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ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS AND THE ABORIGINAL HEALING FOUNDATION HOST A MARCH 6-12 WORKSHOP TO CREATE COMMEMORATIVE MARKER FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

(OTTAWA, Ontario, March 5, 2014) – This week the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), together with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF), is bringing Indigenous artists from across Canada to Ottawa, where they will create a national commemorative marker honouring the experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students of Indian residential schools. The markers will be placed in communities on or near the sites where children attended residential schools.

Five Indigenous artists will gather in Ottawa to participate in a one-week creative workshop to create a marker prototype that will be publicly unveiled March 12. At the workshops, the artists will engage in discussions with residential school survivors and a steering committee made up of former students, Elders and advisors, including representatives from Carleton and Concordia universities, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the National Gallery of Canada. The artists will then begin collaborating on the design and development of the Commemorative Marker.

These workshops will start Thursday, March 6 at Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health at 299 Montreal Road, Ottawa. AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo is scheduled to address the artists during opening ceremonies on Thursday, March 6. Media are invited to attend opening ceremonies and remarks at 9:00 a.m. on March 6 and to meet the artists on Saturday, March 8 at 10:00 a.m. Media are also invited to attend the prototype unveiling event at 4:00 p.m.

The National Commemorative Marker Project is part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) of 2007, a multi-party agreement that includes the AFN and AHF. The initiative is designed to “memorialize in a tangible and permanent way the residential school experience” and provide an opportunity for continued truth-telling, healing and reconciliation.

The last Indian Residential School in Canada closed in 1996.

Our mission is to provide resources which will promote reconciliation and encourage and support Aboriginal people and their communities in building and reinforcing sustainable healing processes that address the legacy of physical, sexual, mental, cultural, and spiritual abuses in the residential school system, including intergenerational impacts.

Notre mission est de fournir des ressources favorisant la réconciliation, d'encourager et d'appuyer les Autochtones et leurs communautés à développer et à renforcer des démarches de guérison durables qui s'attaquent aux effets des abus physiques, sexuels, psychologiques, culturels et spirituels subis sous le régime des pensionnats, y compris les répercussions intergénérationnelles

The Assembly of First Nation is the national organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada. Follow AFN on Twitter @AFN_Comms, @AFN_Updates.

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