

November newsletter: Ombudsman visits Grassy
Narrows, Interim French Language Services
Commissioner's Annual Report coming
December 7, and more

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER



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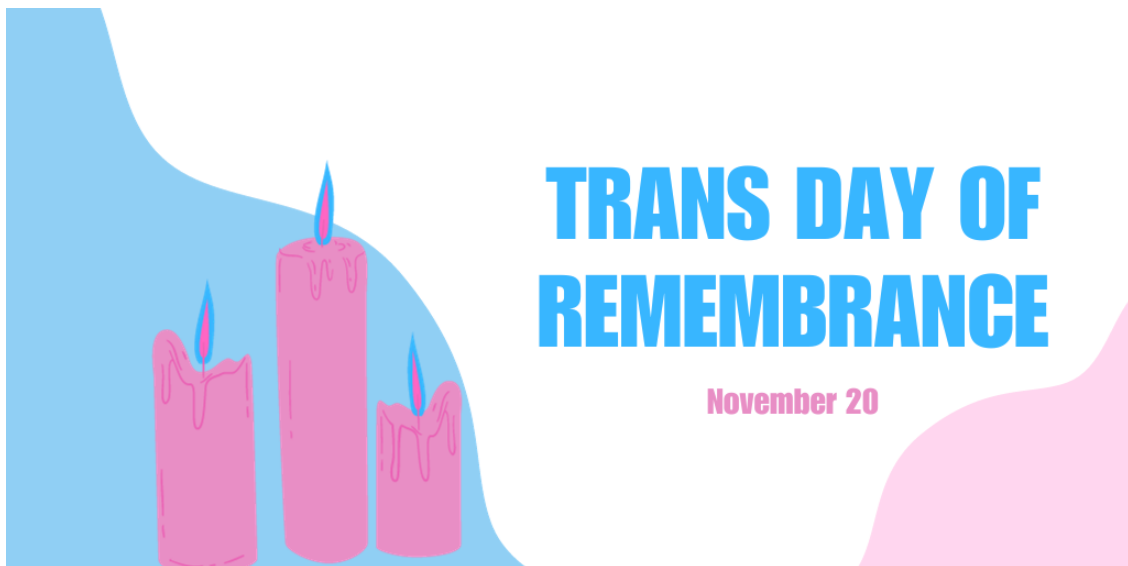
Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé, Director of Children and Youth Diana Cooke, and two members of our Indigenous Circle Team were invited to visit Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation (Grassy Narrows) in northern Ontario earlier this month. They were welcomed by representatives of the Council of Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation, Kitapinoonjimiinaanik Family Services, and several members of the community.

The three-day visit, from November 6 to 8, highlighted the community's significant trauma and challenges, particularly regarding mercury contamination of water in the region. The Ombudsman was moved by the accounts of hardship and injustices faced by the community and discussed the emphasis our Office places on incorporating recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls into our work. As a thank you, Ombudsman Dubé was gifted a blanket, a symbol of deep respect and honour.

Our team members were impressed by the community's resiliency and commitment to keeping its children safe. An impressive new housing program for youth at risk and vulnerable families was an example of both.

The Ombudsman thanked the First Nation on social media: "You honoured us with your hospitality, your teachings, and education about the trauma and injustices your people have endured. I look forward to more good words and opportunities to collaborate with you towards better provincial services and the promotion of your rights."

Commemorating Trans Day of Remembrance



November 20 was the Trans Day of Remembrance – a day to honour and memorialize the lives of transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, and gender-diverse community members who have been lost to acts of anti-transgender violence and discrimination.

This day reminds us of the need for continued education and awareness, not only to honour those we have lost, but also to support and uplift our transgender and gender-diverse colleagues, friends and communities. Our Office is committed to inspiring continuous learning among our staff, and to helping transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, and gender-diverse people across Ontario.

For example:

- [We made sure a boy's name change went through](#) after a mother waited months for it to be processed.
- After a transgender college student complained about bullying and a lack of accommodation, [we helped ensure she received a certificate from the college](#).
- [We stepped in when the Ontario Health Insurance Plan improperly refused a transgender woman's application](#) for prior approval for breast reconstruction surgery.

Interim French Language Services **Commissioner's Annual Report** **coming December 7**



On December 7, Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard will release his Annual Report, covering the period from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The report will highlight the work of our French Language Services Unit and include the Commissioner's recommendations to improve services in French in Ontario.

You can read the report and watch the Commissioner's press conference live on our website on December 7 at 9:30 a.m.

Do you have a complaint about government services in French? Contact us via [phone](#), [email](#) or on [our website](#).

National Francophone Immigration Week



November 5 to 11 marked the **Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone** (National Francophone Immigration Week), featuring a wide variety of activities across the country, under the theme “Terre Accueillante” (“Welcoming Land”). In recognition, our French Language Services Unit spoke to newcomers about our services, and Interim Commissioner Carl Bouchard attended the launch of the new Observatoire en immigration francophone (Francophone Immigration Observatory) in Toronto, which aims to provide policy-makers, researchers and practitioners with analyses and data to support and promote Francophone immigration in Canada.

