

July 25, 2019

Nathan Phillips Square to be transformed into an Indigenous cultural space July 29 and 30

The Indian Residential School Survivors (IRSS) Legacy Celebration will offer a vibrant cultural space on Nathan Phillips Square from July 29 to 30 to honour residential school survivors and their families.

Produced by the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in collaboration with the City of Toronto, this free two-day gathering will feature Indigenous songs, stories, language, food, performances, installations and demonstrations for all ages.

Highlights of the IRSS Legacy Celebration program include:

- Traditional performances and cultural teachings, including hoop dancing, Metis fiddlers and jiggers, drumming and throat singing
- More than 20 large painted teepees hosting drop-in workshops, information sharing, interactive experiences (such as Wampum belt teachings) and counselling supports. In addition, there will be a tent dedicated for residential school survivors to use as a meeting space, and
- Indigenous food, arts and crafts for sale in the Indigenous Marketplace.

Visitors will have the opportunity to explore, learn about and participate in Indigenous activities. Everyone is welcome. More information is available at <https://irsslegacy.com/>.

This celebration aims to create awareness of the IRSS Legacy Project, led by Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in collaboration with the City.

The legacy project will be permanently featured on Nathan Phillips Square and will consist of a turtle sculpture called the Restoration of Identity and a teaching, learning, sharing and healing space, both to be completed in 2022.

The six-foot (two-metre) tall turtle sculpture represents many First Nation creation stories as it embodies Turtle Island, also referred to as Mother Earth. The turtle stands on a three-foot (one-metre) tall boulder, which will list the 17 residential schools that once operated in Ontario. Further project plans and a turtle sculpture replica will be unveiled on Monday, July 29 during the IRSS Legacy Celebration.

The IRSS Legacy sculpture was developed in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, specifically, Call to Action 82. It calls upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible,



residential schools monument in each capital city to honour survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

Quotes:

"This celebration of the resilience and vitality of residential school survivors and their families is an opportunity to move reconciliation from discussion to action. We are proud to collaborate with Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre again this year to produce this important event at Nathan Phillips Square."

- Toronto Mayor John Tory

"This gathering is significant as it is scheduled around the lunar moon cycle which represents a positive energy force. We have an opportunity to work with Creation, in this case our grandmother moon now in her seventh lunar cycle – we call this the raspberry moon, it is that time when great change begins. We learn from creation to be loved, to forgive and to be thankful for all we have been given."

- Andrea Chrisjohn, Board Designate (ohkwali clan, On[^]yota'a:ka), Toronto Council Fire

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre is an autonomous, vibrant cultural agency that involves and serves the Indigenous community with confidence for and commitment to their well-being. It is an active member of the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. More information is available at <https://www.councilfire.ca/>.

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