



## MEDIA RELEASE

# In Advance of Orange Shirt Day, First Light Calls for Renewed Commitment to Implement TRC Calls to Action

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**St. John's, NL** – To mark the second annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, First Light is supporting calls for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a Reconciliation Council.

Such a Council would be tasked with leading substantive, systemic change across multiple government departments with the goal of improving the lives of Indigenous people in the province. The idea was first proposed by the Provincial Indigenous Women's Steering Committee (PIWSC) in a July 2022 report, entitled [Hear Our Voices](#), and then again in [a media statement](#) that the group issued earlier this week.

"It is with heavy hearts that we continue to mark Orange Shirt Day in recognition of the legacy of residential schools and the ongoing forms of colonial violence against our people," says Stacey Howse, First Light's Executive Director. "Members of the urban Indigenous community recognize that the path for healing was laid out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, issued in 2015. We feel that there has been little action towards implementing the kinds of policy changes that the TRC identified seven years ago now."

In its Final Report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on all levels of government to restore respectful relations with Indigenous Peoples by implementing systemic changes in a wide variety of areas. Yet despite the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador frequently noting the importance of advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in the province, Indigenous people and non-Indigenous allies have yet to see progress toward meaningful change.

"It is great to wear an orange shirt on September 30th and declare your commitment to truth and reconciliation," continues Howse. "But if you're an official in government, you can and should be using your position of power and privilege to advance systemic change. We want to see you take action now."

Tomorrow, First Light will be organizing special community-focused programming and a [commemorative event open to the general public](#). The public event takes place from 6pm to 7pm at the Pippy Park Courtyard.

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### **About First Light**

First Light is a registered non-profit that has been serving both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in St. John's since 1983. One of over 125 Friendship Centres across Canada, First Light provides programs and services rooted in the revitalization, strengthening, and celebration of Indigenous cultures and languages in the spirit of trust, respect, and friendship.