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THE ARRIVAL OF A HYDROPONIC GROWING CONTAINER IN INUKJUAK

The Pirursiivik Project combines social art and on-the-land activities to improve the health of Inukjuammiut through a local greenhouse and the promotion of healthy practices around water and nutrition.

INUKJUAK, October 29, 2020 – The arrival of a hydroponic growing container in Inukjuak is a significant milestone in the Pirursiivik Project, and one of the first phases of a larger collaboration with the Pituvik Landholding Corporation (LHC) and Sirivik Food Centre to use a year-round greenhouse and container farm to grow, cook and share food and knowledge among the community. Over the past three years, the One Drop Foundation and Makivik Corporation have partnered with the RBC Foundation to implement the Pirursiivik Project in Inukjuak, Nunavik.

The Pirursiivik Project, meaning “a place to grow” in Inuktitut, is a 4-year initiative which aims to improve the community’s health through the implementation of a greenhouse and a social art program to promote healthy habits around water and nutrition. This project represents a \$2.7-million community investment between the RBC Foundation and the One Drop Foundation.

The arrival of the hydroponic container farm on October 11, 2020, is a significant milestone in this ambitious project yet is only the tip of the iceberg. The true success of this initiative lies under the waterline: the community mobilization and leadership at each step of the project. From day one, the community of Inukjuak stepped up to take concrete action towards improving access to fresh produce for Inukjuammiut. A Community Advisory Committee with representatives from over 15 local organizations was established, and this group of volunteers has continued to meet monthly to provide key input on project activities and planning.

The hydroponic container which uses water to grow instead of soil was purchased from The Growcer, a Canadian company established in Ottawa, and will be locally owned and operated. It will soon be installed and begin producing leafy greens this winter with the target to share the first harvest with the community. The fresh produce will be available to community members who, through social art activities, have learned fun new ways to use little-known vegetables such as kale and bok choy.

This growing initiative in Inukjuak was first piloted on a smaller scale, when the Pirursiivik Project supported the construction of and growing in seven community cold frames (outdoor garden boxes made of wood and polycarbonate). These were built using materials donated by the Kativik Ilisarniliriniq and constructed by the Environment Club at the Innalik School, and the Unaaq Men’s Association.

With this new hydroponic container farm adapted for the Arctic, the community is now ready to take this next step towards increasing food security and access to fresh local produce grown by and for Inukjuammiut. This is the first phase in a larger collaboration with Pituvik Landholding Corporation and Sirivik Food Centre, a year-round greenhouse and Food Centre in which to grow, cook, and share food and knowledge among the community. The project team is currently identifying fundraising opportunities to secure the \$6 million needed to advance this next phase. This innovative multifunctional infrastructure would be the first of its kind in the North and would set a precedent for future greenhouse initiatives in Nunavik and across the Arctic.

About the Pirursiivik Project

Over the past 3 years, almost 1,000 community members have participated in various social art and on-the-land activities, from drumming and cooking classes to a nature trip to identify and document knowledge related to local plant species. A circus show was created by Tupiq ACT, the first Inuit circus troupe from Nunavik, with the support of the project and technical assistance from One Drop (including advice and accompaniment throughout the process). These activities, inspired by Inuit culture and art, were not only fun and entertaining, but also created



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spaces for shared learning and exchange on traditional foods, nutrition, and the importance of clean water. Collective learning and sharing that will continue both in-person and online through the digital knowledge hub currently in development with the support of a grant from RBC Tech for Nature. Learn more about the project at www.onedrop.org/en/projects/canada

About One Drop

One Drop™ is an international foundation created by Cirque du Soleil and Lune Rouge founder Guy Laliberté with the vision of a better world, where all have access to living conditions that allow empowerment and development. Together with its partners, One Drop deploys its unique artistic approach to promote the adoption of healthy water, sanitation, and hygiene-related behaviours and empower communities. For this to be possible, One Drop creates and produces novel fundraising initiatives supported by a visionary community of partners and donors. This year, One Drop is celebrating 13 years of turning water into action, with projects that will soon have improved the living conditions of over 2.1 million people around the world. In 2019, the Foundation was recognized for the second year in a row by Charity Intelligence, this time as one of the Top 10 International Impact Charities in Canada. To learn more about One Drop, visit www.onedrop.org Interact with One Drop on Facebook and Twitter @onedrop, or on Instagram @1dropwater

About Makivik Corporation

Makivik Corporation is the land claims organization mandated to manage the heritage funds of the Inuit of Nunavik provided for under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. Makivik's role includes the administration and investment of these funds and the promotion of economic growth by providing assistance for the creation of Inuit-operated businesses in Nunavik. Makivik promotes the preservation of Inuit culture and language as well as the health, welfare, relief of poverty, and education of Inuit in the communities.

About Pituvik Landholding Corporation

Incorporated January 30, 1979, Pituvik holds title to 521 sq. km. on lands classified as Category I. These lands are held by Pituvik on behalf of the Inukjuaqmiut beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. In this holding capacity, Pituvik has the right to allow people and organizations to use these lands and for that use is allowed to charge compensation. Pituvik also maintains a beneficiary list on behalf of all Inukjuakmiut. Pituvik is a not-for-profit corporation, however it can create and own for-profit subsidiaries to stimulate local economic growth and job creation.

About RBC Tech for Nature

RBC Tech for Nature is a global, multi-year commitment from the RBC Foundation to support new ideas, technologies, and partnerships to address our most complex environmental challenges. It is a core pillar of RBC's [Climate Blueprint](#) – its enterprise approach to accelerating clean economic growth and supporting clients in the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. RBC Tech for Nature brings together charitable partners, technology experts, the public and private sector – as well as RBC's own unique capabilities – to build the multi-partner coalitions needed to work towards solving our shared environmental challenges. Learn more at: rbc.com/techfornature

About The Growcer

Growcer manufactures modular hydroponic systems that enable commercial food production in plug-and-play 40-foot modules. Its vertical farming technology enables customers to grow fresh vegetables in virtually any climate and has been deployed within the Arctic Circle at temperatures below -50°C. Growcer empowers conventional farmers, entrepreneurs, communities and institutions to grow food locally all year round. Growcer's work has been



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recognized with awards from Fast Company's World Changing Ideas, the Entrepreneurs' Organization, and was also featured on season 13 of CBC's hit show, Dragons' Den.

Media Resource Contact

One Drop Foundation

Marie-France Dos Santos

Marie-France.DosSantos@onedrop.org

Makivik Corporation

Carson Tagoona

CTagoona@makivik.org