



Creating Futures

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Slave “stars” in award-winning music video

Fort Smith, NT – South Slave can now boast that they were part of an award-winning rap music video. The video *Strong*, by Edmonton-based musician FEENIX (Shawn Bernard), was chosen Best Hip-Hop or Rap Music Video at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards this past weekend. FEENIX also won Best Hip-Hop or Rap Album for “Collabanation”, which featured the song.

The rapper made two visits to the region in 2009 to speak to students about how he escaped a life of gang violence, prison and substance abuse. Out of the first visit came the song, “Strong”, which was written by FEENIX in produced as a music video in conjunction with the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC). The video was filmed primarily on location in Fort Smith, Fort Resolution and Hay River, and featured students from schools in those communities.

“The song was written to highlight two important Dene beliefs, both of which are integrated into our Dene Kede curriculum: to be strong like two people, and to nurture and share your special talents,” says Brent Kaulback, Assistant Superintendent of SSDEC. “These are universal messages: to be accepting, to look for strength and value in all cultures, and to discover and nurture your talents so that these can be shared with others for the benefit of all.”

The entire process of making the video involved South Slave students, who had the opportunity to be on camera or work behind the scenes, helping to film and organize the shoot. Part of the reason the SSDEC chose to collaborate with FEENIX to produce the video was to create a novel way to introduce these important Dene Kede concepts to students. “As the message of the video suggests, it is important to reach out and communicate to students in a language that they understand – the language of music,” adds Kaulback. The SSDEC is producing a Teachers Resource Kit and lesson plans to accompany the video and these resources will be distributed to schools throughout the NWT.

-30-

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