



This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

[News](#) [Opinion](#) [Business](#) [Sports](#) [Entertainment & Life](#) [Special Sections](#) [Shopping Essentials](#) [ePaper](#) [Puzzmo](#) |

[Home](#) / [Atlantic Canada](#) / [Newfoundland & Labrador](#) / [News](#)

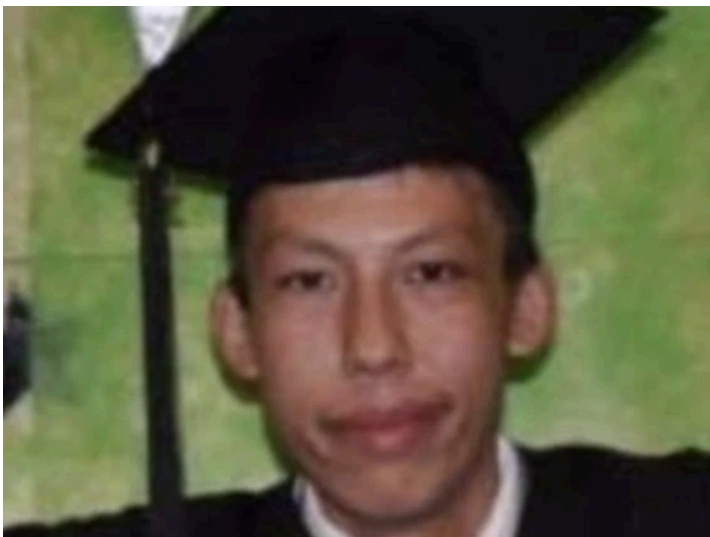


Jacob Collins' mom was 'misled and bamboozled,' told son was thriving as system failed him, NL Innu inquiry hears

Innu inquiry hears Jacob was isolated, monitored, ignored before he was left without supports

By [Tara Bradbury](#)

Published May 05, 2026 Last updated 3 hours ago 6 minute read



Jacob Collins. FACEBOOK

Lawyers for the families of six young Innu people from Natuashish who died after

spending time in care presented their experiences at the Inquiry Regarding the

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

publish a story on each of the submissions.

Virginia Collins was led to believe that her son, Jacob, was doing well at his Ontario treatment centre.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

He was playing soccer. He had joined cadets. Those in charge of his care repeatedly told Collins that Jacob was a happy teenager, well-integrated and thriving.

Over and over, Collins consented to Jacob remaining in the care of the Newfoundland and Labrador government, outside his hometown of Natuashish, because she thought he was doing so well.

The truth was very different, a provincial inquiry heard on April 22

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Jacob was living — Broken Arrow Residential Treatment Services, or BARTS for short — had been presented to her as a program with an implied Aboriginal connection, but was just a foster home with a poorly-trained support worker who accompanied Jacob to school.

This advertisement has not loaded yet.

Jacob was forbidden to speak his native Innu-aimun except during limited, monitored phone calls with his mother, and he never attended any addiction treatment or counselling sessions.

Jacob's foster parents never even communicated directly with Collins.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Homesick and unhappy, Jacob tried to run away but was returned to the facility where

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

one point for putting an extra spoonful of jam on his toast.

Read More

'That noise is Thunderheart': Natuashish teen dreamed of being a musician until he went through the child welfare system



How a Labrador youth home failed Wally Rich: Innu inquiry hears details of his last months alive



Jacob, the inquiry heard, hid his pain from his mother.

“He saw himself as the man of the house, and he was protective of his mother and her emotions,” Hiscock said. “He didn’t want to upset her.”

Jacob died by suicide at the Labrador Correctional Centre on Feb. 6, 2020, at age 22.

TRENDING

1



Colin and Justin's new HGTV show dives into small-town Nova Scotia: 'It's about living a big life in a small town'

His death, and the deaths of five other young Innu people from Natuashish — Wally Rich

2



Final curtain call: Cape Breton theatre

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System.

3



Fed. government abandons plans to reuse cottages for tiny home housing project



4



Nova Scotia mine reopening to process \$240 million worth of gold left because of permit problems

5



'It was a rough ride': CBRM councillor set to return from medical leave


Through their lawyers, the loved ones of six young people from Natuashish who died between 2015 and 2020 – (clockwise from top left) Faith Rich, Kirby Mistenapeo, Jacob Collins, James Poker, Thunderheart Tshakapesh and Wally Rich – presented submissions to the Inquiry Regarding the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System on Thursday, April 23, 2026. The inquiry's mandate is to examine systematic issues within the provincial child welfare system, conduct investigations into the young people's deaths, and to make recommendations to the government.

