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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THUNDER BAY INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE, MATAWA FIRST NATIONS AND LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD CELEBRATE COMPLETION OF SECOND TINY HOME AS PART OF INDIGENOUS SKILLS TRADES TRAINING PROGRAM**

*Tiny homes built by students being sent to Matawa First Nations communities as part of collaborative effort to foster cultural learning and building lifelong skills while building housing*

**THUNDER BAY, ON** – KZ Lodge, the Indigenous Skills Trades Training Program at Hammarskjold High School has celebrated a major achievement on Friday, marking the completion of its second modular home, destined for a Matawa First Nations community.

The program is a collaboration between Lakehead District School Board and Matawa First Nations and Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre to create this unique learning experience. The program connects skills training with cultural teachings and language.

“We value the key partnerships that have been built over the past 2 years with Hammarskjold High School’s KZ Lodge North and others. First Nations in Matawa have been concerned with homelessness for some time and welcome any initiative that serves to solve it,” said **Matawa First Nations CEO David Paul Achneepineskum**. “We are in admiration of the youth who are in Thunder Bay who have built this second tiny home and are still thinking of their communities and homelands. We are grateful for it and, we welcome it.”

The event celebrated the youth and staff involved as well as the importance of key partnerships that have created a positive force for change in communities across Northwestern Ontario.

“Lakehead District School Board is proud to partner with Matawa First Nations, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and others to support this important program that provides valuable education to Indigenous students at Hammarskjold High School,” added **Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education**. “Lakehead District School Board continues to look for innovative opportunities to ensure our schools are delivering quality education and skills development in a way that supports Indigenous, Métis and Inuit student success.”

The first modular home completed in spring 2023 is currently located at Matawa Court Street which will be shipped to a Matawa First Nations community this summer.

The Tiny Home Pilot Project is a pre-apprenticeship extension of the Grade 9 KZ Lodge North program and engages Indigenous youth in the build of a one-bedroom 10x30-foot modular home for donation to Matawa First Nations for use in a northern community.

During the build, the KZ Lodge students learned to read blueprints, studied the principles of carpentry, learned to identify numerous building materials, applied mathematics skills, and safely operated common power tools. The completion of the tiny home pilot project provides the young builders with Interdisciplinary Studies secondary school credits and the Working at Heights Certificate through the Carpenters’ Local Union 1669.



Partners of the program that have helped support it and ensuring it can continue to grow by supplying funding and/or building materials include Indigenous Services Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Smart Modular Canada, Home Depot, and many others.

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