



## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Tasha Albert, Marketing Coordinator  
780-849-8610  
[tasha.albert@northernlakescollege.ca](mailto:tasha.albert@northernlakescollege.ca)

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### **AFFORDABLE STUDENT HOUSING CELEBRATION, DONATION ANNOUNCED**

SLAVE LAKE- Enrollments are soaring and the demand for affordable student housing is at a peak, especially for those looking for training in trades and health careers. Construction of the student residence complex was celebrated in Slave Lake today.

Marking the celebration was the announcement of a major gift from a local family. Joe Mouallem and family gifted Northern Lakes College \$100,000 towards the new student housing. In honour of the donation the facilities will be called Mouallem Student Residence. The Mouallem family felt that it was important to leave a legacy supporting students and reducing barriers to accessing education. In addition to the Mouallem donation, the Northern Lakes College Student Association gave \$19,500 on behalf of the students.

"The name Mouallem happens to mean 'teacher' or 'educator of knowledge'," said Joey Mouallem, speaking on behalf of the Mouallem family. "With education we have security and we will always be able to provide for our family. We want to give students the gift of knowledge, the gift of security. Education and knowledge provides opportunity. Knowledge opens many doors, but you and you alone have to walk through that door." Mr. Mouallem went on to say, "what I saw today in the Students' Housing far exceeded my expectations."

The Hon. Pearl Calahasen, MLA Lesser Slave Lake, conveyed the importance of the student housing complex for those wishing to access training in the north. "One of the biggest things I heard when I was campaigning was a lack of housing for students to come to Northern Lakes College in Slave Lake. Today is a really great day. To the Mouallem family, you really make me proud." Mrs. Calahasen brought greetings from the Hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Yvonne Fritz.

Northern Lakes College Board of Governors' Chair, Trevor Gladue, acknowledged the importance of partnerships. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank those that have helped make the student housing a reality" said Mr. Gladue. "In particular, the Alberta Government, Town of Slave Lake and MD of Lesser Slave River; Paul Kuzel, Housing and Urban Affairs Project Advisor; Balon Construction and the Northern Lakes College Board of Governors, management and staff."

Northern Lakes College President & CEO, Rick Neidig, recognized the Mouallem's' generous contribution, "The Mouallem's' have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring educational access to

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**Northern Lakes College**  
1201 Main Street  
Slave Lake, Alberta T0G 2A3  
[www.northernlakescollege.ca](http://www.northernlakescollege.ca)

northern learners. The Moullem Student Residence will greatly assist northern learners access a broad range of programs close to home.”

The project, that will primarily provide 52 beds for trades, apprenticeship and other northern students, is the result of joint applications by the Town and Northern Lakes College for a \$3.1 million grant administered through the province’s Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Neidig went on to say “local municipal governments were also supportive of the project from the beginning. They recognized the value in this type of community project.” While this grant covers 70% of the total cost, the Northern Lakes College Board of Governors has made a commitment to the construction of the project through a combination of funds from other sources, including fundraising.

Northern Lakes College has campuses in over 30 communities across north-central Alberta. Programs range from upgrading to careers, from university to apprenticeship trades. Flexible learning opportunities include full time or part time options. As well many classes are offered to students online or using various technologies including video conferencing.

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