



Eabametoong First Nation

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MEDIA RELEASE

Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Members of Council Visit Eabametoong First Nation

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On May 4th and 5th, 2017, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Markham Regional Councillor Nirmala Armstrong, and Markham Councillor Logan Kanapathi visited the remote northern Ontario community of Eabametoong First Nation. This is their first visit to the community since signing a Cultural Collaboration Agreement in January. The purpose of their visit was to formally acknowledge their new relationship in Eabametoong First Nation territory and meet with community members to explore how the relationship can be developed in a mutually beneficial and respectful way.

Upon their arrival in Eabametoong, Mayor Scarpitti, Regional Councillor Armstrong and Councillor Kanapathi were greeted by Chief Elizabeth Atlookan, Council, and Band members with a welcoming song performed by hand drummers Elmer Atlookan, Kurt Atlookan and Steven Meeseetawageesic.

A pipe ceremony and feast were held, at which Mayor Scarpitti remarked that “Eabametoong First Nation is a dynamic community that has seen positive changes come about so far. Our hope is with the support and the partnership we will be able to further strengthen the relationship so that both our communities will benefit.”

The Cultural Collaboration Agreement between a northern First Nation and a southern Ontario city is, according to Chief Atlookan, “thinking out of the box, striving toward real goals as we put actions to truth and reconciliation.”

During their visit, the Markham delegation toured the Nursing Station, the JC Yesno Education Centre, the Detox Centre, the site for the Healing Lodge and the new community garden, as well as the new Sewing Circle Project.

Coincidentally, world-renowned fashion designer Linda Lundstrom was in the community at the same time, training Band members on state-of-the-art sewing equipment in preparation for a Cultural Tourism Showcase planned for June 2017. Through Linda Lundstrom's Sewing Circle Project and the Cultural Tourism Showcase, community members are striving to establish new business opportunities in this remote First Nation.

Funding for the garden, the Sewing Circle, and the Cultural Showcase has been generously supported through grants from the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

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left to right: Markham Regional Councillor Nirmala Armstrong, Eabametoong Councillors Steven Atlookan, Louie Sugarhead and Charlie Okeese, Chief Elizabeth Atlookan, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Councillor Logan Kanapathi, Kenneth Caplan



At the evening gathering and round table discussion



At the Community Breakfast