



FIRST LIGHT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





OUR MISSION

To deliver transformative programs and services that empower, uplift, and support Indigenous communities and nations in ways that promote good relations between all. Through advocacy, research, and social entrepreneurship, we foster inclusive environments that unite Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, promote social well-being, and drive sustainable change. Guided by principles of trust, respect, and friendship, we aim to build a brighter future where Indigenous Peoples thrive and flourish, leaving a profound and lasting legacy for generations to come.



7 LOCATIONS

80+ STAFF



We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we work as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk. We acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. We acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

CATHERINE FAGAN

Vice President

BLAIR BENOIT

Treasurer

DAVID WORKS

Secretary

LISA SMITH

Youth Representative

SOPHIE BENNETT

Elder

EMMA REELIS

Member

HASAN HAI

Member

MARGARET CRANFORD

Member

STUART GILL

Member

PATRICIA KEOUGH

Dear Community Members,

We are thrilled to announce and celebrate this extraordinary milestone of First Light Friendship Centre as we mark 40 years of dedicated service to our community. From its humble beginnings in a small office at Memorial University, First Light has flourished into an organization with nearly 100 employees, several successful businesses, amazing programs and services, and multiple locations, thanks to the unwavering support of our incredible community and the hard work of dedicated staff.

This journey has been a testament to the strength of our community, and we want to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you who has played a role in our growth. Your support has been instrumental in allowing us to expand our reach and impact over the years.

As we reflect on the successes of First Light, we take pride in the positive outcomes we've achieved together. From providing essential services to fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride, First Light has become a cornerstone for many individuals in our community.



We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Board of Directors for their guidance and commitment. Your leadership has been crucial in steering the organization toward success and ensuring that we stay true to our mission.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the future and the opportunities it holds for further collaboration and growth. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Once again, thank you to our incredible community, staff, volunteers, funders, and Board of Directors for 40 years of friendship, support, and shared success. Here's to many more years of making a positive impact together!

Warm regards,

Stacey Howse

Stacey Howse
Executive Director





40 YEARS OF





FRIENDSHIP



Construction began at our **716 Water Street** location in April 2023, marking the initial steps toward converting the building into a transitional housing facility. Anticipating the arrival of our first tenants next summer, we are eager to witness this space evolve into a supportive and welcoming home. The project is made possible through joint funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Indigenous Services Canada.