National Child Day



In collaboration with UNICEF Canada, on November 20, we recognized National Child Day, which reinforces the importance of children's rights in Ontario.

“Today, I am proud to join @UNICEFCanada in celebratating National Child Day,” said Ombudsman Paul Dubé on social media. “Our Office’s Children and Youth Unit is

dedicated to ensuring #EveryRightForEveryChild is upheld, as we continue to champion the well-being and rights of children in care across Ontario.”

Reaching Ontarians: Here's where you saw us this month!



On November 2, Ombudsman Paul Dubé participated on a panel at the annual conference of the **Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators** in Toronto. Alongside Dr. Şule Tomkinson, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Université Laval and Irwin Glassberg, Ontario Fairness Commissioner, he shared his perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the administrative justice system.

On November 2 and 16, Ombudsman staff attended events hosted by the **Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations** in Toronto, connecting with seniors to let them know about how we resolve administrative issues with driver's licences, ServiceOntario, social services programs, and much more.

On November 6, our French Language Services Unit spoke to newcomers at a Toronto event organized by **Entité 3** (one of six French-language health services planning entities in Ontario), Réseau en immigration francophone du Centre-Sud-Ouest, and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

On November 7, we spoke to students at **Nipissing University**, and on November 9, we attended the **St. Lawrence College Connections Fair in Kingston**, explaining how we can help post-secondary school students with everything from financial aid issues to complaints about academic reviews.

On November 9, our dedicated 2SLGBTQAI+ team presented at **Friends of Ruby Drop-In**

Youth Centre, focusing on the vital rights of youth in care and our commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive environment for queer youth.

On November 14, Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay and Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard attended **the installation ceremony of the new Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honorable Édith Dumont**, the first Francophone to hold the position.

On November 21, senior Ombudsman staff members met virtually with more than 80 constituency assistants and other staff for several **Progressive Conservative MPPs** to let them know how we help resolve public complaints about provincial services.

On November 22, our Black Children, Youth, and Families Table participated in a community engagement series led by **One Vision One Voice**, a program led by the African Canadian community through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

On November 24 and 25, we were at **Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)** Annual Special Education 2023 Conference in Toronto, answering questions from educators, special education professionals, parents, and associations.

Is your organization interested in hearing more about the types of problems we can resolve? [Reach out to us today](#) to schedule a presentation or request brochures!

How we helped: Case summaries



Name shame

A mother contacted us in frustration about the conduct of a driving instructor towards her son, a student driver. The student was in the process of a gender transition, and the name on his legal documents was not the same as the name he had chosen to use in daily life. The mother complained that the instructor was “deadnaming” her son, but the instructor told her he was following Ministry of Transportation policy.

After we spoke with Ministry officials, they followed up with the instructor to confirm that the student could use the name of his choice. The Ministry told us that while their policy on online learning does not specifically address the issue of preferred names, it does require course providers to avoid exclusionary language, including in relation to gender.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems](#)



[The road to French services](#)

We received a complaint from a man who had recently moved to Canada. Although his motorcycle licence was valid in his home country, he was required to re-take the test in Ontario. He asked in advance to take the road test in French at a DriveTest centre that is designated under the *French Language Services Act*, but he was assigned to an English-speaking examiner, and failed.

Staff at our French Language Services Unit contacted the Ministry of Transportation and learned that this DriveTest centre had no certified bilingual examiner for motorcycle road tests. Thanks to our intervention, the man's road test was rescheduled with a bilingual examiner from another DriveTest location. The Ministry told us it has made arrangements to

ensure there are staff available to handle bilingual road test requests at the designated DriveTest location.

Learn more about the French Language Services Unit which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French



[A cut above](#)

A Black youth living in a rural group home with little access to public transit complained to us that staff would not drive him to get a haircut. Our staff suggested that he speak to his caseworker about the matter, and we followed up with the children's aid society. After the youth told the caseworker the local barber shop was not familiar with the unique hair care needs of Black youth, she offered to drive him to one that was.

Under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, a service provider is required to take identity characteristics such as race, ancestry, colour and ethnic origin into account when providing services.

[Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth](#)

[Careers](#)



We continue to hire new staff – and currently have openings for [Early Resolution Officers, Legal Counsels and a Communications Officer!](#)

We offer:

- Collaborative, exciting work with exceptional colleagues passionate about public service
- Comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits
- Generous paid maternity and parental leave
- Hybrid working environment with an office centrally located on the subway line
- A commitment to work-life balance
- Defined-benefit pension plan
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

APPLY NOW!

File a complaint or contact us here



The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. The Ombudsman's investigations have benefited millions of Ontarians and prompted widespread reforms, including improved newborn screening, a more secure lottery system, and better tracking of inmates in segregation.

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land.

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