



HONOURING OUR **ANCESTORS**

REMEMBERING THE
LEGACY OF THE
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
SYSTEM IN NORTHERN
MANITOBA

FIRST EDITION
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021



DEDICATION

The Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee dedicates this book to Survivors of the residential school system along with the generations of family members who continue to be impacted by the legacy of the residential schools. We especially recognize the babies, children, and youth who will be responsible for carrying on much of the healing and reconciliation work that needs to take place for our Nations to fully heal from the genocide of residential schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge all committee members past and present who helped us to develop the memorial near the bush plane. We also recognize all leaders, Elders, and Survivors who took the time to provide us with their reflections for this book.

It is our hope that each reader will learn something new while making their way through the stories and information contained within this publication.

Cover photo credit: Kacper Antoszewski



HONOURING OUR ANCESTORS

“Members of the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy dedicate this space to the Indigenous children who were put on bush planes to attend residential schools.

This reflection space is dedicated to the Indigenous children who were put on bush planes to attend residential schools.

As you stand in this space, we ask you to reflect on the imagery of bush planes. We ask you to remember that although they are a symbol of economic opportunity, they are also a painful reminder of the residential school’s legacy.

Take a moment to consider the question, ‘What if it was my child or grandchild who was taken away by this bush plane?’

Let us remember our shared history in the hopes that we will never again allow government policies to allow any children in Canada to be torn away from the loving arms of their parents, grandparents, and communities.”

The above message appears on the residential school monument that you can find close to the bush plane in Thompson Lion’s Park.

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*“From the windows of his office or the staff
room, the principal could keep an eye on us
all the time.”*

~Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God’s Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 6)



Message from the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee

The Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee has developed this booklet to help you learn more about residential schools and their impact on Indigenous citizens from Northern Manitoba.

It is clear the residential school system continues to impact our communities. We hope that through some of the work we carry out, we can help to address the healing that is needed in relation to truth and reconciliation. It is our hope that by developing this booklet, we are contributing to truth telling around the issue of residential schools and their impact on Northern Manitoba.

We also created this booklet to provide background information about why we developed a monument and reflection space to honour residential school Survivors and their families in Northern Manitoba. It is our hope that this booklet will help people learn more about why this monument is important when it comes to the history of Thompson, Manitoba.



We hope you will find this booklet informative. There is still much work to do when it comes to uncovering the truth about residential schools and moving forward in carrying out the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It is my hope that this booklet is one more step in an ongoing dialogue on the issue of residential schools and their ongoing legacy.

I encourage you to become familiar with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation and find a TRC Call to Action that speaks to you (they are cited at the end of the book). Take steps to help make that Call to Action a reality. Get your family, friends, and neighbours involved. If you are a non-Indigenous person seeking to be an ally with us, continue reading this book and keep listening to with an open mind and heart.

Thank you to everyone who makes time to read the information contained within this booklet. I do want to add a caution that some of the reflections in this booklet will be hard to read.

Please ensure to take care of yourself while you go through this information and seek out resources and support if needed. We have listed some resources near the beginning of this book for your reference.

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation,

Charlene Lafreniere
Chairperson





“You have to try, and you have to keep going. That’s very important.”

~Elder Mabel Hart, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 51)



Resources: Getting help

HELP LINES: TALK TO SOMEONE

Hope for Wellness Line

This line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It offers counselling services if you are in distress, want to talk, are triggered by painful memories, etc. You can also ask for referrals to mental wellness supports accessible near you.

Call toll free: **1-855-242-3310**

There is also an online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca

Indian Residential School Survivors Society Emergency Crisis Line

This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for those that may need counselling support.

Call: **1-800-721-0066**

Kids Help Phone

This line provides support to young people 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can text CONNECT to 686868 to text with a crisis responder

Call toll free: **1-800-668-6868**



Klinic Crisis Line

Available 24 hour a day, 7 days a week

Call: **204-786-8686**

Toll free: **1-888-322-3019**

Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line

Toll-free: **1-877-435-7170**

www.reasonstolive.ca

Manitoba Farm, Rural & Northern Support Services

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Call toll free: **1-866-367-3276**

Residential School Crisis Line

This 24-hour line is available to access emotional supports and crisis referral.

Call: **1-866-925-4419** Seniors Abuse Support Line

Available from 9am to 5pm

Call toll free: **1-888-896-7183**

You can find more supports through the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program. Services can be accessed on an individual, family, or group basis.

Web link: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581971225188/1581971250953>

In Manitoba, you can call: **1-866-818-3505**



“Most of us Northern students never went home for the holidays, nor Christmas, because of the distance. We didn’t have a Christmas tree, nor presents, nor a beautiful turkey dinner. Our holidays came and went like any regular day.”

~Elder Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God’s Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 10)



Message from Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak

As First Nations people, each one of us has been impacted in some way by the legacy of the residential schools. Many children and youth experienced severe abuse and trauma while in the schools.

This past year has been extremely difficult for many of us, not only because we continued to live through a pandemic, but because we also learned about the uncovering of at least 215 unmarked graves at the former site of the Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia.



The uncovering of the grave sites started at the end of May 2021. The news made ripples across the country and it seemed that a dramatic increase in Canadians were becoming aware of the dark truth behind Canada’s history of residential schools. International media paid attention and people around the world

expressed their shock and dismay that Canada had treated Indigenous peoples in such a genocidal way. The Pope was forced to respond to the issue, although he didn't apologize.

The number of unmarked graves being uncovered in schools across Canada and the United States continues to grow. As Survivors and intergenerational Survivors, I urge you to look out for one another during these difficult times. It is not easy to continually hear about the atrocities of residential schools in the news and on social media.



While I'm grateful for the increased awareness of the dark legacy Canada has, I'm also aware there is much work to be done with limited resources. We outline some of the work being done on the issue of residential schools in chapter 2.

There is a need for us to develop plans to search for and locate potential unmarked graves at the locations of all former residential schools in Manitoba. There is a need for healing for the Survivors and for their children and grandchildren. There is much work to do and there are limited human resources to carry all this work forward. Please practice kindness with the people around you who are working on this difficult issue.

I'm thankful to the Elders and Survivors who have come forward with words of wisdom and guidance for me while we navigate these sad times. I rely on Elders and Survivors for guidance on what is needed to move forward in a good way.

Ceremonies are needed.

Many Survivors want to have ceremonies at all the schools our citizens attended. Support is needed in terms of finances to help transport Survivors to these sites. Funds are needed to help with accommodations, food, and to ensure we can pay for healers and counsellors to be on site to provide supports that are needed in dealing with these painful legacies. I will work to advocate for these supports for Survivors.

The painful legacy of residential schools is clear if you get into a discussion with First Nations people about the bush plane in Thompson. This plane can be a symbol for something we lost. There is a painful history connected to this bush plane and it's important for us to share what happened to our peoples at the hands of the church and the Canadian government. This bush plane continues to cause pain for many who see it.

On June 11, 2008, the Government of Canada apologized for the abuse, suffering, and generational and cultural dislocation that occurred because of the residential schools. This was an important step in recognizing the harms inflicted upon the first peoples of this country.

Together, we must work to build a brighter future for Indigenous peoples living in Northern Manitoba. Today, as we mark the first ever statutory holiday for Truth and Reconciliation Day, we acknowledge we are taking further strides toward truth and reconciliation. Our people are rising up and sharing their truths.

