



HEU celebrates National Aboriginal Day on June 21

June 21 marks the day where Canadians come together to celebrate the unique heritage, traditions and contributions First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples bring to our country's culture.

The Hospital Employees' Union has been a pioneer in advocating for the legal right to organize, certify and negotiate contracts for First Nations health care workers living on federal or native land.

HEU took this fight all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada – winning a landmark case on July 19, 1999 – after the union organized Gitksan health care workers. That ruling has helped other Canadian unions organize First Nations workers on and off-reserve.

In May, HEU held its inaugural provincial First Nations Bargaining Conference – bringing together representatives from each nation – Nisga'a, Gitksan (Gitanyow, Gitwangak), Skidegate (Haida Gwaii) and Stz'uminus – to share bargaining ideas and strategies.

The union's First Nations Standing Committee (FNSC) encourages all HEU locals to show solidarity and participate in one of B.C.'s National Aboriginal Day events (listed on our website with this newsletter).

Members are invited to share National Aboriginal Day experiences by sending photos to <sneufeld@heu.org>.

First proclaimed by Canada's Governor General in 1996, National Aboriginal Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the unique achievements of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

After consultation with Aboriginal organizations, the federal government chose June 21 for National Aboriginal Day because it is also the summer solstice – the longest day of the year – a day on which many generations of Aboriginal peoples have celebrated their culture and heritage.

June 19, 2013

