



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 20, 2024

### BCAFN Celebrates Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Celebration and Awareness Day

(x̣ṃəθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam), Sḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiẉətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) acknowledge the first day of spring as a day to celebrate Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, that is an initiative of the Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC). This day also aims to bring awareness to the personal experiences of Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across the country. BCAFN aims to uplift BC First Nation 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and those who advocate to improve the lives and rights of Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples. This year’s celebration theme is “Bringing sexuality back into our Medicine Wheel.”

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, “I raise my hands for all Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and the First Nations leaders in BC who advocate and are inclusive to all within their community. To create safe and healthy communities, we as leaders must continue to address the barriers and take action within BC First Nations to uplift Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples. Action can be taken in many forms, from implementing First Nations Gender-Based Analysis Plus when designing programs or revising internal policies to creating resources to educate your First Nation community. On this day, I hope you take the time to reflect on your strategy to support 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in your community. Mussi Cho!”

The long-standing BCAFN Women’s Representative, Louisa Housty-Jones, added, “Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are honoured this day as we celebrate their uniqueness and the beauty they bring into our lives and communities. I would like to emphasize how celebrating this day affirms the purpose of our work, which is to center and uphold the diverse ways that First Nations in BC bring in and uplift the voices of community members, and that is expressed through their languages, laws, world views, and in their teachings. I hope observers will learn about the traditional knowledge regarding 2SLGBTQQIA+ people within BC First Nation, as the western associations of Pride are not a true reflection of Two-Spirit and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.”

Orene Askew, also known as DJ O Show, BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative, shared, “It is so essential for organizations like CBRC to exist. They’re not only creating sexual health resources but also providing supplies and Indigenous medicines for First Nation 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in BC. Initiatives like the Medicine Bundle Program help keep our First Nation youth, adults, and elders healthy and safe. I am grateful for organizations like CBRC for prioritizing the sexual health of First Nation 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as it also helps their physical health as well. Past and future 2SLGBTQQIA+ generations are feeling the work of CBRC and other like-minded organizations. Chen kwenmantumiyap!”

-30-

Media contact: Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer, (778) 281-1655

#honouringourancestors



bcafn