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MEDIA RELEASE

Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) Students of ASAP & ROFATA Celebrate at Graduation Ceremonies

THUNDER BAY, ON – WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 2015: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) hosted a Graduation Ceremony for the 64 successful students from the 2014-2015 Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program (ASAP) and recognizing graduates of the Ring of Fire Aboriginal Training Alliance (RoFATA) Trades Training Program at the Da Vinci Centre in Thunder Bay.

In preparation for Ring of Fire employment opportunities, many Matawa First Nation members are now prepared, educated and trained for employment. All of the graduates have successfully completed the education and training programming requirements and will continue to move forward to pursue future career goals and employment opportunities. All of the ASAP graduates will also be receiving their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and many of them have also completed their Post-Secondary Entrance requirements.

"When an opportunity to improve the quality of our lives presents itself, our people take that opportunity. The KKETS's ASAP program has been set up to help our community members get the skills and training they need to improve their lives in the new economy that is emerging due to resource development. It is great to see 64 of our community member's graduate and move on to further their education and job skills. I believe that KKETS approach is going to help hundreds, possibly thousands, of First Nation members achieve a better life for themselves, their families and their communities," said David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO Matawa First Nation Management.

"ASAP program is a unique adult education program that is tailored to the individual learner by providing full wrap around supports that are culturally appropriated and meet the social, emotional and academic needs of the student," said Conrad Chapais, KKETS Board of Directors President Interim.

"Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) is meant to help our people move towards sustainability through employment; education with training is a key part of this. ASAP gives Matawa members a chance to get their OSSD's, and this opens the door to further education. So whether our

graduates move towards the workforce, pursue more training or further their education, they are broadening their horizons, and we are very proud of them,” said Morris Wapoose, KKETS Program Manager.

“Today is a day of celebration and future where 64 high school graduates will receive their Ontario Secondary School Diploma’s and continue on their path of success whether its post-secondary education, apprenticeship skilled trades training or direct employment. The Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program has changed many lives and created hope towards a better quality of life for Matawa First Nation members,” stated by Carolyn Zadnik, ASAP Project Coordinator.

“Although we only recognized some RoFATA Trainees today, we have graduated 362 individuals from the Matawa communities. The graduates from the RoFATA Trades Training Programs have all received their full industrial certifications, in-class apprenticeship requirements and they are employment ready. Today is indeed a great day for the RoFATA graduates and I will await the receptiveness of potential employers as our graduates enter the northern Ontario labour market,” said Lawrence W. Jourdain, the Coordinator for RoFATA.

ABOUT ASAP

The Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program (ASAP) is an exciting initiative assisting members of Matawa First Nation communities in pursuing their high school education, employment and career goals. It is an innovative, collaborative and integrated approach with “cutting-edge” practices that will help adult learners build pathways to positive educational and employment outcomes using a skills laddering approach. This program provides the foundation of full scope of high school academic requirements, employment/career readiness, life skills and skills training required to participate in the mining sector and other supportive industries. The wrap around team, cultural, social, transition and emotional supports are key factors in the completion rates and retention strategy. ASAP works to ensure students are ready for the labor market workforce, post-secondary education and specialized training.

It’s KKETS goal to prepare, educate and train for employment. In 2014/15, KKETS provided this opportunity to 100 Matawa First Nation members. The delivery of ASAP took place in Thunder Bay, Ontario on 28 N. Cumberland Street, 3rd Floor.

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KKETS is a Matawa employment and training non-profit corporation, supported by our Chiefs, that offers our First Nation members opportunities to advance their skills and employability to get meaningful jobs in all industries, but particularly in the growing resources sector. KKETS will positively change lives and communities through education, individual skills development and training.



ASAP is funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU)



Lakehead Adult Education provides instructional services for the delivery of OSSD accreditation.

Matawa First Nation Management (MFNM): MFNM is a non-profit corporation and Tribal Council that provides advisory services to its nine member First Nations.



The Nine Member First Nations of MFNM: Remote (accessible by air or winter ice road) - Eabametoong First Nation, Neskantaga First Nation, Marten Falls First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, and Webequie First Nation. Road Access (accessible by provincial highways and roads) - Constance Lake First Nation, Aroland First Nation, Long Lake #58 First Nation, and Ginoogaming First Nation.

Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) is an Agreement Holder with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) under the Aboriginal employment and training program “Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)”.

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