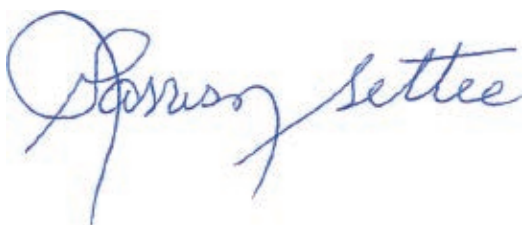
Congratulations to the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee on creating the monument for



residential school Survivors and for developing this resource book. It is my hope this will be the first edition of many. I commend the entire Committee for your ongoing work to lift and empower the Indigenous community in Thompson and surrounding areas.

I encourage all of you to read through this booklet to learn more about the residential school system and to take in the reflections shared by Northern Manitoba citizens on how residential schools have impacted them and their communities.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee



“My grandmother attended residential school and I know the impacts it has had on our family firsthand. I am proud of my grandmother for surviving 10 years in a residential school. For others who have a survivor in their family, I encourage you to recognize them for what they experienced. They are heroes. Let us not forget what happened to young Indigenous peoples across Canada. This is why we are working to overhaul the child welfare system and return children to our First Nations and their cultures. We still have a lot of work to do to heal from the intergenerational effects of the residential school system. We are strong people and we will continue to heal and build a brighter future for the generations of Indigenous children to come.”

~Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak



“That plaque has an impact because it is a place where a lot of the survivors go ... It brings you back to the time when you were maybe at the residential school far away from home, not being able to go home.”

~Elder Marie Ballantyne, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Monkman 2021)



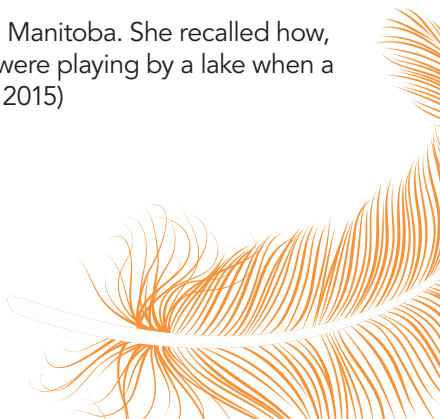
“A lot of kids were wrestled to go in the plane... They just put ‘em on a plane and took off from there. It was all about crying from there to Flin Flon.... I was standing there beside that plane, [and thought] boy, there must be a lot of tears here inside the plane.”

~Survivor Rene Jobb, Southend Reindeer Lake, Saskatchewan (Monkman 2021)



“My friend took off first. I remember this ‘cause it’s, and this guy just grabbed me and put me on the plane. And there were other kids in the plane already. And this was how w I ended up in Norway House. Not even saying, I didn’t even see my grandparents.”

~Survivor Dorothy Hart grew up in Northern Manitoba. She recalled how, when she was six years old, she and a friend were playing by a lake when a plane landed. (TRCC 2015)





“In the early years of the residential schools opening up, one of the ways that travel was done was through these bush planes as well as boats, canoes, and portaging through the bush. There are many modes of travel that they had, the train—the train is something that triggered my life many times, hearing the train whistle or trains horn or whatever you want to call it.

The different modes of travel and one of them was the bush plane. When they put up that bush plane, it reminded me of stories that were told to me by former students of the residential schools. My grandmother, my parents, different community members from York Landing and Ilford, passing through Ilford, Manitoba—that was the stopping point or there is a community next, a little community on the rail line next to Ilford where they used to stop to camp and wait for the train to come along.

Mostly the bush plane would be the thing that triggers most people when they come to Thompson from the outlying communities. That’s not a good feeling to have, when you see this plane right in the middle where you’re coming through to Thompson or, you know, when you’re traveling from outlying communities, the other communities that surround the region of Thompson.

That plane can trigger many memories, either by the former students of the residential schools or their families, because they tell stories to their families about how they were taken from their home community from their families.

I've heard stories from my grandfather, my step grandfather, and my parents about how they were taken from their homes. The plane there is a sad reminder of the times they were disconnected from family for almost a year.

Some of them didn't even come home, like my grandmother told me that she didn't come home for eight years until she was 16 years old. When she came home, she didn't know her language. She had to relearn her language and relearn her culture and her traditional ways.

Just seeing that plane floods your memory about many things, not only the fact about how you travelled from your home community. It floods the memory about many things that happened as a former student of these residential schools.

~Survivor Caroline Ouskan, Tataskweyak Cree Nation

Message from Mayor of Thompson

On behalf of the City of Thompson, I want to extend my congratulations to the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee on their important work of increasing awareness on the issue of residential schools and the ongoing impact of the system on Indigenous people in Northern Manitoba.

Our city is a hub for the First Nations of the North. The bush plane in Lion's Park is one of the first things people see when they are coming in from the North or from the airport. I have heard and I acknowledge that the bush plane causes pain to some people who see it. It is my hope that the reflection space and monument that has been created by the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee brings some healing and comfort to those who stop by.

It is also my hope that the monument helps to create clarity on how residential schools impacted Indigenous people, separating children from their families and communities. It is essential for us to talk about this issue and to take steps to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

Thank you to the members of the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee for helping our city take an important step forward on the path towards truth and reconciliation.

Mayor Colleen Smook

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colleen Smook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. To the left of the signature, there are some faint, stylized orange and yellow brushstrokes.



“It’s very difficult to go back and revisit those eras today.”

~Elder Betty Ross, Pimicikamak Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 75)



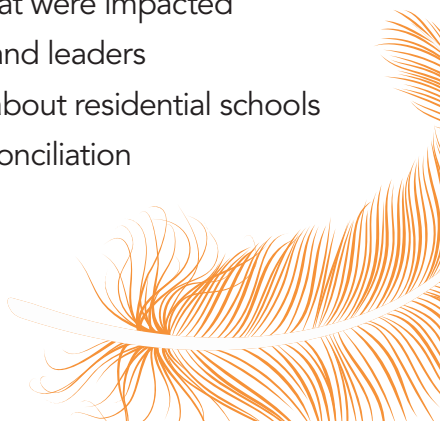
1. About this book

The purpose of this book is to help people learn more about the impact of the residential school system on Indigenous peoples living in Northern Manitoba. We hope you will learn more about past harms inflicted by the schools and move forward with us in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

We have attempted to include a variety of voices from citizens of Northern First Nations throughout the book.

This book includes information about:

- How the government worked to control Indigenous peoples in Canada
- What residential schools were
- What the purposes of the schools was
- What the residential schools were like
- The outcome/legacy of the residential schools
- Residential schools in Northern Manitoba
- Northern survivors: First Nations that were impacted
- Stories and quotes from Survivors and leaders
- Resources to help you learn more about residential schools
- The 94 Calls to Action: Truth & Reconciliation





“The whole truth about residential school and what really went on behind closed doors came out when Grand Chief Phil Fontaine and other First Nations people started opening up about it.”

~Band Councillor Fred Stevens, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Laviolette 2021)



1.1 How did the government work to control Indigenous Peoples in Canada?

When the country of Canada was created in 1876, so too was The Indian Act. This Act gave the Canadian government license to control almost every part of Indigenous peoples' lives. The Act required children to attend residential schools, most of which operated after 1880.

