



**WARDEN**

Attn: Mr. Rolf Bouman  
Friends United Foundation  
Cleveland, Richmond County  
Nova Scotia, Canada

February 20, 2024

**RE: Letter of Support for Friends United Foundation**

Dear Rolf,

On behalf of the Municipality of the County of Richmond, I am writing this letter to express our support for the past and ongoing efforts you have made through the Friends United International Convention Centre, and now through the Friends United Foundation.

For many years, the Friends United Centre has been an iconic gem in Richmond County – culturally, economically, and socially. You have turned reconciliation into action by creating an enabling environment for First Nations artists to express what is in their hearts through art, and by dedicating the Centre as a space for gathering and connecting within and between different cultures. In creating an artist-in-residence program and opportunities for artist collaborations, and by providing tools, supplies, and a space for Canada’s First Nations people to create, you have built what is one of North America’s most stunning collections of Indigenous art right here in Unama’ki Cape Breton.

Witnessing the evolution of the Centre over the years has been astounding as the variety, quality and quantity of the artwork has grown exponentially. More importantly, the way the Centre has changed perspectives and made meaningful connections between peoples is profound. Many people have spoken to me about how fundamentally their perspective changes when they walk through the doors and become immersed in the art of people who have lived in this region for some 14,000 years. It’s an awe-inspiring feeling that can not be replicated in any other place; an experience that is unique to Friends United.



Friends United is a place that breaks down barriers, builds understanding, develops relationships, and stimulates dialogue. It is an incredible example of the artistic and spiritual complexity of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. In a brilliant example of the Two-Eyed Seeing concept articulated by Elder Dr. Albert Marshall, the Friends United Centre showcases sacred teachings, artifacts, and other visual art in a facility that is modern and professional.

I am grateful to have been a small part of your journey at Friends United, and even more so that you have pivoted the model to be sustainable for generations as a Foundation. Friends United is a cultural icon within Richmond County, indeed within Canada, that must be supported and protected.

Thank you for your friendship and congratulations on the success of the Centre to date!

Sincerely,

Warden Amanda Mombourquette  
Municipality of the County of Richmond

cc: Richmond County Council