



Update on the Manitoba Developmental Centre lawsuit

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, June 21, 2020 – There has been a positive step made in the lawsuit about the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC). Filed in the fall of 2018, the lawsuit is seeking for the Manitoba government to admit that they did not provide a duty of care to the people who lived at the institution.

The recent ruling is allowing the lawsuit to go forward as a class action. This means that all people who lived at MDC between July 1, 1951 and May 29, 2020 and were alive as of October 31, 2016, will be included in the class action. But there can be an appeal to this ruling, so it is not completely final yet. The period to start the appeal process is open until June 28. But still, this is a small victory in a larger battle.

The lead plaintiff for the class action is David Weremy. David Weremy has been part of People First Manitoba since 2003. He was elected Second Vice President in the summer of 2019. Through David's career with People First he has worked on many projects, such as co-directing *The Freedom Tour* documentary. He has won many awards, including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities National Award, and the LiveWorkPlay 2019 Legacy Inclusion Leadership Award. As a member of the People First of Canada / Canadian Association for Community Living Joint National Task Force on Deinstitutionalization, one of David's biggest accomplishments has been taking on the task of lead plaintiff in this lawsuit.

The lawsuit was filed against the Government of Manitoba for the abuse David and others suffered while forced to live at the Manitoba Development Centre.

"I'm happy it's moving ahead," said Weremy about the case being classified as a class action. "It takes a long time. Just to get to this part. I hope it goes faster now." As a survivor of institutionalized living, David hopes to one day shut down all institutions so future generations will not have to experience the exclusion and abuse that he did.



David Weremy, lead plaintiff in the class action suit

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People First of Manitoba is the voice of Manitobans labeled with an intellectual disability. People First of Manitoba is led by a group of self-advocates. We believe all people labeled with an intellectual disability need to be recognized as equal citizens with the same rights, values, choices and freedoms as everyone else. For further information, contact Michelle Tomchak, Coordinator for PFMB email: michelletomchak@icloud.com Find out more at <https://peoplefirstmanitoba.weebly.com/>