



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Indigenous Peoples Day a Time to Celebrate

Sunday, June 20, 2021

St. John's, NL – Monday, June 21, 2021, is National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD). For the First Light community, the Summer Solstice has always been a time to recognize and celebrate the beautifully rich and diverse cultures of Indigenous Peoples. A full schedule of events, both in-person and online, is available at firstlightnl.ca/NIPD. Events are open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

We acknowledge that this year many members of our community are [grieving the news just last month](#) that the remains of 215 children had been found at a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. Since then, more unmarked graves have been located, and the findings have devastated our community and reignited feelings of trauma.

We are grateful for the outpouring of support from friends and allies who have reached out to learn more about residential schools, to offer support during this time, and to ask how best to mark NIPD this year. While we welcome these requests, many of our staff have also felt the weight of them. For us, the legacy of colonialism is something that we ourselves have lived, and continue to live, each and every day. We renew our call for everyone to educate themselves and those around them about the ongoing legacy of colonial violence in this country, including residential schools. Read the [Calls to Action](#) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the [Calls for Justice](#) of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP).

“As our community continues to heal, NIPD is an opportunity for us all to recognize the vibrant cultures of Canada’s First Peoples,” said Stacey Howse, Executive Director of First Light.

“Despite the impact of colonialism, Indigenous communities remain strong and resilient. First

Light's team has worked hard to make this year's NIPD celebrations positive and memorable for everyone, and I think we have succeeded." Event highlights include an annual sunrise ceremony, held at Cavell Park starting at 6:00am, followed by the unveiling of design plans for First Light's new headquarters located at 40 Quidi Vidi Road.

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Media Contact

Justin Campbell
Manager of Research and Advocacy Programs
First Light: St. John's Friendship Centre
justincampbell@firstlightnl.ca
709-690-0636

Formerly known as the St. John's Native Friendship Centre, First Light is a registered non-profit that has been serving both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in St. John's since 1983. The organization provides programs and services rooted in the revitalization, strengthening, and celebration of Indigenous cultures and languages in the spirit of trust, respect, and friendship.