



For Immediate Release

## Commissioner's Awards for Bravery and Humanitarianism

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (April 23, 2014)** – The Deputy Commissioner of Nunavut, Nellie Kusugak, awarded a total of eight bravery, humanitarianism and volunteering awards during a ceremony in Iqaluit on April 17.

Bravery awards went to six people: Samo Keith Angnakak and Marlene Angnakak, Amaujaq Alexander Groves, and Pitseolak Alainga and Billy Kownirk.

In August of 2009, Samo Angnakak was working on his boat when he heard a snorkeling sound and water splashing. He noticed his six-year-old nephew in the water struggling to stay afloat. Samo and Marlene Angnakak immediately worked to get him out of the water and saved his life.

Amaujaq Groves was four-years-old in December 2007, when his baby sister started choking. Amaujaq put his finger in her mouth and pulled out the cereal she was choking on. He saved his baby sister's life.

In the fall of 1994, nine men perished after an annual walrus hunt. Pitseolak Alainga and Billy Kownirk survived by braving the waters. They endured three nights and four days in the high winds and rough seas. They survived by hanging on to the boat and encouraging each other not to give in to the elements of the sea.

Mathew Knickelbein received the humanitarian award for helping his community stay safe and warm during the January 2014 blizzard, when residents of Apex were without power for 18 hours. During that time, Mathew risked his safety to open Nanook school and ensure that Apexmiut had access to heat and light to stay safe and warm.

Two recipients, Judy Grace Gabuna and Ed McKenna were recognized for their volunteering efforts. Judy Grace Gabuna has been volunteering for both the Anglican Church and the soup kitchen as the book keeper for many years. Ed McKenna has been serving weekend meals in the soup kitchen for several years and has also served on the board of the soup kitchen. He was one of the volunteers to start the weekend meal program.

"I believe volunteers are the heart of every community. What would we do without their tireless support?" said Deputy Commissioner Kusugak. "Life is so precious. We've been

taught to love and help one another. I thank all who put others before themselves. We are all grateful.”

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