

Plaisance, Quebec – 9 June 2022  
For immediate release



## SEWING SKILLS LAB: A \$25 000 investment to support sewing in KITIGAN ZIBI school



Students at Kikinamadinan School in the Algonquin community of Kitigan Zibi (Maniwaki, QC) showcased their impressive skills and talent for the textile arts during a year-end fashion show and exhibit today. During this event, they were delighted to hear of big news coming to their school: a high-end sewing skills lab for the 2022-23 school year, representing a \$25 000 investment in the school's existing sewing program.

Alison Commando, Career Counsellor at the school, welcomed the news with great enthusiasm: "These machines are a terrific addition to our Aki Kikinamagewin program. With them, we will be able to create beautiful ribbon shirts and ribbon skirts and sew hides. Migwech for this generous donation!"

**The Sew & Sew Program was launched by I Love First Peoples (ILFP), a national non-profit based in the Outaouais,** in 2020 after a successful pilot by Art for Aid founder Colleen Gray. Today, Sew & Sew is supported by international companies who make the success of this program possible.

The skills lab delivered to Kitigan Zibi on Wednesday represents ILFP's biggest lab yet, comprised of 20 Janome 2030 QDC machines, as well as an annual supply of quality fabrics and notions gathered from donors across Ontario and Quebec through the partnership of Janome, Rotary Clubs and Art for Aid. The machines are sophisticated yet sturdy for a classroom environment, and able to sew hides and canvas. As part of their initial three-year commitment, Janome Canada generously contributes 60 of these machines each year to supply the Sew & Sew program and establish labs across northern communities.

ILFP has also been selected as a global partner of PVH, the parent company of Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, as well as Monat Gratitude and the American Eagle Foundation. The amazing people behind these international brands actively support the Sew & Sew Program to help youth access opportunities in the fashion industry.

While ILFP works with communities across Canada and has now served 90 remote communities, it began in 2013 at the Kitiganik School in Barriere Lake (Rapid Lake), Quebec, until 2019, working alongside Ms. Shirley Whiteduck, former principal of the school and board member of ILFP, who now works in Kitigan Zibi.

Art for Aid is a program under the ILFP banner that provides remote community schools with quality art supplies and supports land-based learning programs.

For more information about ILFP and the Sew & Sew Program, visit [www.ilfp.ca](http://www.ilfp.ca).

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