



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KIIKENOMAGA KIKENJIGEWEN EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES (KKETS)
AND DISCOVERY HOUSE LAUNCHED WAH-KA-IH-KUN MAMO ANOKIWIN
(WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A HOUSE) INITIATIVE**

THUNDER BAY, ON: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) in partnership with Discovery House announced the launch of Wah-Ka-Ih-Kun Mamo Anokiwin Initiative with the signing of a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) agreement today at Ramada Airline Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

[Wah-Ka-Ih-Kun Mamo Anokiwin](#) (Working Together to Build a House), will help train 64 Matawa Youth (ages 16-30) in a Construction Craft Worker Training Program that will operate primarily in northern Matawa communities through the use of Galaxy Technologies. 'Smart Classrooms' will be installed in selected Matawa First Nations to provide faster more comprehensive distance learning. Highspeed satellite internet, large screens and new tablets will help create an interactive learning environment in the participants home community, removing the need to relocate for educational and training purposes.

Participants will also assist in building self-sufficient, 'net-zero' living units in participating Matawa communities such as Eabametoong First Nation. Eabametoong Nation is scheduled to receive 60 Housing Units that will include a greenhouse, solar power, geothermal heating and water filtration technology. Each unit will be able to house a family in approximately 1700sq/ft of living space. 30 Housing Units will be built in each of the remote access communities of Marten Falls First Nation, Neskantaga First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation and Webequie First Nation.

Greenhouses built into the roof of the buildings will grow vegetables 8 months of the year, with data collection technology that will monitor and assess crop quality and quantity for viable crops in low light environments. 30 individuals will be employed by each Discovery House complex and each complex is structured as a community owned agricultural co-op.

The project will deliver unprecedented industry leading automation in vertical horticultural, aquacultural and agricultural product processing that will achieve energy efficiency, cost effectiveness, environmental responsibility and production levels previously unattainable.

The Construction Craft Worker Training Program has a funding commitment from the Ministry of Natural Resources Canada (75%) and Discovery House (25%) combined total of \$15.5 million over 3 years, the longest running program at KKETS to date.

For more information, please contact Wayland Moonias, Project Officer at (807) 356-4301 or by email at wmoonias@matawa.on.ca or Roxann Shapwaykeesic, KKETS media contact at (807) 633-9928 or by email at rshapwaykeesic@matawa.on.ca

Established in 2012, **KKETS** is an Aboriginal Skills Employment Training Holder for Matawa First Nations. It assists Matawa members in attaining trades skills and other training including independent programming, employment integration, employment readiness/life skills training, basic employment certifications, and academic upgrading. Like them on Facebook (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services – KKETS).

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 (RS) Treaty area (non-signatory). Follow them on Facebook or Twitter at: @MatawaFN

QUOTES

“This is an excellent opportunity to bring a three-year-long training and work experience in new ‘net-zero’ construction techniques to Matawa youth in Matawa communities. Upon completion of the project, there will be full-time employment opportunities while the new infrastructure will address housing, food security and energy efficiency in remote northern climates.”

– *David Neegan, KKETS Executive Director*

“The Discovery House Project is pleased to partner with KKETS in delivering an innovative training program that will see 64 youth learn about food security, road & facility design as well as constructing buildings on site in their home communities.”

– *Patrick Casey, Discovery House Project Executive Director*

“Congratulations to KKETS and Matawa First Nations on the launch of this exciting initiative. As the former minister for employment, workforce development and labour, I greatly appreciate the innovative approach to addressing societal challenges through training and skills development. These 60 youth have an incredible opportunity to gain skills, contribute to their community and create a lasting legacy. I have often said that an investment in an individual is an investment in a community’s future. Training and meaningful employment opportunities can have the power to change the trajectory for generations to come. This partnership puts people at the centre of a community-based solution to address housing challenges while taking steps to protect the environment for future generations. I look forward to hearing of its progress and learning more about the end result. Thank you for the leadership, collaboration and spirit that has brought this idea to reality.”

– *The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay-Superior North and Canada’s Health Minister*

“The housing issues in my community and other Matawa communities have been an on-going issue for many years. I look forward to being part of the solution and to see new housing that will support families in need and to better survive the unique challenges we face in the north.”

– *Ricky Ostamus, Construction Craft Worker Training Program Student*

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