



**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES COMMENDS
2010 NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER
ÉDITH CLOUTIER**

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, ON, November 23, 2009 – For the third year in a row, the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Public Service has been awarded to a Friendship Centre Movement pioneer. On November 17th 2009, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) announced that Édith Cloutier has won this prestigious designation. Last year, this award went to Joan Glode, NAFC Senator. In 2008, the very same award went to Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC).

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) is especially pleased that the Executive Director of the Val d’Or Native Friendship Centre will receive this highest honour that the Aboriginal community bestows on its achievers.

“Edith Cloutier is an extraordinary leader from the Friendship Centre Movement,” said NAFC President Vera Pawis Tabobondung. “We rely upon her expertise, dedication and strength of spirit to help guide us as a Movement.”

Remarkably, Édith Cloutier started as the Executive Director of the Val d'Or Native Friendship Centre (VDNFC) at the age of 23 years old. Since that time, Édith has won many awards of distinction herself, and her leadership has also helped VDNFC win its own awards including an Honourable Mention Awards of Excellence Network for Health and Social Services (2004), and the Prix Quebecois citizenship Anne-Greenup (2002). Ms. Cloutier's perseverance, natural leadership, and passion have helped VDNFC grow to one of the largest Friendship Centres in a network of 118 across Canada.

“Friendship Centres have always valued the immense contributions that people such as Édith make to the Movement,” said Peter Dinsdale, NAFC Executive Director. “Édith is certainly deserving of such a distinguished honour, and we are privileged to have her as a part of our Friendship Centre family.”

The National Association of Friendship Centres extends immense congratulations to all winners of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Your perseverance, fortitude and dedication to the betterment of Aboriginal peoples' lives helps to create a legacy of hope for our upcoming generations of Aboriginal leaders. For the full list of winners, please visit: www.naaf.ca.

As Canada's largest infrastructure of Aboriginal service delivery providers, NAFC advocates for the needs of urban First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

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For more information please contact:

Geraldine King, Communications Officer, NAFC

(613) 563-4844 ext 328 or mobile (613) 296-6234 or [gking @ nafc.ca](mailto:gking@nafc.ca) (no spaces)