



# News Release

For Immediate Release

## 2018 United for Life Gathering for Suicide Prevention leads to community empowerment and action

**BAKER LAKE, Nunavut (September 13, 2018)** – A three-day United for Life gathering for Suicide Prevention, organized by the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) partners, brought together more than 100 stakeholders including Elders, community wellness leaders, Inuit organizations, businesses, treatment organizations and survivors. Participants worked to strengthen networks, heal and learn from each other, and empower community-led action.

Prior to the gathering, and in support of *Inuusivut Anninaqtuq's* commitment #3 “*We Will Support Youth Resilience*”, over 30 youth, aged 17-25, took part in activities and workshops over the weekend before participating in the main event.

On the final day, a ceremonial signing took place by all NSPS partners in support of the opening of the Umingmak Child and Youth Support Centre, a child advocacy centre slated to open in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

“Community-led action is the foundation of positive change and collective resilience,” said Minister of Health George Hickes. “I had the pleasure of spending the last three days with dedicated community leaders and stakeholders from across the territory who I know will make a difference in the lives of young Nunavummiut. The symbolic signing of support for the Umingmak Child and Youth Support Centre is an important step in our commitment to improve the health and well-being of children and youth in Nunavut.”

“Inuit are resilient. I know that Nunavut youth will continue to courageously share their voice to make life better in Nunavut. The United for Life gathering provided space for youth to discuss the process of community healing, not only with each other but also in our languages. Not only was their innate strength acknowledged but they also became aware of other supportive tools and avenues available to them. It is important that we create safe spaces to discuss heavy issues.” said NTI President Aluki Kotierk.

“The RCMP is engaged and fully committed to collaborating with the communities we serve, our partners and stakeholders in suicide prevention, with the goal of enhancing the well-being of Nunavummiut.” said Commanding Officer C/Supt. Mike Jeffrey. “Suicide affects us all, almost everyone knows of someone affected by this tragedy. It's only by us all working together that we will be effective at identifying and assisting those in need.”



“I was extremely happy to see our youth involved and engaged throughout this summit. Recognizing and involving youth in our decision-making processes is about more than engaging young people for the sake of inclusivity. It’s about meaningful involvement, control and ensuring they are connected to all the work we are doing to embrace life. I encourage youth to continue staying involved in our efforts as they make a positive difference” said David Lawson, Embrace Life Council President.

United for Life gatherings are a direct result of jury recommendation from the coroner’s inquest into suicide in September 2015 that called for increased engagement of stakeholders. These gatherings provide partners and stakeholders with the opportunity to further engage and understand intergenerational experiences that support and empower community-based suicide prevention projects.

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