“The Act subsumed a number of colonial laws that aimed to eliminate First Nations culture in favour of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. The Act has been amended several times, most significantly in 1951 and 1985, with changes mainly focusing on the removal of discriminatory sections. It is an evolving, paradoxical document that has enabled trauma, human rights violations and social and cultural disruption for generations of Indigenous peoples.”

(The Canadian Encyclopedia 2021)

Christian churches and the Canadian government originally created residential schools.

1.2 What are residential schools?

Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools. They were created to assimilate Indigenous children

into Euro-Canadian society. You may have heard the saying, “kill the Indian in the child.”

Residential schools made a strong effort to remove the culture from First Nations people by taking actions such as separating children from their families, disallowing traditional practices, punishing children for speaking their First Nations language, and so forth.



Successive Canadian governments made laws to strip Indigenous peoples of basic human and legal rights, dignity, and integrity. They also created laws to gain control over the peoples, their lands and natural rights, and resources.

From the 1870s to the 1990s, Canada, often in partnership with church organizations, operated a residential school system to which over 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students were sent.

When it came time for children to attend residential school, parents often received no information as to which school their children would attend. In most cases, children/siblings from the same family were split up and sent to different residential

schools. The parents were not notified if something happened to their children if they didn't return from residential school.



“My dad went to Elkhorn. He was four years old when he was taken. He was four years old when he was taken and he never saw home until he was 16. My siblings and I, we are all residential school survivors. All my siblings went to Dauphin, McKay Student Residence and I went to Teulon. That was not our choice.”



~MKO's Mobile Crisis Response Team member Theresa Henderson, from the Tataskweyak Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba, shared her story of how residential schools impacted her life at a ceremony held at the Portage la Prairie Residential School. The ceremony was held in honour of the 215 children buried in unmarked graves in Kamloops.

1.3 What was the purpose of residential schools?

The goals of these schools were to “civilize” Indigenous peoples or as stated previously, “to kill the Indian in the child.” They worked to achieve these goals by forcibly converting Indigenous peoples to Christianity, and to integrate them into Canadian society through a process of cultural, social, educational, economic, and political assimilation.

1.4 What were the residential schools like?

Residential schools were underfunded and overcrowded. Survivors of residential schools have shared that they experienced starvation, neglect, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, often including isolation from normal human contact and nurturing.

Students were forcibly removed from their communities, homes, and parents. They were frequently forbidden to speak their

Indigenous language and perform traditional music and dance. Many children had their long hair cut off. Sisters and brothers were separated from one another, impacting families and communities in the longer term.



“There was nothing your parents could do and they didn’t know if you were ever going to come home again. That’s the way everyone needs to think about this, is how this has impacted everyone who experienced it.”

~Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation (Lavolette 2021)



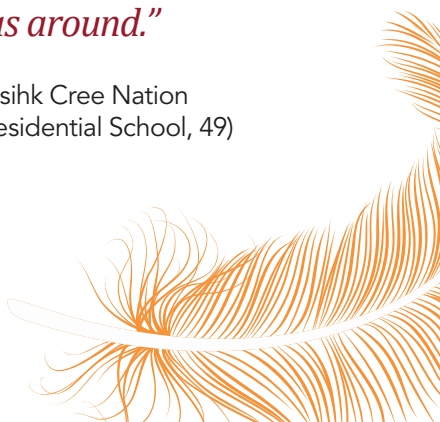
“We, the girls, were never allowed to mingle with the boys, nor even in the cafeteria, as there were designated sections for boys and girls.”

~Elder Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God’s Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 6)



“My siblings were with me in the years I was at Assiniboia, but we didn’t see each other all the time because the boys were on one side, the girls were on the other, and my sister had her own group of friends, but at least I knew she was around.”

~Elder Mabel Hart, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 49)



It is important to note that the experience of Survivors varied dramatically from school to school. As you will see throughout this booklet, we have included a variety of perspectives from Survivors.

1.5 What was the outcome of residential schools?

Residential schools caused immeasurable damage. The schools disrupted lives, disturbed healthy communities, and causes long-term problems. The impact of the schools is reflected in the quotes we share throughout this book.

The legacy of the schools has been to alienate generations of Indigenous peoples from their beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles. The damages inflicted by these schools created intergenerational trauma. This trauma continues to affect Indigenous peoples across Canada today.



“When my parents grew up and had us, their parenting skills weren’t really there... Parents show their love and kindness by hugging their children. We didn’t experience much of that growing up; it was very rare. That intergenerational effect was passed on to me and I was that way with my own children, but now I have a second chance with my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The intergenerational effect and trauma associated with that takes a long time to heal.”

~Band Councillor Fred Stevens, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Laviolette 2021)



It is thought that 6000 children died while in the residential school system, while many more remain unaccounted for. Officials often refused to send the bodies of dead children back

to their parents, claiming the cost was too high. Many children were buried in graves with multiple bodies. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, about 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools.

Many of us have our own personal ties to the impact of residential schools. It is nearly impossible to find any First Nation person who hasn't had a family member in residential school in Canada and that hasn't been impacted by it.



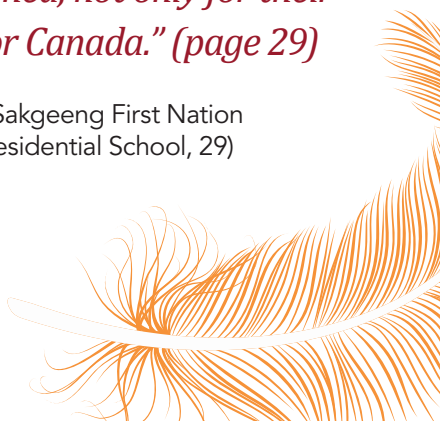
“There were fifty-three girls and forty-four boys, according to a picture of 1958, of the students at Assiniboia. Now it is the year 2016 and in this picture of 1958 I counted that twenty-eight have passed on already, at least of those I knew.

~Elder Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God's Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 9)



“Of those who survived Indian residential schools, many died early in life, struggling to overcome abuses, sorrow, and losses, experiencing lifelong effects and impacts. Those who couldn't survive were lost, with all they could have offered and accomplished, not only for their families and communities, but for Canada.” (page 29)

~The late Elder Theodore Fontaine, Sakgeeng First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 29)



2. The current situation

The uncovering of 215+ unmarked graves in Kamloops, British Columbia has triggered a growing dialogue about the impact of residential schools. Leaders are working to capitalize on this and make progress on a number of fronts when it comes to addressing the intergenerational impacts of residential schools on our communities.



“As we honour our survivors, we also know that as investigations continue thousands more unmarked graves will be found, and we cannot allow Canada to simply ‘move on.’ The nation’s attention to the horror of residential schools must not be lost.”

~Chief Morris Beardy, Fox Lake Cree Nation (Fox Lake 2021)





“What has occurred is a genocide... so this year we’ve decided to cancel Canada Day... It’s going to be a sombre day, a day of remembrance, a day of reflection and a call to action.”


