



Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation and Mastercard Foundation Form Partnership to Empower Indigenous Youth

Truro, Nova Scotia – The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation (UICF) is supporting foundational change for Indigenous youth in Atlantic Canada. UICF, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, is making a significant investment to empower Indigenous youth and communities to envision and implement solutions in four key areas: harnessing the potential of youth leaders, promoting opportunities to access culture and language, building meaningful educational pathways, and supporting the transition to employment and entrepreneurship.

The UICF has been supporting youth-led programs since commencing operations in 2018. Bree Menge, a leader of several Indigenous youth-led projects in Eskasoni First Nation, N.S. says, “Being First Nation is a gift in itself, but having organizations such as UICF, who support our dreams, our goals, our visions, is a true blessing. The UICF is helping me to give back to my community in ways I thought impossible and is empowering the Mi’kmaq Nation to come together to celebrate our culture and sense of community. I am grateful for the partnerships that they have developed to ensure our youth receive opportunities to explore unique solutions to specific challenges.”

The UICF is related to Ulnooweg Development Group Inc. Now in its 35th year of operation, Ulnooweg Development Group is an established and innovative not-for-profit organization dedicated to the success

of Indigenous communities, individuals, and businesses of Atlantic Canada. The UICF is a charitable foundation that is taking a lead role in building and strengthening relationships with the philanthropic sector.

UICF, in collaboration with the Foundation, are supporting Nation Building among the Indigenous people in Atlantic Region. With the understanding that Indigenous communities and youth have the solutions to current and future challenges, this partnership offers a five-year commitment to supporting the implementation of those solutions.

Jennifer Brennan, Head, Canada Programs for the Mastercard Foundation, says, “We recognize the power of Indigenous youth as leaders, entrepreneurs, and agents of change for their communities, Nations, and Canada as a whole. The UICF plays an important and innovative role in supporting Indigenous youth and shows that Indigenous community foundations can be an effective vehicle to accelerate social and economic change aligned with the broader goals of Indigenous Nations and Nation Building.”

Chris Googoo, Executive Director for the UICF adds, “The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation is thrilled to partner with the Mastercard Foundation, enabling us to provide resources for innovative and solutions-focused youth initiatives leading the way for future change. Eight positions were created across Atlantic Canada as a result of this initiative, including five Youth Engagement Officers, a Learning Facilitator, a Partnership and Outreach Coordinator, and Culture and Language Coordinator. We are excited to support this project over the next five years and witness the change that unfolds.”

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About the Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation is a registered charity that is helping strengthen the relationships between Canada's philanthropic sector and the First Nations communities of Atlantic Canada. For more information, please visit: www.ulnoowegfoundation.ca

About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation works with visionary organizations to enable young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. It is one of the largest, private foundations in the world with a mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion to create an inclusive and equitable world. The Foundation was created by Mastercard in 2006 as an independent organization with its own Board of Directors and management. For more information on the Foundation, please visit: www.mastercardfdn.org