



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, September 28, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KIIKENOMAGA KIKENJIGEWEN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES
STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN ORANGE SHIRT DAY, ACKNOWLEDGING
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL LEGACY**

THUNDER BAY, ON: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) announced today that from 1:00 – 2:00 pm EST they participated in an *Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program (ASAP) Orange Shirt Day Walk* acknowledging the residential school legacy they experience as Indigenous Peoples. KKETS teachers and staff were joined by approximately 81 students of the ASAP program. They walked from Van Norman Street, to Algoma Street, to John Street, to Court Street, and ended at the KKETS office at 28 Cumberland Street North. They were met with support from Chiefs of their First Nations as they passed the Matawa First Nations Management building at 233 South Court Street towards the end of their walk.

The ASAP Walk is in advance of Orange Shirt Day, an annual event that takes place on September 30 to remember the experiences of former students of Indian Residential Schools and to commit to ongoing reconciliation. The ASAP Walk is part of a class students undergo as part of their studies. Previous to today's walk, they recently participated in a presentation on the impacts of historical trauma, intergenerational grief and residential schools by Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Indigenous Chair on Truth and Reconciliation on behalf of Lakehead University.

The ASAP Orange Shirt Day Walk is tied into the trauma-informed approach to service delivery in addressing Aboriginal workforce development that KKETS has been delivering through the ASAP program since 2012. They graduated their 5th cohort of students this past March. A recent case study entitled: [Intergenerational Healing and Growth - A Case Study of the Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program](#) (June 29, 2018) by the *Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation* has highlighted their approach and has confirmed that the ASAP program is achieving success rates for their students considerably higher than traditional adult learning settings.

ASAP offers the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and certification education in Thunder Bay, Ontario. It is a unique education and training program designed to meet the needs of Indigenous adult learners aged 22 years and above. It is founded on the knowledge that each learner brings to the program the shared goal of empowerment through education and training, and each individual arrives at the program with their own dynamic set of strengths, needs, and challenges. ASAP was developed to address the immediate and evolving wrap-around needs of diverse learners by offering adjunctive services and supports that are be responsive to their needs. Many, if not all, have been affected by the Indian Residential School legacy either first-hand or inter-generationally.

This was the 1st time that the ASAP program assembled students in this kind of walk acknowledging Orange Shirt Day in Thunder Bay.

For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca.

Matawa First Nations Management is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area. Follow them on Facebook or Twitter at: @MatawaFN - **KKETS** can be followed on Facebook at: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services – KKETS

QUOTES

“I am child of a Residential School Survivor. My mother never speaks of her time at this place which hurts. She shares so many experiences, but never about that place. She says she suffered so her family didn’t have to. She speaks of hope and blessings she was given and never to let go. She sees today as a time of hope. She sees us blessed with safer times and chance of a better life. These are the reconciliation words that come from my mother. Today, we honour and celebrate the ones who survived and the ones we lost with our Orange Shirt Day Walk. Let us never forget what was done—so that we never do this again.”

– Roger Wesley, *KKETS Executive Director*

“In 1963, I attended St. Joseph Boarding School and experienced physical, mental, emotional and spiritual abuse that has had a negative impact on my life. I survived alcoholism, family breakdown, social and economic issues. Today, I see some change but it will take many generations to have full recovery of this residential school experience.”

– Gene Nowegejick, *KKETS Client Support Officer*

“We are all impacted by residential schools. In the Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program, we are supporting each other and assisting our students through education in a wholistic way that is culturally appropriate where personal connections are made. Today, we come together unified in strength.”

– Carolyn Zadnik, *ASAP Project Manager*



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