All six young people were involved in the child protection system and each of their families applied to participate in the inquiry, seeking an investigation into their deaths and the relation to the services they received.

ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Investigators hired by the hired by inquiry have produced private, detailed reports on each case, with common emerging issues and systemic failures: disempowerment, gaps and inappropriateness of services, accountability failures communication breakdowns solvent

Sections  Search

The Telegram

Subscribe \$12 for 1 year

Sign In

Subscribe \$12 for 1 year

Felt powerless to intervene

For Collins, one of the most painful realizations came when she began reviewing Jacob’s records as part of the inquiry.

“She feels she was misled and bamboozled into repeatedly signing her son away under voluntary custody agreements,” Hiscock said.

“She was told, in great details, how well Jacob was doing in soccer, school, cadets. She was repeatedly told how happy he was with the opportunities he was getting.

“To her, it felt as if she was being told that she could not do for him what he needed. Her interactions with (Child, Youth and Family

Services) and its social workers had consistently made her feel like a failure of a

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

At no time was Collins' ability to parent Jacob questioned by child protection authorities, Hiscock said, and she was consistently referred to as a dedicated, competent parent who had sought help for her son in the face of his addiction issues.

Though his placement in care was voluntary in theory, it didn't feel that way to Collins, who said social workers arrived to meet her with paperwork in English, ready to be signed, needing her to simply authorize the decisions they had already made instead of offering her a real choice in the matter.

Collins said she felt powerless to intervene.

When he was able to make his own decisions,
.Jacob returned to Natuashish. He would have

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your
article continues below.

Left with no supports or plan

Jacob arrived home with no reintegration plan and none of the supports he had in Ontario. Having lost connections with extended family and friends over the years, he spent years isolated from his community, he returned essentially as a stranger — dropped off, his mom said, like a hot potato; a problem child welfare workers were quick to leave with her and forget.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your
article continues below.

“I think nothing in this case is as important as the fact he was divorced from his own people, his own community, his own language, his own culture, and so many of his friends and family,” Hiscock said.

“A connection with his mother was important but it cannot substitute for all the

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Jacob graduated from high school in Natuashish and shared his love of soccer with others, encouraging them to play.

At the same time, his mental health issues, undiagnosed in Ontario, deteriorated. He began experiencing hallucinations and suicidal thoughts.

Without needed supports, and with Jacob now too old to fall under a child welfare mandate, the RCMP was the only outlet Collins could reach out to for help.

The system’s final failure, Hiscock told the inquiry, was the inability to keep Jacob safe in the Labrador Correctional Facility.

“When we look at Jacob’s case, it is especially tragic, because it is clear that both he and his mother worked hard to make that transition a success,” Hiscock said.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

“They did so unsupported and against the backdrop of Jacob’s sinking deeper and deeper into his psychosis.”

Natuashish circle hearings provided some healing

Collins has put a lot of her energy into the inquiry — not just for Jacob, but for her other son, who was also sent to Ontario and is living a similar pattern.

She’s worried his life will end the same way as Jacob’s.

Those worries have put Collins in a very dark place over the years, but a circle hearing held last summer as part of the inquiry has helped her heal.

Hiscock, too, was moved by the circle, saying he had never seen any legal process produce the same healing results.

Over the course of two weeks in July at a Natuashish healing lodge, circle hearings were held for the six youth. Each hearing opened with a sacred smudging practice and

This advertisement has not loaded yet.

a prayer, and gave the families and others an opportunity to share their stories and pain

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

accomplishments, Hiscock said.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

“Ms. Collins still struggles with the darkness and the grief of this tragedy, obviously, and that may always be the case, but she has found it easier since the circle. She still gets angry at the way she and her son were treated. That is balanced by a greater understanding of those failures and by the hope that this inquiry can make the changes that the Innu need,” Hiscock said.

“If all of the recommendations of this inquiry were ignored and government completely took the report and threw it into the trash — and we all hope and pray that’s not going to be the case — this inquiry would not have

been in vain simply for what those weeks of the healing circles produced ”

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

depth coverage of the stories that matter most in Newfoundland and Labrador, right in your inbox.



LATEST FROM SHOPPING ESSENTIALS

Reddit has spoken: These are the Sephora products people will "repurchase forever"



I see a Sephora trip in your near future

5 minutes ago

Shopping Essentials

Made in Canada: Embrace spring with these 5 floral inspired products from Canadian brands



Depending where you are in the country, May can either be the start of summer or an extension of winter. Either way...

1 hour ago

Life