



# Matawa

EDUCATION & CARE CENTRE

We work together  
to make change.

# Grand Opening

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 | 200 LILLIE STREET NORTH

**SYMPOSIUM** **12.30**

**OPENING CEREMONY** **1.30**

Pipe Ceremony led by Elder Brenda Mason

Pipe Song led by Matawa Education Drum Group

Lords Prayer led by Elder George Whitehead

Traditional Prayer led by Matawa Education  
Elder Emily Jacob

## REMARKS

Opening Remarks by David Paul Achneepineskum  
CEO Matawa First Nations Management

Chief Solomon's Representative  
Fort William First Nation

Mayor Ken Boshcoff  
City of Thunder Bay

Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Federal Government of Canada

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler  
Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Sharon Nate  
Matawa Education Executive Director

Closing Remarks by David Paul Achneepineskum  
CEO Matawa First Nations Management

**CLOSING** **2.45**

Thunder Mountain Dancers Showcase

Closing Prayer and Tobacco Ceremony led by  
Elder Brenda Mason

Ribbon Cutting and Tree Planting

**MATAWA EDUCATION TOURS** **3.30**

Tours led by Matawa Education Staff

# Program



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## A note from our Youth

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many Funders and those involved for allowing myself and my peers to have endless educational opportunities, especially the gym. The newly built gym will be used daily, providing opportunities for students such as fitness and health classes, teams sports, and a welcoming gathering space for all.

I sincerely love and appreciate my school, my peers, and all the staff who work here. I enjoy all the endless opportunities it gives me to further my education and encourage personal growth.

In the coming months, I hope to solidify the Matawa Education Youth Council by gathering my peers and forming a committee by youth, for youth. This year, my goal is to finalize the Youth Council policies and procedures so that the foundation is ready before I graduate. I am thankful I choose the Matawa Education and Care Centre to be my school. It is a great school and I love it very much.

I am very excited about the new gym and cannot wait for the doors to open!



Jared Bananish; Grade 10

## Wear orange

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30.

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

On September 30, we encourage everyone to wear orange to honour the thousands of Survivors of residential schools.



## Tobacco Tie

Tobacco is one of the sacred gifts the Creator gave to the First Nations people. Tobacco has been used traditionally in ceremonies, rituals and prayer for thousands of years for its powerful spiritual meaning.

Tobacco has a variety of medicinal purposes. Tobacco establishes a direct communication link between a person and the spiritual world. The most powerful way of communicating with the spirits is to smoke tobacco in a Sacred Pipe. Even before the tobacco is put into the pipe the prayers have already begun. When used in a Sacred Pipe ceremony, the smoke from the tobacco carries the prayers to the Creator and it is offered to the Creator and the four directions. This creates an avenue of dialogue between the human world and the spirit world.

Prior to the European tobacco distribution, First Nations people had their own tobacco that was used in ceremony. This tobacco was a mixture of Red Willow Bark and other plants that are referred to as Kinnikinnick. Tobacco is also an important part of medicine bundles that are used for protection, in keeping one safe.

Tobacco is also thought to be the first plant given to the Indigenous people by the Creator. Because of this, tobacco is most frequently used as an offering, either in order to give thanks, to make a request for wisdom or protection, or as a means of cleansing.



As you approach September 30, Orange Shirt Day, we welcome you to lay your tobacco down somewhere outside. While doing so, we encourage you to take a moment to honour the thousands of Survivors of residential schools, as well as those who were unable to make it home to their families.

## Matawa First Nation Chiefs

Chief Dorothy Towedo  
Chief Rick Allan  
Chief Solomon Atlookan  
Chief Sheri Taylor  
Chief Judy Desmoulin  
Chief Bruce Achneepineskum  
Chief Chris Moonias  
Ogamakan Michael Sugarhead  
Chief Cornelius Wabasse

Aroland First Nation  
Constance Lake First Nation  
Eabametoong First Nation  
Ginoogaming First Nation  
Long Lake #58 First Nation  
Marten Falls First Nation  
Neskantaga First Nation  
Nibinamik First Nation  
Webequie First Nation

## Matawa First Nations Management

David Paul Achneepineskum

Chief Executive Officer

## Matawa Education Department

Sharon Nate

Executive Director, Matawa  
Education Department

## Matawa Education Programs and Services

Matawa Education and Care Centre  
Matawa Student Care Centre  
After Hours Supports  
Matawa Education Kitchen  
Pathways to Student Success  
Matawa Waka Tere Language Revitalization  
Matawa Education Advisory Services