



**Ottawa – August 2, 2017**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Local Inuit organization receives funding from Hintonburg store for leadership program***

This Thursday an important local non-profit serving Ottawa’s Inuit community, Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI), will celebrate a cash donation from a local start-up retailer Maker House Co., who raises funds for community organizations through their Craft Change program. Customers at Maker House know that 2% of all sales from locally handmade goods at the store go to support local non-profits, with a new partner each quarter.

In early 2017 the owner of Maker House, Gareth Davies, approached the team at TI to see how the money could benefit their organization and local Inuit community. He was inspired by hardworking staff and a program called Ikajutigiit, a young women’s healing circle with artistic workshop elements. Now with a donation of \$3,070 from Maker House, TI is able to run an extra intake and cohort of this program with 10 young women and future leaders.

“This donation will go towards the next round of programing that will engage young Inuit women in arts-based programing and crafts that will support the sharing of cultural knowledge, narratives and skills.” said Jennisha Wilson Manager, Alluriarniq Program Exiting Prostitution and Anti-Human Trafficking who ran the program with the help of Ms. Jennifer Switzer and many staff. Mr. Davies and the team at Maker House shares the good feeling. “It gives more meaning

to what we do as a store, when we are able to share the proceeds with amazing organizations like TI, doing important work on the ground in our City.”

“I’m very pleased to see community support in the form of a donation such as this and a partnership that supports cultural healing for a vulnerable population. As a registered charity, T.I. is always in need of non-government funding to address service gaps and we are very thankful for this contribution from Maker’s House” said Jason LeBlanc Executive Director of T.I.

All media are invited to the store at 987 Wellington St. W. in Hintonburg this Thursday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm, for a cheque presentation and opportunity to learn more from leaders of TI and Maker House.

They are available for interviews, at the contact info below, in the meantime.

**Gareth Davies, Maker House Co., 613-805-2453, [gareth@makerhouse.com](mailto:gareth@makerhouse.com)**

**Jason LeBlanc, Executive Director, Tungasuvvingat Inuit, 613-565-5885 ext. 215, [exec-dir@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca](mailto:exec-dir@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca)**

What is Ikajutigiit?

The 'Ikajutigiit' project: young Inuit women caring for each other. This title has value and meaning for young Inuit women experiencing violence as it speaks to their resiliency and strength when navigating such difficult situations. As a means of disturbing cycles of violence, this project aims to create a safe space for young Inuit women to participate in culturally appropriate healing practices and professional and personal skill development workshops that will increase their self-esteem and promote positive relationship building. Utilizing the arts-based methodology of Photovoice the participants in the project will take part in creating a community resource manual that will situate their images and stories around violence and resiliency to support interventions and safety planning that are based in harm reduction, healing and Inuit cultural practices. To date we have successfully completed 1 cycle of the project with 10 participants between the ages of 16-25 years.