

# *Letter from Ogichidaa Kavanaugh*

With the New Year upon us, I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone in the Treaty #3 territory a happy and healthy 2021.

I have been privileged to serve as the Ogichidaa of the Anishinaabe Nation during a year of many troubles. Despite these troubles, the strength and resilience of our communities in times of adversity has once again been demonstrated. Rather than focus on the struggles of the past year, I would ask for citizens to take the time to consider how well we managed through this crisis as a Nation.

Each and every community rose above expectations to handle a crisis that few of us have ever seen in our lifetimes. Our leadership did their best to guide us through the very real dangers that faced our communities. Our service providers and technicians found innovative ways to ensure that the stress of the pandemic did not lead to the breakdown of our systems. Many of our citizens dropped everything to come together and weather the storm, together as a community by donating their time, efforts, skills, and resources to ensure we all made it through. And most crucially we have kept our Elders safe so that our children can continue on with our Nation's journey.

I believe we have demonstrated what our communities are capable of accomplishing even during adversity. Many things will change after the resolution of this pandemic, and I believe our communities and our Nation will benefit from this new reality. Even though it may feel as though much time and progress was lost during 2020, many important lessons and skills were learned in the process.

I assure you that over the next few months, every effort will be made to ensure the rollout of vaccines is as efficient as possible for our communities. Until then, we all must still limit our contacts and activities so that the spring of 2021 will be one of celebration and not of frustration.

I thank each and every citizen of the Anishinaabe Nation for their efforts over the past year, as you have all been an inspiration for me to continue on with this work even during the most difficult of times.

I wish you all the very best in this New Year and hope that we can all safely gather together again in time for our springtime ceremonies.

Gichii Miigwetch,  
Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh