



## Sault College News Release

For immediate release

### Sault College Alumni Receives Prestigious Premier's Award



(Sault Ste. Marie, ON December 12, 2011) A Sault College graduate's tireless efforts in the field of community service stood out among the nominees across Ontario and has won her a prestigious Premier's Award.

Brenda Combs, a graduate of the Developmental Service Worker program of Sault College (1982), was one of six Premier's Awards winners announced at the annual Colleges Ontario Higher Education Summit recently held in Toronto.

Combs, referred to as one of Canada's "thought leaders" in family violence prevention and education in First Nations communities, travels across Canada on a volunteer basis giving voice to the hundreds of murdered and missing Aboriginal women who can no longer speak for themselves. An Anishnabe Quay from Batchewana First Nation, Brenda is the immediate past Chair of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence – the largest organization in Canada aimed at the safety and well-being of Native children and families. She currently holds the position of Executive Director at Nimkii-Naabkawagan Family Crisis Shelter (Nimkii).

A passionate and dedicated woman, Brenda spends countless hours working, volunteering, educating, assisting and leading women who are victims of domestic violence, abuse and

poverty. Nimkii serves Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in crisis, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Under Brenda's leadership, women in need are provided with emergency shelter and the essentials they require to remain safe in times when they need it the most.

"We are so proud to celebrate both Brenda's personal and professional achievements. She is an advocate and role model for all women, especially those of First Nations," states Dr. Ron Common, President, Sault College. "On behalf of Sault College, we congratulate Brenda on her success and are extremely proud to have her represent Sault College alumni. With over 26,000 graduates living and working in our community and across the globe, Sault College alumni are continuing to make a difference."

"I am so honoured to have been recognized in this way," says Brenda of the win. "My Grandmother, Fanny Nolan, who was a residential school survivor is my inspiration and always taught me to be there for others. I am what I am today because of her and the professors I had along the way who believed that I could go further."

Annually, Premier's Awards are presented in six categories - Business, Community Services, Creative Arts and Design, Health Sciences, Technology and Recent Graduate – to honour the significant social and economic contributions Ontario college graduates make in the province and throughout the world.

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### **Sault College Alumni**

Educating 4,500 students annually, Sault College offers a full range of programs: certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, post-graduate certificates, degrees, and apprenticeship programs. With over 26,000 graduates from across Canada and around the world, the Sault College Alumni Association serves to unite all graduates while fostering life-long relationships within the college community. Graduates are encouraged to stay connected, informed and united with each other and Sault College to foster lasting relations and enhance the collective growth of all future alumni. Please visit our website at [www.saultcollege.ca/services/alumni](http://www.saultcollege.ca/services/alumni) for more information about Sault College alumni.

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