

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

A 1.2-ton Rock to Foster Inuit Culture

FIVE ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES TO BUILD A GIANT QULLIK AT THE UPCOMING NUNAVIK RECOVERY CENTRE

Kuujjuaq (February 22, 2022) – This year, the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre will fulfill a cherished dream of its board of directors: the construction of a giant *qullik* in the lobby of its new centre. The *Qullialuk*, or “giant Inuit lamp” in Inuktitut, is an exceptional initiative for the region and it was made possible thanks to the commitment of five organizations, Glencore/Raglan Mine, Air Inuit, Avataq Cultural Institute, EVOQ Architecture, and Canadian North. Thanks to them and the Canada Council for the Arts, the *Qullialuk* project will be completed in time for the opening of the new centre in 2023.

Led by a committee of regional artists as well as representatives from Isuarsivik, Avataq Cultural Institute and Evoq Architecture, the *Qullialuk* project will highlight the talent of Mattiusi Iyaituk, a renowned Inuit carver from Ivujivik, and rising artist Benjamin Isaac.

“I am honoured to create a giant artwork that will serve as a welcoming point for my fellow Inuit in their healing journey. After more than forty years of practice, it's the first time I use my expertise to carve such a majestic piece. I thank Isuarsivik for giving me the opportunity to leave such a beautiful legacy for the region,” says artist Mattiusi Iyaituk proudly.

A true symbol of resilience, warmth, and light, the Inuit lamp will be made from a 1.2-ton soapstone graciously offered by Raglan Mine. The “rock hunt” was conducted by two artists working for Raglan Mine as the project needed a beautifully shaped and textured ore-free stone that would not crumble during carving work. Finding the perfect rock was a team effort. Jimmy Uqaituk, a geological technician at Raglan Mine from Puvirnituq, initiated the project. Another key member of this hunt is Isaac Sala, a dishwashing attendant at Raglan Mine from Kuujjuarapik.

“What a fabulous experience to have been able to analyze the different stones available in our ore-free pit. We did dozens of solidity tests on the stones and finally settled on a modest 2,700-pound piece! This special day will be one to remember and I am excited to see the unveiling in Kuujjuaq,” says Isaac Sala.

At the end of December 2021, one of the most meticulous and risky tasks of the project was successfully completed when the soapstone was transported from Raglan Mine to Montreal, a logistic stop before its transport to Kuujuaq. Thanks to Air Inuit, the 1.2-ton rock was delivered to the warehouse on December 24th.

"As Nunavik's official airline, it was natural for us to make the most of the expertise of our cargo crew to handle the rock with care and confidence. The Qullialuk project is a first-time initiative for Nunavik and it is a privilege for us to be part of success stories like Isuarsivik," says Noah Tayara, Executive Chairman of Air Inuit.

The *Qullialuk* project is one of the many initiatives that will promote Inuit culture and practices at the new Nunavik's healing centre. The Avataq Cultural Institute has been providing significant support to the cultural and artistic components of these projects, specifically our Inuit lamp creation. The outstanding collaboration of EVOQ Architecture, the creators of the new centre's design and plans, also proved fundamental for the project's feasibility. Thanks to them, the *Qullialuk* will find its rightful place in the building lobby, in compliance with norms and construction plans.

The artists will finish carving the stone in Kuujuaq in 2022 and the flames that will inhabit the lamp, fuelled by an ethanol burner, will come to life in 2023. Canadian North will provide air transportation for committee members and various supporters to attend the unveiling ceremony.

About Isuarsivik

Founded in 1994, the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre is a Kuujuaq-based non-profit community organization that provides a culturally focused 42-day healing program to Nunavimmiut to enhance their inner strength and wellbeing. The organization is recognized within the 14 communities as an essential solution to the region's many challenges and as an invaluable source of assistance for people with substance abuse problems. Thanks to over 25 years of experience, Isuarsivik stands out for its integrated knowledge, its competent and experienced team, and its holistic approach to assist Nunavimmiut in their healing process.

— 30 —

If you need more information or would like to schedule an interview, please contact:

Marie-Hélène Caron

Coordinator, Communications and Regional Awareness, Isuarsivik
T. 418-905-1193/communications@isuarsivik.ca

Véronique Décoste

Coordinator, Community Relations, Raglan Mine
T. 514-206-3515/veronique.decoste@glencore.ca

Caroline Frappier

Advisor, Internal Communications, Air Inuit
T. 514-905-9445/caroline.frappier@airinuit.com