

For immediate release

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TE ARAWA MĀORI GROUP RETURN TO YUKON FOR YOUTH WELLNESS GATHERING

MAYO, YUKON — The Te Arawa Waka group will mentor youth at the 2018 First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun (FNND) Youth Gathering, strengthening ties between the Māori and Yukon First Nations.

The gathering is focussed on promoting physical and mental wellness. It will be held in Mayo from February 5-8 and involve youth from across the Yukon.

Yukoners will remember Te Arawa Waka for their participation at the 2017 Adāka Cultural Festival, where they shared rituals and protocols, traditional strength training games and artistic practices. This marked the beginning of a special relationship between them and Yukon First Nations.

For Te Arawa Waka it means a lot to return to the Yukon to share their culture, build new relationships and support the development of youth.

“We are excited to work with Yukon First Nations and with the youth of the region. Culture is the foundation of important value systems and dynamic transformation and we can’t wait to be a part of that,” says Paora Te Hurihanganui, a member of Te Arawa Waka. “The collective transformation with Yukon First Nations and Māori is of the utmost importance to each other’s future. It is a great learning opportunity where we can contribute to one another’s growth and plan for continued future exchanges.”

Organizers of the FNND gathering were inspired to invite Te Arawa Waka after seeing their demonstrations and performances at Adāka last year. They felt the group would make good role models for participating youth, helping motivate them to care for their physique, health, education and careers.

The Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT) produces the annual Adāka Cultural Festival. They welcome this first iteration of cultural exchange between the Māori and Yukon First Nations following Adāka 2017.

“Through the sharing of traditions, protocols and culture, our new Māori friends became brothers and sister last year. We are delighted to be welcoming them back to the Yukon and sharing with them again.” YFNCT President Shirlee Frost says. “Te Arawa Waka’s dedication to bettering their lives, and the lives of others, through their culture will be an inspiration to young people at the gathering.”

Te Arawa Waka is a Māori cultural group from the Te Arawa nation in the central north island of New Zealand. The group will be leading workshops and performing at the 2018 FNND Youth Gathering.

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