



ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICES
Gaa kina gwii waabamaa debwewin • All those who seek the truth



Debut single “Where is Everyone?” calls for attention to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit people

Staff from Aboriginal Legal Services in Toronto form artist collective Zoongde`e, reconnect with Indigenous culture, and share stories of resilience through innovative music therapy project

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Artwork by Karen Cull Seidel, member of Zoongde`e

Toronto, December 8, 2023 – A new artist collective named Zoongde`e (English phonetic: Zone-da-eh, Anishinaabe for ‘strong heart’) released their debut single “Where is Everyone?” today - a raw and powerful folk song, [available now](#) on all major streaming platforms via A4A Records.

Zoongde`e was brought together as part of the [Culture to Wellness project](#), a partnership between Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS) and Toronto-based non-profit Make Music Matter (MMM) based on MMM’s Healing in Harmony music therapy model for trauma survivors.

The therapeutic and victim services team at ALS have taken part in a series of workshops and collaborative songwriting sessions, culminating in the creation of the track “Where is

Everyone?”. They describe the song as ‘a letter to the world’, a way to shine the light on the tragic and common reality of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

“The fact that the woman in the song disappears is the closest truth to the reality that Indigenous people experience,” explains Quinn Roffey-Antoine, Victims Rights Advocate at ALS and one of the songwriters. “The fact that her family and community cares and remembers her is part of the strength we as Indigenous women demonstrate.”

“The song represents truth,” adds Colette McComb, another member of the group. “We are seeking justice here. It represents educating the public. Our song honors the memories of those who we have lost and was done through the guidance of our ancestors.”

For Zoongde`e, the creation of the song was also a way to process their personal experiences. Most of the staff at ALS have endured vicarious trauma through the front-line work that they do, and have endured intergenerational trauma themselves as Indigenous people. The project has provided them a safe space to be vulnerable, to express themselves, and find healing. Ultimately, their aim is to explore new ways of delivering holistic support to the Indigenous people they serve.

Christa Big Canoe, Legal Director at ALS and member of Zoongde`e, feels the project is an opportunity to revitalize the connection between culture, music, and healing – something that’s been disrupted by the violence and harm faced by Indigenous communities.

“In 30 years of Aboriginal Legal Services being an agency, what we know works, what reduces recidivism, what helps people get back on track, what helps put people in better places is a connection to culture and a connection to community,” she explains.

Workshops will continue throughout 2024, offering this new approach to holistic healing to more members of Toronto’s Indigenous population including ALS clients and partners.

In September 2023, Canadian rockers [Billy Talent were invited to visit the artists in studio](#), learn more about the *Culture to Wellness* project, and share some musical guidance with the group.

[Listen now to “Where is Everyone?” by Zoongde`e](#)

Producers: Julian Lee, Thomas Aman

Editing: Thomas Aman, Carrie Armitage, Anton Evans

Mixing: Carrie Armitage, Anton Evans – for Village Works Canada

Mastering: Robert L. Smith at Defy Recordings

- [Lyrics](#)
- [Artwork](#)
- [Images](#)

About Aboriginal Legal Services

For over 30 years, Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS) is one of the leading non-profit organizations supporting Indigenous people and communities and a national leader in Indigenous justice and advocacy. ALS' mission is to strengthen the capacity of the Indigenous community and its citizens to deal with justice issues and to provide Indigenous-controlled and culturally-based justice alternatives and healing. <https://www.aboriginallegal.ca>

About Make Music Matter

Make Music Matter uses the creative process as a therapeutic tool to help empower marginalized individuals and communities to recover, reintegrate, and reclaim their future with hope and dignity. Its innovative Healing in Harmony music therapy model has been clinically proven to help reduce PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

Healing in Harmony has helped transform the lives of over 14,000 individuals in nine countries worldwide. Participants emerge with a renewed sense of agency and self-worth. Their original songs are professionally produced and released globally, serving as advocacy tools to promote human rights and combat stigma. <https://makemusicmatter.org>

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