

MARTIN PLEDGES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO AID STUDENTS AT “SPECIAL” OSKAYA

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Perhaps not unexpectedly when a former prime minister is in the house, it tends to gather a crowd. Such was certainly the event on October 12 when the Right Honourable Paul Martin was the headline attraction in tandem with a host of other dignitaries at Oskayak High School in Saskatoon where they were fittingly joined by the student body of this unique school.

It was no coincidence that this school (part of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools) was chosen as the latest recipient of a \$75,000 contribution via the Martin Aboriginal Initiative that was established by Martin and his family after he left political life in 2006.

As a longtime champion of working toward betterment of opportunities for First Nations and Métis youth, Martin was joined by corporate heavyweights RBC Royal Bank, who have been an integral part of the initiative by having committed \$300,000 from the RBC Foundation to six schools across Canada, the most recent being Oskayak.

In making the announcement, Martin praised Oskayak staff and students, referring to the predominantly Aboriginal high school as “a special and unique school where you can see the dedication that makes this a very unique partnership in all of Canada,” adding that it’s an example others would do well to follow.

With partners like RBC, part of Martin’s two-pronged initiative includes the Capital for Aboriginal Prosperity and Entrepreneurship, which is a \$50 million private-sector investment fund with participation from 21 of Canada’s leading companies and international foundations. The Fund invests in diverse industries and regions, with its mission to promote entrepreneurial values among Aboriginal people.

Meanwhile, the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative is a charitable organization that has initiated various education projects designed to provide Aboriginal Canadians with the opportunities they need to succeed. This includes the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program designed to encourage Aboriginal youth to stay in School.

Oskayak becomes the second program in Saskatchewan, following the one initiated at Scott Collegiate in Regina in 2010.

Martin exhorted the students in the crowd to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the program underscoring that whatever career path they might choose, the overriding importance is to gain an understanding of how the economy works.

“That is what this is all about– it enables you to see beyond the walls of your school or your province or country. I hope you allow this program to flourish; but it’s up to you to take advantage of it.”

“We came here because this is a special school,” Martin said. “The world today is undergoing a fundamental change and you will have every opportunity to participate in the future so I encourage you to embrace it.”