~Chief Eric Redhead, Shamattawa First Nation (CBC News 2021)




Recent significant activities:

- May 18: State of emergency declared in Shamattawa First Nation due to high rates of suicide
- May 28, 2021: 215+ unmarked graves located at the site of the former Kamloops Residential School
- June 3, 2021: Federal government passed Bill C-5 to designate September 30 of each year as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- June 17, 2021: Healing gathering took place at the site of the former Brandon Residential School
- July 1, 2021: No Pride in Genocide event in Winnipeg and cancellation of Canada Day festivities in various First Nations



- 
- July 7, 2021: Premier of Manitoba Brian Pallister defends colonization/colonizers, causing much anger and distress to First Nations people (and their allies) across the province
 - July 9, 2021: Minister Eileen Clarke resigns from her position as Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations for the Province of Manitoba
 - July 14, 2021: State of emergency declared in Tataskweyak Cree Nation due to high rates of suicide
 - July 15, 2021: New Minister of Reconciliation and Northern Relations announced for Manitoba; Dr. Lagimodiere promptly makes unacceptable and damaging remarks about the intentions of residential schools at a press conference
 - July 19, 2021: Manitoba Grand Chiefs call for the resignation of Premier Brian Pallister following his remarks defending colonization
 - August 11, 2021: Premier Pallister announces he will not seek re-election
 - September 1, 2021: Premier Pallister steps down from his role as leader for the Province of Manitoba
 - September 3, 2021: Government of Manitoba formally recognizes September 30 as a day of observance to encourage reflection and meaningful discussion about the impacts of residential schools; announces Manitoba schools will close on Sept. 30
 - September 20, 2021: A federal election is held, Justin Trudeau and the Liberal party win a minority government
 - September 30, 2021: First time Orange Shirt Day is recognized as a statutory holiday, it is now known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Summer 2021:

- First Nations people promote renaming of schools and street names
- 

- First Nations across the country move forward on surveying/ searching for unmarked graves at residential school sites; the number of unmarked graves grows rapidly



“It’s time we heal our people and honour those impacted by residential schools, so we aren’t celebrating Canada Day this year, but instead paying tribute to all we have overcome as First Nations people and to remember those that didn’t come home.”

~Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation (Laviolette 2021)

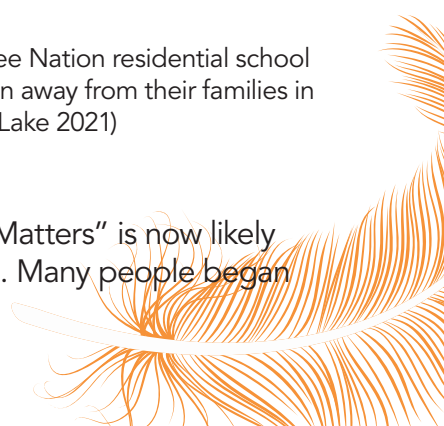


“As a national spotlight was shone on graves of children at residential schools, I found myself always thinking about those children that didn’t make it home. Those classmates in residential school that we never knew what happened to them. I think it’s important that we keep the national conversation going. We need to keep holding Canada and the churches accountable. We need to honour those little kids and the survivors. I ran away from residential school three times, and now I am walking to honour those that can’t because they never returned.”

~Councillor Sophie Lockhart, Fox Lake Cree Nation residential school survivor and one of the many children taken away from their families in Northern Manitoba (Fox Lake 2021)

2.1 Every Child Matters

The hashtag and slogan “Every Child Matters” is now likely widely recognized throughout Canada. Many people began



making t-shirts with the slogan and wearing/selling them in support of residential school Survivors. Northern First Nations organized walks and community events as a way to acknowledge the past and the truth, while thinking of the missing children as they become found. People started hoisting orange flags and putting up orange t-shirts in their windows to express solidarity with Indigenous people.



“Even though there’s heightened awareness now about what happened in the residential school system, a lot of the information was already known. Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) offered a detailed account of how Indigenous children and families were treated. We weren’t the first ones. In fact, I keep reminding people that this evidence about children dying in the schools and being improperly handled after death was revealed in a report done in 1907, by Peter Bryce. And when he wrote this report he was told to basically cover it up and he wouldn’t. Then he was fired.”



~Former Senator and former Chairman of the Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission Murray Sinclair (Smith 2021)



2.2 Cancellation of Canada Day 2021

On Canada Day 2021, many Indigenous people did not want to celebrate. Some First Nations held events to bring recognition to what happened in residential schools, but most importantly, as a way for people in the community to come together and heal. These events are an opportunity that many haven't been able to host until recent times.



“Everyone is hurting right now, because they think how it could have been one of their loved ones or maybe it provides them with an answer as to how their loved one never made it home from residential school. All Indigenous people are grieving right now and many are seeing how the effects of all this trauma has led to substance abuse and various other unhealthy lifestyle behaviours. It’s affecting everyone down the line.”

~Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation (Laviolette 2021)



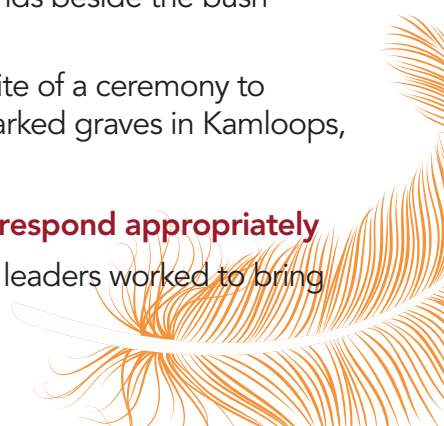
2.3 Reflection space in Thompson Lion's Park

In 2019, MKO and the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy worked together to create a plaque that would recognize the harm caused by the removal of children from their First Nations via bush plane. This memorial now stands beside the bush plane in the Lion's Park in Thompson.

In June 2021, this space was also the site of a ceremony to honour the 215 children found in unmarked graves in Kamloops, British Columbia.

2.4 Pressing federal government to respond appropriately

Throughout the summer, First Nations leaders worked to bring



awareness to the issue of residential schools and the damage created by this system. On June 4, 2021, MKO called on the federal attorney general to investigate the Indian residential school system as a crime against humanity.

On June 9, 2021, three Grand Chiefs in Manitoba joined Member of Parliament Leah Gazan to release a media statement calling on the Government of Canada to recognize residential schools as an act of genocide. They also held a virtual press conference to discuss the issue. Unfortunately, MP Gazan's motion was defeated in Parliament.



“All eyes are on Canada and it’s response to the deadly impacts of the residential school system on Indigenous people in Canada. I urge the Government of Canada to realize the utmost importance of a truthful response to the tragic discovery of hundreds of unmarked children’s graves in Kamloops. Today I stand with Leah Gazan as she calls on Canada to recognize that the residential school system fits the definition of genocide.”

~MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee, June 2021



2.5 Renaming schools, streets, and other public spaces

The discovery of growing numbers of unmarked graves at residential schools has opened up the possibility for making positive changes that may not have been feasible before. We now have the understanding of non-Indigenous Canadians around how harmful residential schools have been to our communities.

This means we are more easily to call out other practices, actions, and symbols that are hurtful and harmful to us. There

are conversations happening in various spaces about the need to rename streets and buildings in a way that respects Indigenous people. It is clear there are many symbols of colonization all around us.

In early June 2021, the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba quickly made a decision to remove the name Oscar Blackburn from their school this summer. They took action after discovering that Oscar Blackburn was involved in sending First Nation children to residential schools.



“Right away in my mind I said ... ‘This is very shocking. How is it going to impact our survivors?’...How they were, you know, uprooted from their family and taken away and then it triggered really this bad experience at the residential school.”

~Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (Cole 2021)



Around the same time, in early June 2021, award-winning Cree author David Robertson was amplifying his concerns around the use of the name “Bishop Grandin” for a major road in Winnipeg. As he shared at the time, “Bishop Grandin was one of the architects of the residential school system. He was personally responsible for the establishment of at least three of them.” (Thompson 2021).

