

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Mission Accomplished – Celebrating the Manitoba Developmental Centre lawsuit settlement

**Winnipeg, May 5, 2023** – There is a lot of celebrating in the disability community across Canada today. People First of Canada (PFC) and its members are certainly celebrating, and none more so than David Weremy. He is the lead plaintiff in the class action lawsuit against the Manitoba Government. The lawsuit is about the abuse and neglect people suffered while they were kept at the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC).

The proposed settlement was finalized today. This means that people who lived at MDC and were abused may be able to get compensation, or money, for the harms they suffered. It means that they will get an apology from the Government of Manitoba for the abuse and neglect that happened to them while they were forced to live in the institution. There are also other plans in the settlement. These are meant to help former residents.

For Mr. Weremy, it means all this and more. He was forced to live at MDC for nearly 20 years of his life. He has spent more years than that trying to close the institution down. It has been one of his goals in life. When asked how he felt today, Mr. Weremy said, “I’m happy. My work is done now. I’m happy with this. I spent a long time to close it down. But I did it. We all did it. I can stop now. I can retire.” Mr. Weremy began the lawsuit in 2018, but his work to close institutions started long before that.

David Weremy is a long-time member of People First of Manitoba. He is also a member of the People First of Canada and Inclusion Canada Task Force on Deinstitutionalization. He has worked closely with PFC Executive Director, Shelley Fletcher, for many years, including during the lawsuit.

“We are happy with the outcome of the settlement,” said Ms. Fletcher. “People will be compensated. But the apology is a really important part too. It’s worth gold in my opinion. It gives people back some of their dignity. It lets people who were forced to live at MDC know that they did nothing wrong. The apology can help people move forward and heal.”

Speaking on behalf of the People First board, President Dewlyn Lobo said, “We are so thankful for David. He is very determined. He has been working for a long time to do this. He is helping people to live in the community.” The lawsuit has a plan attached to it. By March 31, 2024, all residents of MDC will be moved to living arrangements in the community.

As the work to close all institutions continues, it is important to celebrate this milestone. It is also important to celebrate the fierce determination, efforts and success of David Weremy in reaching his goal and furthering the human rights and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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