



The following is distributed by L'nuey on behalf of the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils

For Immediate Release

Charlottetown, PEI – 27 May 2021

Introducing the First Ever Recipients of the Reconciliation Recognition Award

The Epekwitk Assembly of Councils hand out new awards during Aboriginal Awareness Week

The inaugural “Reconciliation Recognition Awards” were presented to four Island recipients at a small ceremony which took place in the Assembly Chamber of the new Epekwitk Assembly Building on Thursday, May 27, 2021, during Aboriginal Awareness Week.

The Reconciliation Recognition Award is a new initiative launched by the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils, to show their appreciation for the work being done to advance reconciliation by individuals, businesses, and organizations here on PEI.

The inaugural Reconciliation Recognition Award is based on a series of criteria that serves to recognize, respect, and include the Epekwitk (PEI) Mi'kmaq people, stories, history, or land in such a way that it creates a positive and inclusive Island community with lasting impacts for future generations.

The four award recipients for 2021 are the PEI Brewing Company, École Saint-Augustin, Parks Canada, PEI Field Unit and Mount Stewart Consolidated School. More information on the initiatives for which each of the four recipients were chosen is included in the background section.

“This new award serves to recognize and show appreciation for those who are playing an active role in the journey towards reconciliation. The future we envision is one where reconciliation is at the forefront in building a better and stronger tomorrow. – Chief Junior Gould, Abegweit First Nation.

“The initiative shown by these four recipients demonstrates what positivity and growth can come from working together and is key to building a home that is more inclusive and equitable for all Islanders. We all need Reconciliation.” – Chief Darlene Bernard, Lennox Island First Nation.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Sean Doke at sdoke@lnuey.ca or 902.330.4420

Backgrounder

The Recipients:

PEI Brewing Company

Kevin Murphy, Jeff Squires and the PEI Brewing Company recognized that the branding of their Sir John A. Honey Wheat Ale was outdated. Upon seeing recent Nation-wide controversy regarding the naming of statues, streets, and buildings after historical figures that have had a negative impact on First Nations peoples, they took it upon themselves to self-educate in the harm that Sir John A. inflicted towards Indigenous people by implementing Residential Schools - a nation-wide program of assimilation introduced in 1883 and other policies.

The PEI Brewing Company made the decision to start the process of changing their brand and reached out to L'nuey, PEI's Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, to ask for recommendations and create a partnership on the re-branding of their product. They also decided that just changing the name, although already a significant action, was not enough. The company will be updating the historical information on plaques showcased in their Taproom to help tell the full story of the damaging policies put in place by Canada's first Prime Minister. They will also be adding signage to their Events Centre acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

École Saint-Augustin

Ecole Saint-Augustin established a true path toward reconciliation and have partnered with members of the Lennox Island First Nation. The first step was by a teacher at the school, Julie Gagnon, who wanted to focus their reconciliation efforts on building a stronger relationship backed by education, experience, and example. Officials with the school have been working with members of Lennox Island First Nation to create activities and cultural learning opportunities. So far, the children at the school have created their own talking sticks and built miniature tipis/teepees. The school has plans to take students to Lennox Island for a tour of the museum to being a part of a reconciliation ceremony. Even further, Ecole Saint-Augustin held a ceremony in late April to raise the Mi'kmaq flag at their school.

Parks Canada - PEI Field Unit

Parks Canada has taken the steps to implement Mi'kmaq programming in their National Park and in National Historic Sites on Prince Edward Island. One initiative involved the creation of panels which were designed and fabricated as part of a Stories of Canada project, to bring an awareness and present messages about Mi'kmaq culture to visitors of the National Park and Historic Sites. These signs are to be located in Greenwich, Cavendish Beach, Brackley Beach, Green Gables, Ardgowan and Skmaq and feature three languages: English, French and Mi'kmaq as well as a Land Acknowledgement on all three panels.

Mount Stewart Consolidated School

Mount Stewart Consolidated School has worked for several years showing true appreciation and establishing a path toward reconciliation through its partnership with Abegweit First Nation. They focused reconciliation efforts on building partnerships by integrating Indigenous culture, dance, and songs into all school events such as assemblies, concerts and graduations. They have taken Orange Shirt Day to another level by seeing that everyone in the school is wearing an orange shirt and they organize a program or event to recognize the day. Much recognition is also given to the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation in June honouring those who attended residential school. Another example is all older students in the school singing O Canada in Mi'kmaq. This was actually recorded for the students as well. Other cultural identification can be seen by the wigwam erected outside in the quiet area of the school which the students helped build. This also allows the students to experience first-hand the ways of the Mi'kmaq culture through Mi'kmaq elder teachings, smudging, songs, dance, stories and just enjoying quiet time and being at peace with nature.

Stay up to date with L'nuey's initiatives through our social media platforms: Facebook (L'nuey PEI), Instagram (@lnuey.ca) and Twitter (@lnueypei).