The City of Winnipeg is now working with Elders, including a representative from Northern Manitoba, to work on renaming Bishop Grandin.

2.6 Ceremony at Brandon Indian Residential School

In 2018, Cree Elder Rebecca Ross approached Grand Chiefs



in Manitoba with a message from the late Dakota Elder Doris Pratt. She shared information about children being buried at the site of the former Brandon Indian Residential School.

There have been numerous graves located on site. Research shows there are (at least) 54 children from Northern Manitoba, between the ages of 7 to 16 years old, who are buried on the grounds of the former Brandon Residential School. Sadly, children and youth from Northern Manitoba are buried in an RV park called Turtle Crossing. Following lengthy pandemic lockdowns, a ceremony was held Dakota leaders and with the support of Elders and traditional people on June 17, 2021.

Elders, survivors, leaders, and others came together to host a special ceremony for the children buried in Brandon. Many prayers were sang and shared for the children who never made it home. The helpers who supported this ceremony include Ken Whitecloud, Lisa Meeches, Elder David Daniels, and Elders Thelma Morrisseau and Stan LaPierre.



Grand Chief Garrison Settee is pictured here with Chief Jennifer Bone of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation on June 17, 2021.



“For two years, I have been looking forward to the day when I could visit the site of the Brandon Residential School to pay my respects to the MKO children and teens who are buried there in unmarked graves. It was an important day for me and I send my heartfelt appreciation to Chief Jennifer Bone and the Council of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation for welcoming me to your territory. We worked to fulfill and honour the spiritual direction of the late Dakota Elder Doris Pratt, who expressed her vision for the children from Northern Manitoba who are buried in Brandon. This vision was brought forth by Pimicikamak Elder Rebecca Ross. I am thankful to all the Elders who provide direction and support on this.”

~MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee



Speech by Elder Rebecca Ross

Delivered in Brandon on June 17, 2021

Tansi, good morning, I greet you all this morning for we are blessed with another beautiful day. I want to acknowledge the Dakota people for welcoming us in their territory, the land of the Dakota Nations.

My name is Rebecca Ross, a retired educator from Pimicikamak Cree Nation. Both my parents went to residential school and 9 of us children also went to residential schools. My aunts went to this former Brandon Residential School.



I want to say welcome for coming to be part of this gathering to visit, and to honor the children's burial sites of this former Brandon residential school, Ekosani, Miigwetch to everyone.

Before I deliver the message that was given to me by the Late Elder Doris Pratt from the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. I also want to honour her.

The Late Dakota Elder Doris Pratt spent most of her life preserving and teaching the Dakota language. Elder Doris died March 6, 2019, at the age of 83 years. Doris has written some books on the preserving Dakota Language and shared her stories on residential experience. Doris believed in Lifelong

learning and she lived by that. She said, "You never stop learning."

In the summer of 2018, Elder Doris was one of the Elders who participated in the First Nation Language Strategic Working Group with Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. At one of these meetings, she shared her story about attending the Elkhorn Residential School at a very young age. She did not know anyone but become friends with the children from Northern Manitoba. She said it was the students from Northern Manitoba who took care of her and protected her.

Doris could speak enough English and translated for students who couldn't understand English. At this meeting she asked me to deliver a message to the Grand Chiefs of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs that, there are children from Northern Manitoba who are buried in former Elkhorn Residential School and most of these children are from Northern Manitoba.

Doris also talked about the former Brandon Residential School and she said many children are buried there too. In the fall of 2018, I delivered this message to the Grand Chiefs, but we know everyone is busy and the time passes by quickly and then this pandemic did not allow any gathering. She requested a ceremony and a feast to honour these children and should not be forgotten.

She said, "Those children were my friends and my protectors" and that is the message from Late Elder Doris Pratt. It is regrettable she passed, but we know she is here in spirit.

I have done some little research on these residential schools and found the lists of the children that died. The records of these many any of these children was very poor-Mamasees like:

- No age, birthdate or date of death
- Community unknown
- Cause of death unknown
- Cause of death recorded as tuberculosis

- Cause of death recorded as farming accident
- No records

It has almost been three weeks since we heard about the devastating news about the findings of the 215 children's remains at the former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. This is only one residential school of the 139 residential schools in Canada and how it impacts for all Indigenous people over 150 years of legacy. Not a legacy that anyone should be proud of."



"None of our grandparents or parents talked about what went on back then, but now with all that has come out about the treatment of our family members in residential schools, we are faced with the truth and need to acknowledge the abuse that took place. That is not easy. The effects of the abuse have been passed down to the next couple of generations and can't magically be undone. Now as they find all these unmarked graves with children's bodies in them, it's really hitting home as to what exactly went on in these schools."

~Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwipi First Nation (Laviolette 2021)



3. Residential schools in Northern Manitoba

This section provides the names and information about the residential schools that were located in Northern Manitoba. The information in this section comes from the website of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Manitoba Museum. The photos come from Archives Canada.

The National Centre for Truth and reconciliation has started listing the names of children who died at the schools. We are sharing them here as well. The National Centre would like anyone with more info on children who may have died at residential schools to share information with them. Their website shares the following message:



“There are some schools that do not contain a list of student names. This means that at present, we have no record of children having died as a result of their time at that school. There is a significant amount of work still to be done to ensure no child is forgotten. If you have any information on a child that did not return home from a school, please contact us at the NCTR.”



Churchill Vocational School: 1964 to 1973

In 1964, the Churchill Vocational School was set up at an abandoned military base in Churchill. The school was meant for Inuit students from the Eastern Arctic who were seeking post-secondary training.

The school was non-denominational but the hostel associated with the school employed Roman Catholic and Anglican staff. Students were segregated based on denomination. Some students also took classes at the local Duke of Edinburgh School.



Since it was always considered a temporary facility, the school administrators had ongoing difficulties in getting the federal government to make needed upgrades to the building.

Remembering Pauloosie Meeko, who died on November 17, 1968



“The news of the discovery of 215 children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School is yet another sign of the genocide committed against our people. It is time we find our loved ones. We call on you to act... We owe it to the families from Cross Lake, from Norway House, from Gods Lake, Gods River, or Island Lake, whatever child was brought over to the residential school here.”

~Chief David Monias, Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Monkman 2021)



Cross Lake: 1912 to 1969

The Cross Lake school was first created as a Roman Catholic day school. In 1912, it began to take boarders. In 1915, it opened as a residential school. This school was also known as St. Joseph's.

In 1930, one teacher and 12 children died in a fire that destroyed the school. Students lived at a number hostels associated with local Catholic day schools until a new school was built.

In 1940, the Cross Lake School was rebuilt. In 1960, the Jack River (Notre Dame) Hostel was recognized as a separate institution.

In 1969, the schools were transferred to the provincial education system.



“At St. Joseph’s Residential School, the priests, nuns, and brothers basically tried to crucify me because of who I was. I experienced every kind of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, verbal, and sexual abuse in that institution. They forced me to memorize Latin verses from the Bible—two straps for each mistake; and gave me tiny orange pills to take, where I lost consciousness every time, only to wake up naked, cold, and scared to death.”

