

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The North West Company congratulates Community Champions from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories

Winnipeg, MB, March 09, 2016 – In small, remote communities such as, Naujaat, NU and Tuktoyaktuk, NT, community programs rely heavily on the dedication of volunteers – volunteers like Darcie Bernhardt and Suzanne Putulik.

Throughout January, Northern/NorthMart ran a contest on the company’s Facebook page asking customers to help recognize the positive contributions being made to their community and nominate a Community Champion in the categories of *Healthy Living* and *Youth Leadership*. Two finalists were to be recognized as Community Champions and awarded with an all-expense paid trip to Winnipeg to watch a Winnipeg Jets home game.

Out of the 50 nominations that Northern/NorthMart received, from communities, such as: Cat Lake, ON Rigolet, NL; Cumberland House, SK; and Churchill, MB, Darcie Bernhardt, from Tuktoyaktuk, NT and Suzanne Putulik, from Naujaat, NU were selected as Community Champions and were hosted by the North West Company in Winnipeg.

The *Champions* each took part in different activities including a tour of The North West Company head office, a trip to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and local shopping.

“This was a great opportunity for us to connect with communities and share the stories of youth that have made a difference in the communities they live in. We are proud to help share Darcie and Suzanne’s stories and hope that they motivate and encourage others to follow in their footsteps.” said Christine Reimer, Vice President, Sales & Operations at North West.

The busy day was capped off with an exciting Winnipeg Jets game. Equipped with their Jets gear and fan sign, Darcie and Suzanne enjoyed the game from the suite level seats.

“It’s so different than what you see on TV – it’s awesome!” said Suzanne.

“All of it has been so great! The Museum, the game – they have both been incredible experiences.” added Darcie.



Left- Darcie Bernhardt, Right – Suzanne Putulik

About Suzanne

Suzanne, from Naujaat NU, was awarded the title of *Youth Leader Champion* for her commitment to her school and peers. As a youth leader, she started a soccer club to teach her peers soccer skills. She also spends countless hours volunteering at the school. Three nights a week Suzanne babysits in the prenatal clinic, allowing her peers to attend classes. She is very involved in the school's graduation celebrations and at times will simply come into the office help with reception duties and tidy up. Suzanne is also the only female volunteer firefighter in Naujaat.

Nominated by her vice-principal, she is described as a role model for the students in Tusarvik School and Naujaat.

About Darcie

Darcie Bernhardt, from Tuktoyaktuk NT, was awarded the title of *Healthy Living Champion* for her fitness program – Tuk Power. For the past year and a half she has led the only fitness program in the community 3 – 4 days a week. As the program coordinator, she leads community members through circuit training fitness classes and provides advice on nutrition, and at home exercise and stretching.

Nominated by two community members, she is described as outgoing, motivational and well respected in the community.

Darcie is 22 years old and aspires to become a RCMP police officer.

About The North West Company

North West is a retailer serving rural communities and urban neighbourhoods in Canada, Alaska, the South Pacific and Caribbean. We are committed to helping our customers live better by bringing them the best products and services together with a tradition of community support. North West's Northern and NorthMart stores are the largest local private employer of indigenous people in Canada, with over 3,100 employees and an annual payroll exceeding \$65 million.

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