

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MATAWA FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL
INVESTMENT IN THUNDER BAY SHELTER HOUSE STREET OUTREACH
SERVICES VAN**

THUNDER BAY, ON: David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) CEO, on behalf of the MFNM Board of Directors, today announced an investment of \$20,000 to Thunder Bay Shelter House towards the purchase a new Street Outreach Services (SOS) van replacing an older vehicle that was taken off the road in January 2017 due to complex maintenance issues. The SOS program offers daily mobile services to homeless, intoxicated and high-risk people. They are on the road everyday from 2 PM to 2 AM. They are currently using a van on loan by *Roots to Harvest*, an agricultural and youth skills development organization.

The team carries on hand supplies such as warm clothing, blankets, food and harm reductions supplies for distribution to people in need. They answer calls from individuals, businesses, emergency service providers and other agencies within the city working with many agencies in the community including the Thunder Bay Police, Emergency Services, the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Balmoral Withdrawal Management Centre to ensure prompt access to services that people in need of assistance.

In August 2017, Thunder Bay Shelter House relaunched the SOS program, including mobile services, after being forced to suspend it for a number of months due to lack of funding. In April 2017, MFNM joined with the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, in issuing a community challenge to meet a \$200,000 fundraising goal to re-start the program. The call was generously answered by many in the community from a Shelter House client receiving a Residential School Settlement, private donors, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and others.

In May 2017, Eabametoong First Nation fundraised in their community providing \$10,000 for the SOS program. To date, although running, the SOS program continues to require funds to continue to provide services to community members in need.

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For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Matawa Communications Manager at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca or Vivian Ann Martin, Executive Assistant at (807) 627-2861.

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 @MatawaFN

QUOTES

“We are proud to make this \$20,000 investment towards the purchase of a new Street Outreach Services van. The Thunder Bay Shelter House continues to do good work in servicing individuals who are in need particularly for those people facing hardships in the cold winter and hot summer days. We believe Shelter House provides a place of safety to these people so that they can help themselves. Facts have shown that when people get help, they can help themselves become good role models who can move on to help their own people. We believe in the people using Thunder Bay Shelter House services and we will never give up on them as long as they themselves do not give up. We, at Matawa, and other similar minded people and organizations, will continue to support people using Thunder Bay Shelter House services, no matter who and what their circumstances are.”

—David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa First Nations Management CEO

