

*MEDIA RELEASE*

**Tuesday, February 14, 2023**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MATAWA FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT MAKE A \$20K INVESTMENT  
TOWARDS THE UNDERGROUND GYM & YOUTH CENTRE**

**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 the Underground Gym & Youth Centre towards ongoing youth programming and upcoming projects they are planning like renovations and youth skills development. Within the city, the Underground Gym & Youth Centre (a.k.a. UGG) have a number of supporters, many of whom MFNM proudly works with.

UGG provides free access to multiple activities and meals for youth in need and is dedicated to promoting and teaching fitness, healthy lifestyles, self-confidence and self-respect. Some of the programs offered include: gym and fitness; music, art and jewellery; games and learning; kitchen; and winter/summer activities.

This is the first time that MFNM has had an opportunity to make this kind of investment to UGG. At the beginning of February, an [online 50/50 fundraiser](#) for the Gathering of Rivers for Community Care, MFNM's charity was launched to raise funds for projects benefitting First Nations in Matawa and their families.

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**QUOTES**

*“On behalf of the Matawa First Nations Management Board of Directors, we are very pleased to make this \$20,000 investment towards programming at the Underground Gym & Youth Centre in Thunder Bay. They have invested in members of our communities, who live in Thunder Bay for different reasons, for over twenty years. Our youth and children continue to choose them to spend their time with because they feel welcomed, supported and accommodated there.”*

*—David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa First Nations Management CEO*

*“On behalf of the children and youth we serve—many of whom are from the First Nations in Matawa—we sincerely appreciate this donation so graciously given by the Matawa First Nation Management Board of Directors. It is not everyday that we get this kind of substantial amount and with not having core funding, this investment will be put towards our programming and future aspirations.”*

*—Peter Panetta, Underground Gym and Youth Centre, Founder*

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