



Media Release - For immediate distribution

## Province-wide distribution of 25,000 energy efficiency kits to Ontario First Nations households nears completion

**Six Nations Territory Energy Efficiency Kit distribution guaranteed by involvement of Gil & Essie Martin's *Walk with Me for Diabetes* program**

(Oshweken, Ontario, Nov. 29, 2007) This summer and fall an army of students and volunteers fanned out across Ontario First Nations communities to deliver **Mana-cha-toon Wash-ti-ni-gun** or **Conserve the Light** (CTL) energy efficiency kits.

The Conserve the Light project has delivered energy conservation kits to almost all of the 25,000 on-reserve homes in over 100 communities across Ontario. The final few communities such as Six Nations will be completed by year end. Each kit includes easy-to-install compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs, faucet aerators, pipe wraps, fridge and freezer thermometers, a low flow shower head, an outdoor timer for Christmas lights and other devices that will result in immediate reductions in energy use. Electricity conservation is critical for many remote communities with power often provided by diesel generators that require fuel delivered by aircraft or winter roads, both expensive procedures.

The Conserve the Light concept was developed to reduce electricity consumption in First Nation communities. The program is being run by Charles Fox Consulting of Thunder Bay, with funding from the Ontario Power Authority. CTL is part of the Provincial Energy Efficiency & Conservation Measures for Aboriginal Communities (EEMAC) initiative

An excellent example of how the kits are being distributed can be found on the Six Nations territory, where a team from Gil & Essie Martin's *Walk with Me for Diabetes* organization is quarterbacking the kit delivery. During a site visit, last weekend Mr Fox noted, "Gil Martin's annual effort to raise money to increase awareness of Diabetes is well respected in this community. The same focus that he, Essie and his team bring to fighting diabetes is now extended to getting these energy saving kits into peoples hands."



Photo (clockwise from bottom left): Essie Martin, Gil Martin, Cam Statt

Speaking from the Community Minded Spirit Action Building, near Oshweken (south of Hamilton/near Caledonia), Mr Martin stated, “Whether educating people about Diabetes or energy conservation it is important that everyone in the community is involved. Here, every household will have a kit delivered; they can install it and make an immediate cut to their electricity bill.”

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Mr Martin joked, “Any money people save on their electricity bill, they can donate to the Walk With Me program to fight Diabetes in our community.”

Mr. Fox, whose office is located on the Fort William First Nation (near Thunder Bay), observed, “Gil, Essie and their volunteer team are already ahead of their delivery schedule. Over the next few weeks, every Six Nations household will receive one of a total of 2,969 kits being shipped there. In fact, when the group has completed their task, they will have delivered more kits than any other distribution team in the Province.”

Mr Fox stated, “Kits have been delivered from as far north as the coast of James Bay, and south to locations on the coast of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. We have used planes from native owned Wasaya Airlines in the far north, as well as trucks, trains, cars, boats, and now the volunteers from Gil and Essie Martin’s Walk with Me for Diabetes team.”

Fox concluded, “The kits are resulting in energy savings, but more importantly, there is now a much higher level of activity and interest in energy conservation in First Nations communities. We need to revitalize our conservation culture, a culture that is based on our traditional teachings.”

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**For more about the Conserve the Light program, to arrange interviews or receive digital images of the Energy Efficiency kits, the Six Nations team, or Charles Fox, Contact: Don Huff, Environmental Communication Options, 416-972-7404 or *huffd (at) huffstrategy.com***

**For information on the Six Nation distribution contact:**

**Gil Martin at Walk With Me for Diabetes, (519) 445-4094 & Cam Staats at (519) 732-5705 or**

**Charles Fox, Charles Fox Consulting Inc., (807) 622-8008**

*This initiative is part of the Provincial **Energy Efficiency & Conservation Measures for Aboriginal Communities (EEMAC)** program launched in Thunder Bay at the Mana-cha-toon Wash-ti-ni-gun (Conserve the Light) Gathering last May. The Gathering was attended by over 130 representatives from 65 First Nation communities; EEMAC is funded by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA).*

*The **Ontario Power Authority** is working directly with First Nation communities on a range of initiatives, including long-term systems planning, and is committed to ensuring that First Nation communities have access to the tools to participate in Ontario’s growing culture of conservation, in a manner that complements First Nations values and heritages.*

*In addition to the distribution of the Energy Conservation Kits, five Ontario First Nation communities are undertaking community energy retrofits and benchmarking projects: Anishinaabeg of Naongashiing and Stanjikoming (both near Fort Frances), Slate Falls (near Sioux Lookout), and Sheshegwaning and Sheguiandah (both on Manitoulin Island).*