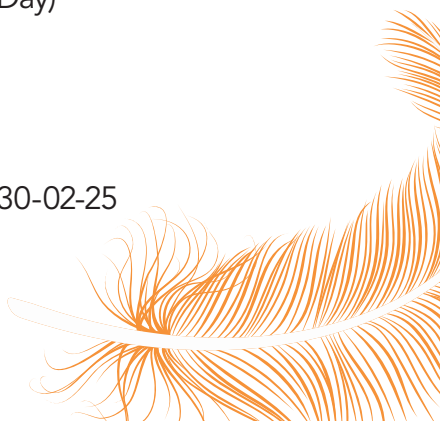
~Elder Betty Ross, Pimicikamak Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 76)



Remembering the following students:

Name and date of death (Year/Month/Day)

1. Agnes Thomas, 1930-02-25
2. Annie Crane, 1930-02-25
3. Betsie Osborne, 1946-05-13
4. Charlotte Mercredi (Cross Lake), 1930-02-25
5. Christie Ross, 1930-02-25



- 
6. Clémence Cook, 1930-02-25
 7. Connell Memekisik, 1943-08-15
 8. David Menow, 1947-05-30
 9. Emile Dumas, 1930-02-25
 10. Etienne Colombe, 1960-12-29
 11. Hyla Crate, 1930-02-25
 12. Hyla Moose, 1930-02-25
 13. Illa Frogg, 1930-08-01
 14. Jane Mckay, 1945-05-01 – 1945-05-31
 15. Job Andrew Flett, 1960-12-08 or 1960-12-28
 16. Lily Ross, 1943-02-25
 17. Margaret Jane Bee, 1942-05-29
 18. Marie Reine Scatch, 1945-06-21
 19. Martha Rivers, 1943-06-24
 20. Martha Scott, 1930-02-25
 21. Mary Ann François, 1930-02-25
 22. Mary Dixon (Cross Lake), 1943-06-11
 23. Nancy Flett, 1930-02-25
 24. Nora Blacksmith, 1930-02-25
 25. Norman Mckay, 1943-08-15
 26. Silas Thomas Frog, Not known
 27. Stella Keeper, 1943-06-24
 28. Therese Thomas, 1943-08-29
 29. Thomas Ross, 1942-01-01
 30. William Miller, 1942-08-09
- 
- 



Guy Hill Residential School: 1952 to 1979

The Guy (St. Therese) Indian Residential School (Treaty 6) was managed by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Roman Catholic Church (Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas). It began operating in 1926 at Sturgeon Landing, Saskatchewan.

By 1951, it was “woefully overcrowded” with a “rather serious epidemic” affecting 19 boys. On September 4, 1952, after sparks from a torch being used by maintenance staff ignited a fire in the engine room, the school burned to the ground. The school was relocated to Manitoba.

A temporary school opened in The Pas and a new school building opened in 1959, located in Clearwater Lake, Manitoba.

From 1971 to 1979, a Native Skills Program was offered at the school. While the school closed in 1979, during the 1990s, a number of Aboriginal health conferences took place at the school.

Remembering the Following Students:

Name and date of death (Year/Month/Day)

1. Helen Betty Osborne, 1971-11-13



2. Mary Dettanekease, 1964-06-24
3. Peter Bighetty, 1967-05-10



“As a child who went to residential school at the age of five, I want to send a message to the parents and all the relatives. I know you loved me. I never let you go. You were always in my thoughts, in my heart, in my tears, in my being. How could you not be?

I know you didn’t let me go, and that you loved me and carried me with you. Don’t feel guilty for what is not yours to carry. You have found me, and I am so glad you never gave up. Know that I always loved you, and still love you, as only a child could.

Remember my laughter, my spirit, my love of life, my love of stories and ceremonies. For that was always the part of you that I loved and carried close to me.

Remember to pass on the beautiful parts of our culture, because that is something they could never take away from us.

Remember we can never take away our love for each other.”

~Senator Mary Jane McCallum, of the Barren Lands First Nation, was removed from her family at the age of 5 to attend the Guy Hill Residential School. She attended the school for 11 years. The above quote comes from a speech she gave following the discovery of the 215 graves in Kamloops. (McCallum 2021)





MacKay Indian Residential School: 1914 to 1933

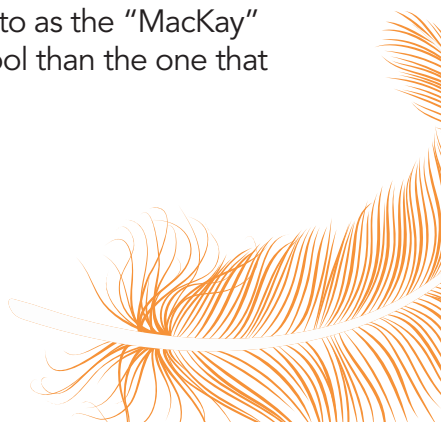
The Mackay Indian Boarding School was built about seven miles northwest of The Pas, Manitoba. It opened in October 1914.

It had a capacity enrolment of 81 students. The three-story frame building was steam-heated and lit by acetylene gas. A separate hospital was also erected nearby. The school was situated on Fisher Island, 10 kilometres up the Saskatchewan River from The Pas. A good supply of water was always available, but the land was unsuitable for farming except for a small vegetable garden.

In 1922, administration of the school passed from the Diocese of Saskatchewan to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, who operated the school until fire destroyed the main building in 1933. A replacement building was not built. Many displaced students were sent to Elkhorn and Lac La Ronge schools.

McKay Residential School (Dauphin): 1957-1969

This school is sometimes also referred to as the “MacKay” Residential School. It is a different school than the one that operated near The Pas, Manitoba.





The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation shares:

“While this school had the same name as the Anglican School in The Pas, it opened 20 years after The Pas school burned down and should be seen as a separate school. It originally operated as an elementary school, but additional dormitories were built in the 1960s to take in high school students who attended local day schools in Dauphin. Elementary school children who lived in Dauphin also attended the school as day students. In 1969, the McKay school closed, but the federal government continued to operate the residences (Scrase Hall and Spence Hall) up until 1988.”



Remembering the Following Students:

Name and date of death (Year/Month/Day)

1. Clara Moore, Not known
2. George Martin, 1933-02-05
3. Janet Moose, 1933-02-16
4. Joseph Star, 1932-01-01
5. Maria Lathlin, 1932-01-01
6. Nora Jane, Not known
7. Sinclair Anderson, 1905-04-15
8. Stella Constant, 1905-04-14
9. Wilfred Stewart, 1930-04-28



Norway House (Rossville): 1899 to 1967

In 1899, the Methodist Missionary Society of Canada began operating this Northern Manitoba school. The building burned down in 1913. A replacement school was opened in the following year. The new building burned down in 1946. It was replaced in 1954.

In 1907, a young boy was badly frozen and lost several toes

when in alarm over physical discipline, he ran away from the school.

In 1967, the property was transferred to the provincial government. The residence was converted to a day school.

Remembering the Following Students:

Name and date of death (Year/Month/Day)

1. Absolam Monias, 1940-04-12
2. Bella Maminawatum, 1941-02-15
3. Caroline Simpson, Not known
4. Eliza Keno, 1940-05-05
5. Elizabeth Sinclair, Not known
6. Harriet Munro, 1940-09-10
7. Isla Little, 1959-03-12
8. James Muswaggan, 1918-04-17
9. John Keeper, Not known
10. Levi Harper, 1940-07-15
11. Madaline Monday, 1918-05-15
12. Madeleine Monias, Not known
13. Sophia Queskakpo, 1940-08-24

Notre Dame Hostel (Jack River Annex): 1960 to 1967

Associated with the Roman Catholic mission at Norway House, the Notre Dame Hostel succeeded the Jack River Annex. Until 1960, the Jack River Annex at Norway House was funded as part of the Cross Lake School.

