



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RECRUITING APPLICANTS - HEAD START FOR YOUNG WOMEN GRAND FORKS JOINS SIX COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA IN FCM PILOT PROJECT TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

GRAND FORKS, BRITISH COLUMBIA –Grand Forks City Council and Councillor Cher Wyers join other members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and local leaders from across Canada in meeting face to face with young girls in their communities to discuss civic issues, as part of efforts to increase the participation of women in municipal government. Recruitment for girls ages 16-24 has started with an orientation session held November 28th at the public library.

FCM has launched an innovative new program called Head Start for Young Women, which is funded by Status of Women Canada. Under the program, young women from six Canadian communities will work with their local elected officials to identify and address barriers that limit opportunities for young women to participate in municipal decision-making. The following communities have been selected to participate in the program: Grand Forks, BC; London, ON; Ottawa, ON; Gatineau, QC; Bathurst, NB; and, Rigolet, LB.

“I recently saw an interview with actor and activist Robert Redford during the US government shutdown and he said very clearly that it is time to hand the reins of government over to women and young people,” stated Wyers. “While at the FCM conference in June, I attended a session on young adults and municipal government” moderated by Erin Hogan, Deputy Mayor from the City of Thompson, MB, and Chair of the FCM’s Standing Committee on Increasing Women’s Participation in Municipal Government. Erin introduced FCM’s action to increase the role of women in municipal government from coast to coast to coast.”

While women make up over 52 per cent of the Canadian population, only 25 percent of the country's elected municipal representatives are female. By contrast, the United Nations defines 30 percent as the minimal percentage of women required for government to reflect women’s concerns. To close that gap, 1,471 more women would need to be elected to municipal office - 100 more women each year from now until 2026.

Head Start for Young Women is one element of FCM's broader program to increase the number of women in municipal government. In 2005, the FCM established the Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government, which is composed of 24 elected municipal officials from across Canada. In line with the U.N. target, the committee is working to ensure women make up 30 per cent of Canadian municipal councils by 2026.

Further details about the Head Start for Young Women program are available on the FCM website at <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/head-start-for-young-women-program.htm>

For local recruitment opportunities, please contact Councillor Cher Wyers at 250-443-1476