

# Anishinabek Employment and Training Services

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## PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Aboriginal Group and Partners Collaboration Results in Developing Health Care Career Paths for Aboriginal Youth

January 26, 2017 --- Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS) in partnership with St. Joseph's Care Group and Confederation College, are proud to announce the completion of the Food Services Worker (FSW) and Personal Support Worker (PSW) Training Programs. The collaboration engaged 44 Aboriginal Learners with 30 successful graduates representing nine North Superior Region First Nation communities, which lead to (or will lead to) employment in the health sector.

The spring programs started on May 2, 2016 with accommodations and meals provided. The culturally aware and responsive program also involved an Elder, Facilitators/Instructors, a Program Co-ordinator and regular monitors to assist each of the learners. Graduates received FSW and PSW certificates and other related qualifications from Confederation College and/or other stakeholder partners, which allowed them to transition to employment immediately upon graduation.

“This partnership provided First Nation Citizens with the capacity to gain the skills and knowledge to realize their career potential. The collaboration has demonstrated the continued success in the development of tailored training programs, which meet the needs of the First Nation communities we serve,” said John DeGiacomo, Executive Director of AETS.

Mutually beneficial partnerships like this one with St. Joseph's Care Group and Confederation College have increased First Nation self-reliance and have contributed to ongoing improvements to the overall well being of First Nation individuals, families and communities in Northwestern Ontario. AETS and its partners were successful in securing the funding for the programs through the Indigenous Education Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

"This partnership has proven successful in removing barriers to education for Indigenous learners, and ultimately, has contributed to the majority of graduates finding meaningful employment upon graduation. This investment in education and training for the AETS communities, particularly for their youth, is critical to meeting the needs of the

healthcare sector and supporting economic growth in the region. We offer our sincere congratulations to the graduates for their accomplishment," said Don Bernosky, VP Workforce Development at Confederation College.

Upon completion of either program, graduates received an employer recognized certificate and most were considered for employment in the health care sector.

"St. Joseph's Care Group has been a proud partner in this holistic and supportive learning initiative with Anishinabek Employment and Training Services. We offer our sincere congratulations to the graduates, who are embarking on a rewarding and in-demand career in health care, helping people to live with dignity and respect." said Lisa Beckwick, Acting Vice-President, People, Mission and Values of St. Joseph's Care Group.

"Ontario is proud to have supported Anishinabek Employment and Training Services in its work to help Indigenous learners gain the skills needed to enter into a career path in the health care and food sectors. I'd like to congratulate the 30 graduates of the programs - I know you all have bright futures ahead of you." - Deb Matthews, Deputy Premier, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Digital Government.

"Opportunities such as the Target Initiatives Fund (TIF) funded through the Indigenous Education Branch (IEB) have allowed our organization to address a labour market demand with our citizens. Through our partnership with Confederation College and St. Joseph's Care Group, AETS was successful in securing \$629,430 through this program. The overwhelming support from this program has eliminated barriers many of our participants have faced in terms of education/training opportunities. AETS eagerly awaits future opportunities to further showcase the success of this initiative and the benefits our citizens receive," said Mandy Price, Proposal & Partnership Development Officer of AETS.

"The immediate entry into the work force for our graduates makes our initiatives worthwhile. Far too often we are faced with successful participants wondering "what now" and it's through our partnerships we were able to assist with that "what now". Graduates have said that our programs have opened doors for them to further their education. They don't want to just stop here. They want to work, get experience then go onto further post-secondary programs. It is our hope that all of our graduates will remain employed and gain the necessary experience," said Joni Michano, Program Co-ordinator of AETS.

"I enjoyed the FSW course and found employment immediately as a direct result. I am still employed with St. Joseph's Care Group, but as a casual employee because I am a full time student. My time spent in the FSW program learning something I was actually enthusiastic about doing convinced me to keep the momentum going. I am now in my first year of business and pleased with the choices I've made," said Alex Wawia, Graduate, Food Service Worker Program

Along with the success of our health programs, we are also pleased to unveil two promotional videos as well as program logos which were done in collaboration with Firedog Communications and HG Consulting.

"Our team at Firedog Communications was delighted to work with AETS, SJCG and Confederation College to showcase the training opportunities in the Health Care sector. We believe that the Health Care Pathways videos share inspiring stories of opportunity and achievement that can motivate people of all ages and backgrounds to pursue a career in Health Care," said Kristina Baraskewich, Account Manager of Firedog Communications.

"We were honored when AETS reached out to us to design the new logos for the Food Service and Personal Support Worker programs. We wish them all the best and look forward to working with their fantastic team again in the future," said Rob Mackinnon, HG Consulting.

"On behalf of AETS Board of Directors, I am happy to congratulate our staff, Confederation College and St Joseph's Care Group for their combined effort that has resulted in Pathways to Employment for our citizens. We look forward to the future of our Health programs to provide further opportunities to our citizens." said Matthew Dupuis, President of AETS.

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**Notes to Editors:**

The FSW and PSW Training Programs were funded by the Targeted Initiatives Fund through the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

**About the Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS)**

The vision of Anishinabek Employment and Training Services is to lead in the development of a skilled Aboriginal Workforce empowering the Anishinabek, respectful of culture and heritage. AETS was established in 1997 and has assisted First Nation Citizens for over fifteen years to stay in or re-enter the labour force. It acts as a Local Delivery Mechanism (LDM) under the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) Anishinabek Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy (ASETS), which includes nine member First Nation communities or over 8,000 First Nation citizens. For more information, visit [www.aets.org](http://www.aets.org)