

Canada Games and the Youth Ambassador Program

Mr. Speaker, from February 15 to March 3, 2019, athletes from the Northwest Territories will be representing our territory at the 2019 Canada Winter Games in Red Deer, Alberta. This event is an important celebration of Canadian sport and culture. It will be the largest event of its kind ever hosted in Red Deer and central Alberta and one of the largest in Alberta since the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

During the past year, our Northern athletes have been preparing themselves physically and mentally. Our athletes will be competing in archery, badminton, biathlon, cross country skiing, curling, figure skating, gymnastics, hockey, judo, short track speed skating, squash and table tennis. All 93 athletes have spent countless hours training hard in preparation to compete in what will be, one of the formative moments of their sporting careers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hard work and long hours put in by athletes and coaches in preparation for the Canada Winter Games. Not only will our athletes represent the Northwest Territories on the national stage, but they are also outstanding healthy lifestyle role models for the entire North.

I would also like everyone to recognize that Team NT's athletes could not reach the Games without the "behind the scenes" effort and support from members of their communities. The hours of preparation, fundraising, organizing and encouragement from family, friends and communities are critical to our athletes' successes.

In addition to Team NT, Municipal and Community Affairs will be supporting 32 Youth Ambassadors and staff from 13 communities as they travel to the Canada Winter Games. I have full confidence that our Youth Ambassadors and their chaperones will be exceptional representatives of our territory throughout the event. The Youth Ambassadors will be placed in many different roles to help support our athletes at the Games.

As Ambassadors, they will demonstrate, that youth from across the North have incredible strength, great character and will be strong, future leaders for their communities. Our youth will benefit greatly from this unique experience. Friendships will be formed, and our young people will return to their communities with many lasting memories.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the efforts of Chef de Mission Bill Othmer and his Assistant Chef de Mission, Damon Crossman, along with their mission staff, responsible for supporting Team NT leading up to and during the Canada Winter Games. These two individuals and the mission staff, work with the Sport North Federation and the Territorial Sport Organizations. They are responsible for selecting and managing their respective teams. The efforts of these individuals are significant contributions to a healthy future for the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is proud to support members of Team NT and the Youth Ambassadors, as part of our commitment to supporting healthy lifestyles for youth and promoting a healthy, stronger North. As Team NT and the Youth Ambassadors prepare to travel to Red Deer, it is my great pleasure to recognize Team NT's 149 athletes, coaches, managers and mission staff who will be participating in the 2019 Canada Winter Games. To all of those behind the scenes - volunteers, parents, staff, schools and community governments, we acknowledge your contributions and thank you for supporting our athletes' success at the Games. On behalf of the Government and residents of the Northwest Territories, I would like to wish our athletes a safe and successful Canada Winter Games.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.