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

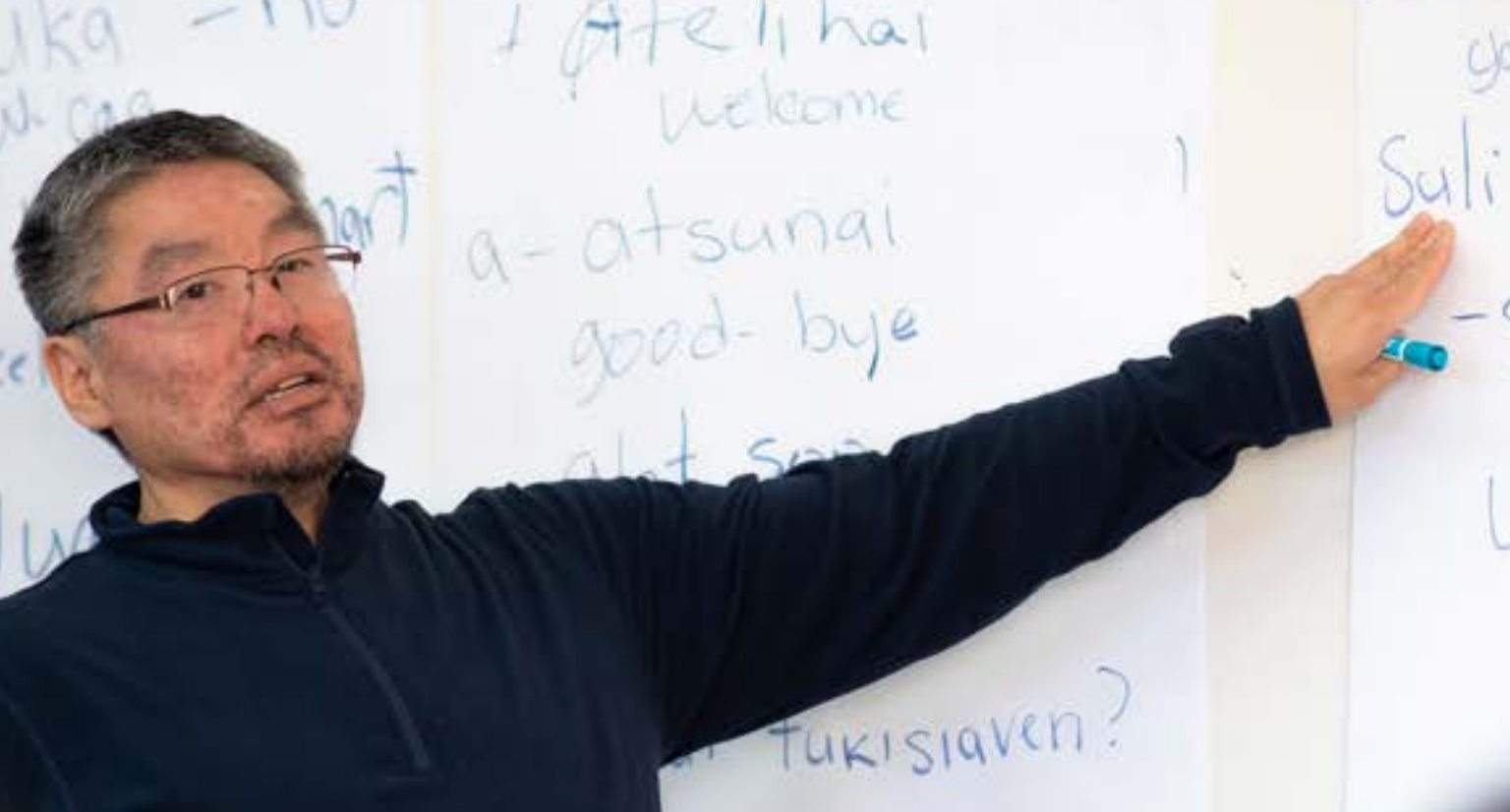


13,012

combined points of contact
in housing & social supports

"Your team are such fabulous advocates for your community members, and the perspective you provide for cultural inclusion is so important."

- End Homelessness St. John's Staff Member



 **568**

hours of cultural humility
training were provided to

2,915 
participants



28

childcare spaces

100%

enrolment





30,095

medical transportation rides provided



290

guests stayed at the

 **lunar**.[®]



9,658

guests attended events at
our Performance Centre



CELEBRATING SUCCESS



Stacey Howse, Executive Director

Top 50 CEO Award

Atlantic Business Magazine

The award demonstrates recognition of Stacey's commitment to First Light. Since Stacey became Executive Director, revenues have increased by 37% and our staff by 20%. Under her leadership, we have become "one of the top Friendship Centres in Canada". Thank you to Atlantic Business Magazine for shining a light on Stacey and the organization.



Centre for Performance & Creativity

Venue of the Year

Music NL

The award reflects not only the dedication of our talented team, but also the vibrant community that supports and contributes to the success of the Centre. Thank you to Music NL for this incredible honour, and to the community, artists & supporters for making the enterprise a beacon of excellence in the world of arts.



First Light

Community Builder Award

NL Association of Professional Planners

The award recognizes the organization's excellence and innovation in land use planning, incorporating inclusive and accessible planning methods emphasizing creativity, beauty & accessibility. Thank you to the NLAPP for acknowledging our commitment to building more complete communities.



"I loved learning new skills with community members,
smudging together and caring for ourselves together."

- Programs Participant

6,291

times people joined
us at programs



1,653
ATTENDEES



23
EVENTS



61
ARTISTS





**LANGUAGE
& CULTURE
CAMP**



130
ATTENDEES





268

interactions through the
Elders In Residence Program



The Research & Strategic Partnerships department was formed in January 2023 to coordinate research, policy, and advocacy efforts by supporting strategic relationship-building efforts across the organization.

In March 2023, the **First Light Research Policy Framework** was implemented to set minimum ethical standards on when and how First Light participates in academic and non-academic research projects. The Framework ensures that all research efforts that are led and/or supported by First Light benefit the St. John's urban Indigenous community.



10 RESEARCH
PROJECTS
completed or underway in
partnership with First Light



**Read the
Framework**
firstlightnl.ca



20 of 42 CALLS FOR CHANGE

completed or underway to advance
truth & reconciliation in St. John's



3 ACTION CIRCLES

underway in language revitalization,
economic reconciliation & justice



Amplifying urban Indigenous voices through

9 COMMUNITY ADVOCATES



Our Shared Vision

A Path toward Truth and Reconciliation in
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2023-33

February 2023
An Urban Indigenous
Community Action Plan

#42Calls



In February 2023, First Voice released **Our Shared Vision**, a Community Action Plan informed by more than 3 years of sustained engagements with the urban Indigenous community and a variety of other rightsholders, stakeholders, decision-makers, and policy experts.

The ambitious ten-year plan outlines 42 Calls for Change inspired by the TRC, MMIWG, and UNDRIP. The Calls describe how all residents in St. John's and across the province can work alongside diverse urban Indigenous Peoples to address the ongoing legacy of colonialism.

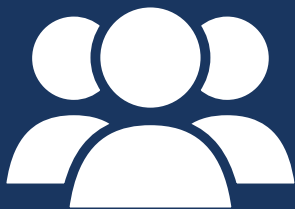
Explore the Calls
for Change



firstvoicenl.ca



NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES DAY



600+
ATTENDEES

ORANGE SHIRT DAY



1,510 shirts sold



500+ people attended the Rally for Reconciliation







**Read our
Strategic Plan**



firstlightnl.ca

Reflecting on 40 years of progress, we're forward-focused with our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Tailored to community needs, it outlines 7 key areas—culture, sustainability, systemic change—shaping our objectives for the next three years. This living document is adaptable to evolving needs & priorities.

Our posts had a reach of
659,775
across social media this year!



CONNECT WITH US!



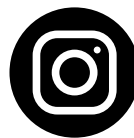
firstlightnl.ca



info@firstlightnl.ca



(709) 726-5902





FIRST LIGHT

St. John's Friendship Centre