Starting in 1960, the facility was funded directly. It began to be known as the Notre Dame Hostel. In 1968, Canada and the Frontier School Division signed the Norway House Joint Agreement transferring operation of the schools in the area to the Frontier School Division. School staff had the opportunity to work for Frontier School Division following the agreement.

Pine Creek (Camperville): 1890 to 1969

The Pine Creek School opened in 1890, closed in 1892, and then reopened in a larger building in 1894. In 1899, a newer and larger building was constructed. The school and the surrounding farmland covered about 632 acres.

Frustration, homesickness, and conflicts over discipline led students to run away or to engage in acts of arson. In 1928, eight boys ran away from the school at once. Two years later, a boy was caught trying to set the school on fire. The school closed in 1969.



Remembering the Following Students:

Name and date of death (Year/Month/Day)

1. Albert Nepinak, 1951-04-08
2. Alexander Cook, 1938-07-29
3. Cecilia Catcheway, 1946-01-01
4. Charles Morrisseau, 1951-12-16
5. Domistille Nepinak, 1933-08-16

6. Florence Nepinak, 1943-01-01
7. George Mckay, 1940-01-01
8. Helen Kemp, ca. 1919-01-01
9. Ida Kakiwash, 1942-08-22
10. Louis (Pine Creek), Not known
11. Maggie Moore, 1934-10-25
12. Margaret St. Paul, 1940-01-01
13. Mary Kirkness, 1925-01-01
14. Raymond Eagle, 1944-05-26
15. Richard Cook, 1938-09-04
16. Sarah Jane Catcheway, 1944-01-01 – 1945-12-31
17. Sarah Jane Eagle, 1943-09-12 or 1943-09-13
18. Sophie Moore, 1934-12-25
19. Theodore Cook, 1935-12-02
20. Theresa Thomas, 1942-05-24
21. Thomas Nepinak, 1944-01-11



“One time, I uttered a Cree word softly to one of the girls, without knowing that a nun stood behind me. She heard what I said and immediately slammed my head on the cement floor, kicking my left ear with her pointed Oxford shoes. To this day, the hearing in my left ear is shattered. I also experience chronic migraines due to repeated head bangs on cement walls by nuns if I missed a marching step.”

~Elder Betty Ross, Pimicikamak Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 77)

4. Northern Survivors: First Nations that were impacted

It is unclear exactly how many children from Northern Manitoba attended residential schools, however, we can surmise that a majority of children attended these schools. It is also unclear exactly how many children went missing or who are buried in unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. There is much work to be done in finding answers to these questions.

It is our hope that by sharing the perspectives of some of the Northern Manitoba citizens who were forced to attend these schools, we can create stronger awareness of the significant impact these schools have had on Northern Manitoba communities.



“Residential school survivors and their families continue to struggle with the lasting intergenerational impacts of being torn from their families, culture, and communities. Some of our people are still lost in addictions, scared to deal with their issues and afraid of the outcome of reopening old wounds. They need options close to home in order to work through the horror of their experience, learn healthy ways to cope, and come to a place of healing that breaks the cycle and starts to rebuild family and culture.”

~Councillor Sophie Lockhart, Fox Lake Cree Nation (Fox Lake 2021)



As we acknowledge the fact that many children attended schools outside of their home communities, we must also recognize that today there are still many First Nations that don't have access or resources/capacity to deliver post-secondary education up to grade 12. In these communities, families must make the difficult decision for their children to leave the First Nation to pursue their high school education.



4.1 Hearings in Northern Manitoba

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) held hearings across Canada to provide Survivors and others affected by the residential school system the opportunity to speak directly to one of the TRC Commissioners. Participants also had the opportunity to give their statement to one of the TRC's statement gatherers.

The Commission held two hearings in Northern Manitoba: the Thompson Hearing took place on September 25 and 26, 2012, while the Garden Hill Hearing took place on February 19 and 20, 2013.

You can read stories from Survivors who attended residential schools on the website of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. There are a number of reports available for free here: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports>

4.1 Residential schools: Where the children were taken

Children from Northern Manitoba were taken to many different schools, including some out of province. The following maps shows locations of the residential schools throughout Manitoba.



Image: © Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg, MB.



“Many children from our area who attended residential school were scattered all over in different locations. I am a second-generation residential school survivor and my father, as a youth, was sent to Prince Albert Residential School and then Birtle Residential School. Many of our Elders attended the Pine Creek – Camperville Residential School as children. So everyone in our community has been deeply impacted by residential schools.”

~Band Councillor Fred Stevens, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Laviolette 2021)



4.2 Reflections from the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation

By Chief Lorna Bighetty



The Mathias Colomb Cree Nation are Ethinew and signatory to Treaty 6. We are a remote northern Cree community of approximately 4500 members located at Pukatawagan, Manitoba, which is about 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg.

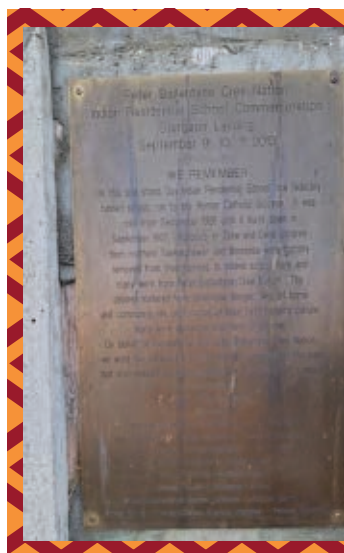
As Chief of our community, I extend my support and condolences to the families, communities, Nations, and Indian Residential School Survivors who continue to be impacted by

the findings of undocumented and missing children at former Residential School sites across Canada and Turtle Island.

Some of you may know the residential school system was a program designed and implemented by the state and churches from 1883 to 1996. The system, using the misnomer of “schools,” was a destructive framework that used the doctrines of discovery and of racial superiority to forcibly remove Indigenous peoples’ children from our Nations and ultimately from our lands and territories.

September 30th is Orange Shirt Day – a day named for a story shared by Phyllis Jack, who was wearing her orange shirt her Kookum gave her. The shirt was stripped from her on her first day of residential school at the tender age of 6.

To this day, our children continue to be forcibly removed from our homes and families into the provincial child welfare systems. The devastation and effects of racist and colonial violence enacted upon our Nations are reflected



through legislated poverty, reservation systems, the Indian Act, incarcerations, suicides and addiction that we suffer among other devastations and most importantly our relationship to lands and territories.

I want to announce that the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation is undertaking the task of **BRINGING OUR CHILDREN HOME**. This work will take place under Pethakohewamak: One family – One Nation.

Pethakohewamak will encompass work with children, youth, and families under C-92, and also through site reclamation work for former sites of Indian day school(s), residential school(s), and sanatoriums where our Band and family members were forced to attend.



As Ethinew survivors, we always knew about our missing children and family members. The work on Pethakohewamak and former school site investigations provide opportunity to our families and communities to find the children and bring them home, and to have ceremony guided by our communities so these children can be properly laid to rest with the love and respect they deserve.

