

## Bear Witness to **Jordan's Principle** on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2018



Bear Witness or "Bring a Teddy to School" Day is on May 10<sup>th</sup>. We are planning school-wide participation in this event as part of our Social Justice and Aboriginal Education curriculum. May 10<sup>th</sup> is a celebration of Jordan River's birthday and the passing of Jordan's Principle. This event will provide our students with the opportunity to make personal, meaningful connections to important social issues in Canada in a child-friendly way. Taking part will also allow our children to make an important contribution to fair and equal treatment for all children in Canada.

Jordan's Principle is named after Jordan River Anderson, a little boy born with complex health issues. Jordan began his life in hospital and had to stay there until doctors felt he could be cared for at home, with additional medical help. Tragically, the provincial government and the federal government could not agree on who should pay for Jordan's care after he left hospital. This was only an issue because Jordan was Aboriginal. This would not have happened to a non-Aboriginal child. So ... Jordan had to stay in hospital until a decision was made. Jordan stayed in hospital until he died

because the two governments wouldn't agree. He was only five years old. Jordan never got to spend a single day in a real home.

A very brave, caring woman, Cindy Blackstock, and an organization she helped create (The First Nations Caring Society), decided they had to do something. They knew this should never happen to any child, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. Ms. Blackstock and her group decided to take the government to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fight for the rights of children like Jordan. After a very long, drawn out court case (about nine years!), the Tribunal passed a ruling that is now called Jordan's Principle. This ruling states that the government of "first contact" with the child will pay for her/his care. The hope (and law) is that Aboriginal children will receive the same interventions and health care as non-Aboriginal children in Canada. Unfortunately, this is still not always happening. We are encouraging our students to add their voices and take action to insist all children receive fair and equal health care.

Teddy Bears are used to celebrate this day because Jordan loved teddy bears. We would like all of our students to bring a favourite teddy bear to school by Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> (some teachers may ask for them earlier), so we can decorate them on Wednesday. Through their decorations, students will be asked to honour and remember Jordan, and use their teddies as a way to add their voices to the call for equitable health care. Thanks to a grant from the B.C. Teacher Federation and Langley Teachers' Association, the school will provide all the beads, elastic string, and buttons needed to create special bracelets and necklaces for the bears.

We will be having a Teddy Bear Parade on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. before early dismissal at 1:25. Parents, please feel free to join us. We would love to have you! If you would like more information on this initiative, you may want to visit:

<https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGAvqRigxko>

Thank you so much for supporting this event,