



News Release

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Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation funds outdoor arbour for new St. Frances Cree Bilingual School

Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation (DDCDC) has committed \$250,000 for an outdoor arbour for St. Frances Cree Bilingual School.

The announcement was made at the construction site of the new replacement school on the corner of Grosvenor Avenue and 7th Street East in Saskatoon. Representatives from DDCDC, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, parents, and students were present to explain the purpose and significance of the arbour. There were also Indigenous cultural demonstrations to exemplify the arbour's purpose.

The *pwātsiwakamik* outdoor gathering space will allow the school to host cultural ceremonies and events such as mini powwows and round dances. It will also serve as a valuable teaching space for students and staff to learn and perform traditional cultural practices.

"We are supporting the St. Frances powwow arbour venue to enhance culturally-informed education," said Saskatoon Tribal Council Tribal Chief and DDCD Board Chair Mark Arcand. "It's to strengthen our traditions, celebrate our culture and encourage community members to learn, share, and pass along knowledge to future generations."

"Having this designated space at the new school will be such an important part of learning for students at the new St. Frances Cree Bilingual School," said Diane Boyko, Board of Education chair for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. "Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, we have all learned about the harsh realities of how our First Peoples were treated. It's not that long ago that speaking their language and practicing ceremonies and celebrations like powwows was illegal in Canada. This arbour will be a significant step in our journey of responding to the TRC's Calls to Action and enabling First Nation's students, families and staff to reclaim and revitalize language, culture, tradition and ceremony. We're very grateful for Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation's contribution to help make this possible."

Photographs area available for media use at

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/1zagxcwczb1brdk0oymp/ADDuSFEfu5MAJzJ-yAlPMEE?rlkey=195j480iclgln3eydlgkw1d1&st=7yj1h0pu&dl=0>

St. Frances Cree Bilingual School is home to Canada's largest Indigenous language program. Having outgrown its current spaces, construction of the replacement school on the corner of Grosvenor Avenue and 7th Street, the former site of Sion Middle School, is expected to be done in the fall of 2025. The Government of Saskatchewan funds construction of new schools, but various aspects of schools, such as specialized learning spaces, cultural spaces, or playgrounds,

are not funded. Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has been seeking donors to fund parts of the school determined as critical to the school, but not core parts of government funding.

Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation (DDCDC) is a First Nation-owned and operated grant funding organization committed to investing in Saskatoon and area communities and affiliated First Nations. DDCDC funds projects across 10 different categories including education, senior and youth programs, cultural development, recreation facilities and more.

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