



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

February 12, 2019

### **Arctic Inspiration Prize awards over \$2.5 million to 5 teams across Canada's North**

WHITEHORSE – Five teams from across Canada's North were awarded a share of over \$2.5 million for their innovative projects to improve the quality of life in their communities during the Arctic Inspiration Prize awards ceremony tonight.

[Pirurvik: A Place to Grow](#), an innovative and comprehensive early childhood education program rooted in traditional child-rearing practices that aims to change the lives of children throughout Nunavut, received the top prize of \$1 million.

“In a territory where lasting impacts of the residential school system still affect our northern communities today, it is imperative that we change the experience for both parents and children when it comes to education. Engaging with Pirurvik as a first experience with education is essential to creating a strong, positive relationship between home and school for years to come,” said Tessa Lochhead, one of the leaders of the project, along with Karen Nutarak. “The program provides an early educational experience that is based on Inuit ways of knowing while building capacity in our communities for the benefit of the safety and health of our children.”

In addition to the \$1 million prize, three prizes were awarded in the AIP category that awards up to \$500,000 to each laureate team; and one prize was awarded in the Youth category, that awards up to \$100,000.

Nunami Sukuijainiq: A Youth Arctic Ecology Land Camp Program was awarded \$466,000 for its land-based and hands-on science education program designed for Nunavik youth. Youth from all Inuit communities in Nunavik have the opportunity to participate in Arctic ecology land camps which focus on marine and freshwater edible resources, hydrology, entomology, contaminants, permafrost and the ecology of lakes and plants in rapidly changing northern environments. Team Leaders: Eleonora Townley and Jeannie Annanack, Youth Committee Members, Kangiqsualujjuaq.

A team from Yukon working to address food insecurity in the North received \$500,000 for the [Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Teaching and Working Farm](#) Extended-Season Greenhouse Construction. The project partners, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) and Yukon College, will build an extended-

season cold-climate greenhouse, the first of its kind in Yukon, that will transform the existing farm into an operation capable of sustaining local production and providing experiential learning opportunities for up to 10 months of the year, even during some of the coldest periods of winter. The final design will also be deployable to other Yukon First Nations and Northern communities seeking to implement localized solutions to food security challenges. Team Leader: Derrick Hastings, TH Farm Manager.

The third winner in this category is Traditional Techniques Tweaked to Galvanize Indigenous Northern Artisans. The project was awarded \$500,000 to create an association of northern Indigenous artists and crafters from across the region to work at developing sustainable business ventures, improving local artisans' skills, ensuring authentic, high quality products, and building confidence as sustainable business owners. The end result will be an Indigenous-owned and operated venture with self-determined, quality products, prices, and markets that will support sustainable and culturally valuable lifestyles. Team Leader: Sue McNeil, Manager, Inuvialuit Community Economic Development Organization.

In the Youth category, this year's laureate is From Scrap to Art which, with its \$100,000 prize, will develop teaching materials, and set up a dedicated welding studio in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, where they can teach other young Northerners the skills of welding under the guidance of Inuit and Maori mentors and northern educators. The project aims to capture the innate creative brilliance of local youth and to help them forge intergenerational connections, develop practical and artistic skills, and confidently approach their futures with goals and a sense of identity – all while strengthening community wellness and pride. Team Leader, Andrew Kitigon, Cambridge Bay.

"The five laureates of the seventh annual Arctic Inspiration Prize are outstanding examples of northern teams with innovative ideas that will have lasting impacts in their communities and beyond," said Jason Annahatak, Chair of the Arctic Inspiration Prize Charitable Trust. "Their projects embody the true spirit of the Arctic Inspiration Prize and will undoubtedly advance the wellbeing and quality of life across Canada's North."

The Arctic Inspiration Prize awards ceremony was held in conjunction with the [Arctic Indigenous Investment Conference](#) (AIIIC 2019) at the Yukon Arts Centre in Whitehorse and featured the first ever pan-northern performance of Juno award winners Elisapie and Leela Gilday, along with Yukon's Diyet and special guest Wesley Hardisty.

As the largest annual prize in Canada with a focus on the Arctic, the Arctic Inspiration Prize (AIP) encourages, enables and celebrates the inspiring achievements of the people of the North. The AIP recognizes diverse teams and enables their innovative projects in the fields of education, sustainable housing, health, performing arts, traditional knowledge, language, and science. Each year, the AIP awards up to \$3 million: one \$1 million prize, up to four prizes of up to \$500,000 each, and up to seven youth prizes of up to \$100,000 each.

The AIP is owned and governed by the northern-led AIP Charitable Trust and supported by Indigenous organizations, governments, industry, philanthropy, and many other partners from the North and South, with management support provided by the Rideau Hall Foundation.

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