



## Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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### **Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff and City of Flagstaff Invites Community to Indigenous Forum on “Our Elders”**

Flagstaff, AZ (February 2, 2017) – On Wednesday, February 8th, the third Indigenous Community Forum will be held at Flagstaff High School Common Area. This will be a unique opportunity to learn about the hopes, concerns, and needs of Indigenous elders who live, work, and visit in Flagstaff. Presentations are invited first from Indigenous elders and their families; second from others involved with their care. Everyone is invited to listen and participate in small group discussions.

#### **Indigenous Community Forum: Our Elders**

**Wednesday, February 8th, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

**Flagstaff High School, Common Area, 400 W. Elm Avenue**

**Food & beverages will be provided. ♦ NAIPTA will offer free bus rides after 4pm  
to passengers who mention the Indigenous Community Forum.**

The Indigenous Community Forum began in response to a proposal in 2015 for the City of Flagstaff to declare **Indigenous Peoples' Day** in October. A working group of Indigenous community members, which grew into **Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff**, proposed a process that would expect more from the City's citizens than a brief public declaration once a year. Indigenous people make vital contributions every day to the City's economic, cultural, artistic, and spiritual life, but face significant, sometimes traumatic, often unnecessary challenges along the way. How could a declaration of Indigenous People's Day make real, positive changes in the lives of Indigenous people who live, work, shop, and visit in Flagstaff?

The working group proposed a series of Forums as a venue for Indigenous community members to speak about their challenges and needs, as well their hopes, ideas, and contributions, around vital topics of concern. And for the City of Flagstaff to listen. These forums would provide a basis for an action plan for the City leading to improved practices and policies, but much more. These would be initial steps in building a better, more positive and dynamic relationship between the City and the Indigenous people who continue to sustain it—a relationship that would improve life for every citizen of Flagstaff.

This is the process that the Flagstaff City Council approved and agreed to in August, 2016. Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff together with the Council, look forward to completing the first series of Indigenous

Forums during the winter and spring of 2017, followed by work on an action plan that the City might adopt in the fall, leading to a new and meaningful declaration of Indigenous People's Day in 2017.

This is a homegrown effort that could provide a model for other “border towns”—towns and cities with significant Indigenous population and important ties to local Indigenous nations. Indigenous Circle hopes that this process will play an important role in achieving the new City Council’s declared goal number 3 for 2017: “[To] strengthen and repair the city’s relationship with its minority communities.”

**Previous Indigenous Forums:**

Nov. 16, 2016: Youth and Education

Nov. 30, 2016: Homelessness

**Future Indigenous Forums, all to be held at  
Flagstaff High School in 2017:**

Mar. 1: Indigenous Business & Economic Development

Apr. 5: Police & Justice System

May 3: Environmental Justice

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