Parks Canada Parcs Canada

7495 Main Street
Louisbourg, Nova Scotia
B1C 1H6

October 10, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Support for Friends United

Parks Canada is pleased to extend its support to Friends United, an organization that plays a vital role in providing talented and emerging Indigenous artists with the skills, support, and encouragement necessary to become independent, self-sufficient entrepreneurs. The work done by Friends United directly contributes to empowering Indigenous communities and fostering a greater appreciation for their cultural and artistic contributions.

In 2023, Friends United curated an extraordinary exhibit of Mi'kmaw artists at Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, showcasing the vibrant works of four local Mi'kmaw artists. Their art, deeply inspired by Indigenous culture, spirituality, dreams, and nature, captivated visitors throughout July and August. This initiative not only allowed these artists to gain much-deserved recognition but also contributed positively to the ongoing education and reconciliation efforts with visitors and staff alike.

The impact of this exhibit was significant. It generated immense interest from visitors, creating an important platform for understanding and appreciating Mi'kmaw culture. The exhibit provided economic benefits through the sale of art supporting the financial well-being of the artists, while also contributing to the museum's revenue. Visitors were then inspired to visit local artist shops, further boosting the regional economy and enhancing the cultural tourism experience. Lastly, the exhibit helped bring more visitors to Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, contributing to the overall success of the site and the local community.

The Friends United facility in Cleveland, Cape Breton, is a true cultural gem, and with continued support, it has the potential to become an important tourism destination. The organization's vision aligns with Parks Canada's mandate to foster connections between people, history, and nature while contributing to local and regional economic sustainability.

We are confident that securing funding for Friends United will allow the organization to continue its vital work of supporting Indigenous artists, providing meaningful cultural experiences, and enhancing Cape Breton's status as a must-visit destination for both locals and tourists alike. We wish Friends United continued success in their mission and wholeheartedly support their efforts to secure funding for the expansion and sustainability of their operations.

Sincerely,

A. Blair Pardy
Field Unit Superintendent
Parks Canada, Cape Breton