

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, September 29, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA EDUCATION & CARE CENTRE GRAND OPENING CELEBRATED IN THUNDER BAY

THUNDER BAY, ON: With the recent completion of a much-needed new gymnasium, the Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC) today celebrated a grand opening marking the completion of construction/renovations to indoor spaces of the MECC. These spaces include: a kitchen, classrooms, a Student Care Centre, amongst others.

A number of dignitaries provided remarks including: Matawa First Nations Management CEO David Paul Achneepineskum, a representative of Fort William First Nation, Thunder Bay City Mayor Ken Boshcoff, Minister of Indigenous Services Honourable Patty Hajdu, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, and Matawa Education Executive Director Sharon Nate. Other guests/dignitaries included: the family of the late Jordan Wabasse of Webequie First Nation, MP Sol Mamakwa of Kiiwetinoong, Chiefs from the First Nations in Matawa, members of the Matawa Education Authority, Denise Baxter, Lakehead University Vice-Provost (Indigenous Initiatives), representatives from Ring of Fire Metals, NAN Deputy Grand Chiefs Bobby Narcisse and Anna Betty Achneepineksum, and project partners. The grand opening included a MECC tour, a program is available: [here](#).

Since 2010, MFNM have provided private high school services to Matawa students in Thunder Bay in the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation. Unfortunately, these services were provided locations within Thunder Bay which were not adequate in meeting students' various needs.

In 2017, the City of Thunder Bay transitioned surplus municipal property (the former Grandview Lodge Home for the Aged) to MFNM. Ontario Secondary School Credits as well as cultural programming and extracurricular activities have been delivered there since and so have ongoing indoor/outdoor renovations. Overall capital costs of the entire project since 2018, was \$23M with federal governments making a majority of the investment.

The grand opening came on the heels of Canada's 3rd annual *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* which fulfills the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call-to-Action #80 and Orange Shirt Day on September 30, 2023.

QUOTES

"This momentous occasion is one that will continue to impact Matawa First Nations youth, their communities, and families for decades to come. Students who must leave the support of their families and communities, and way of life behind to access high school now have a safe and reliable facility in Thunder Bay. With staff who are committed to youth's physical, cultural, mental, and emotional wellbeing, students now have a place where they can access equal opportunity to education and mental wellness supports". —**Sharon Nate, Executive Director, Matawa Education**

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

RELATED NEWS:

- [CITY OF THUNDER BAY AND MATAWA FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT MOVE FORWARD WITH TRANSITIONING SURPLUS MUNICIPAL PROPERTY INTO A MATAWA STUDENT EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE FOLLOWING COUNCIL DECISION - Matawa](#)
- [MATAWA EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE CELEBRATES THE PHASE ONE OPENING - Matawa](#)
- [MATAWA FIRST NATIONS WELCOME \\$5.6M IN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO IMPROVE COVID-19 RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND TO SUPPORT THE MATAWA EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE GYMNASIUM UPGRADE PROJECT - Matawa](#)