I stand with all First Nations in seeking the truth and finding accountability for the missing children in all former residential school sites across Canada. We honour the lives and the survivors and support the necessary work required to have the

children returned to their families and communities with proper protocol.

Today, the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is a revelation to the country of Canada – and we know as Ethiniwak and First Nation peoples that we have always been here and have been sharing our truth of colonization. Today marks a day where we can share our story and be heard. Our goal is to build awareness, empathy and equity across Canada so we may walk a path to redress and reconciliation.

This is not just our Nehithaw history – It is part of Canadian history, our right to self-determination and everyone needs to know.

We wear orange shirts today in solidarity with all First Nations and everyone who survived the residential school system, as well as those who did not, including the missing and undocumented children, their families, communities, and Nations. We stand together to share in the whole truth telling so that we can one day arrive at reconciliation and the dismantling of systems of racist colonialism and oppression to stand as true treaty partners in the place we call home.

Ekosi.





4.3 Reflections from the Norway House Cree Nation

By Chief Larson Anderson, Norway House Cree Nation



Chief Anderson of Norway House Cree Nation is firm in his statement, "Never again will the power of government attempt to destroy us as a people or a Nation, to obliterate our cultures, languages and our way of life from this land, the land we have occupied since time immemorial."

The term residential schools refer to an extensive school system set up by the Canadian federal government.

Residential schools were boarding schools for First Nations children and youth, financed by the federal government but staffed and run by several religious institutions and staff.

The government's policy was to do more damage and equally explicit objectives of indoctrinating them into Euro-Canadian and religious ways of living and assimilating them into mainstream Canadian society. The system forcibly separated children from their families for extended periods of time and forbade them to acknowledge their First Nations heritage and culture or to speak their own languages.

Except for two residential schools in Norway House, often the residential schools were located far from the students' home communities. Children were severely punished if these institutes, among other, strict rules were broken.

Former students at residential schools have spoken of horrendous abuse at the hands of residential school staff that include but are not limited to physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological. Residential schools provided First Nations students with inappropriate education, often only up to lower grades, that focused mainly on prayer and manual labour in agriculture, light industry such as woodworking, and domestic work such as laundry work and sewing.

Residential schools systematically undermined First Nations cultures and disrupted families for generations, severing the ties through which First Nations culture is taught and sustained, and contributing to a general loss of language and culture. Because they were removed from their families, many students grew up without experiencing a nurturing family life and without the knowledge and skills to raise their own families.



The devastating effects of the residential schools are far-reaching and continue to have a significant impact on Northern First Nation communities where services and programs are limited due to isolation factors. The residential school system is widely considered a form of genocide because of the purposeful attempt from the government and church to eradicate all aspects of Indigenous cultures.

Leading up to the residential school era, the European settlers brought with them the assumption that their own civilization was the pinnacle of human achievement. They interpreted the socio-cultural differences between themselves and First Nations peoples as “proof” that Canada’s first inhabitants were ignorant, savage, and like children in need of guidance. They felt the need to “civilize” First Nations peoples. Education, a federal responsibility, became the primary means to this end.

Living conditions at the residential schools was to eliminate all aspects of First Nations culture. Students had their hair cut short, they were dressed in uniforms, they were often given numbers, and their days were strictly regimented by timetables.

Boys and girls were kept separate, and even siblings rarely interacted, “beyond a mere wave in the dining room,” further weakening family ties. In addition, students were strictly forbidden to speak their languages—even though many children knew no other or to practice First Nations customs or traditions. Violations of these rules were severely punished.



Abuse at the schools was widespread: emotional and psychological abuse was constant, physical abuse was used as a form of punishment, and sexual abuse was also common. Survivors recall being beaten and strapped; some students were shackled to their beds; some had needles shoved in their tongues for speaking their native languages. These abuses, along with overcrowding, poor sanitation, and severely inadequate food and health care, resulted in a shockingly high death toll.

Some former students have positive memories of their time at residential schools, and certainly some might have been treated with kindness by the priests and nuns who ran the schools as best they could, given the circumstances. But even these “good” experiences occurred within a system aimed at destroying First Nation cultures and assimilating First Nation students.

The ongoing impacts of the residential school system is viewed by much of the Canadian public as part of a distant past, disassociated from today’s events. In many ways, this is a misconception.

The last residential school did not close its doors until 1996, and many of the leaders, teachers, parents, and grandparents of today’s First Nations communities are residential school Survivors.

Although residential schools have closed, their effects remain ongoing for both Survivors and their descendants, who now share in the intergenerational effects of transmitted personal trauma and loss of language, culture, traditional teachings, and mental/spiritual wellbeing.

The Residential School experiences have had profound effects in Norway House Cree Nation families and community. These effects have come to be known as the “intergenerational legacy” of the residential school system, influences that have been passed on from generation to generation. This intergenerational legacy has been described as

the “effects of physical and sexual abuse that were passed on to the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of First Nation people who attended the residential school system.”

From a First Nation perspective, these effects are expressed in the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of the First Nations life experience. This intergenerational legacy is expressed in many ways, including alcohol and drug abuse, low self-esteem, high incarceration levels, dysfunctional interpersonal relationships, suicide, depression, oppression and abuse of others, and cultural identity confusion.

Moving forward, Norway House Cree Nation demand the federal government implement The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Action is long overdue, and I believe that the Government of Canada must formally commit to working in collaboration with First Nations and engaging Canadians in implementing the Commission’s calls to action.

In 2010, the Canadian Senate adopted a motion to study and report on the progress made on the Government of Canada’s commitments since the apology to former students at Indian Residential Schools. There is still a strong indication that little progress has been made by the federal government to truly address the magnitude of damage created by the residential school experience.

True and meaningful reconciliation is critical to healing and



moving forward at every level. Residential school survivors will be encouraged to share their experience with their immediate family members and how to best reconcile. There is an increased need to develop culturally appropriate services and programs with the financial supports as part of the reconciliation process as my community struggles to overcome this legacy that attest to the spirit and resilience of the people of Norway House in their resolve to heal and forgive.

4.4 Survivor messages for youth

Many people living in our communities express the fact that the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system are responsible/the cause for many of the troubling issues we face today. One concern that comes up for leaders and Survivors is the well-being of young people today and the impact of residential schools on their wellness.

A number of Survivors share messages of encouragement for youth:



“It’s important to address the youth, to encourage them just to keep going, despite all the problems that they run across. I know we were in boarding residential school and we were segregated and the whole bit, but now the current generation is out there facing all the challenges of today—the social media, the bullying, and the rest of it.”

~Elder Mabel Hart, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 48)



“I am still working at the school as an Elder to the Cree program, assisting the Cree language teacher as much as I can... I love it and cannot stress enough the importance of passing down our beautiful Swampy-Cree language, given to us by the Creator. We must pass it down to the young people, their children and babies so they can be blessed in life. Ekosani, Kinanaskomitinawaw.”

~Elder Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God's Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 14)



“I wanted to do this for the youth—not to give up. There's hope out there for them to do whatever they want to do. I know it sounds like a cliché, but you just have to persevere... As Survivors we need to tell our stories for our youth, and actually for the non-Aboriginal people to know that we do it. I have a Master's in Public Administration in the area of health, and I obtained that at the tender age of sixty before I retired.”

~Elder Mabel Hart, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 51)



4.5 Survivor stories/reflections



“During the first year and week of August 1958, after we arrived at the new school, we asked the nun supervisor if we could go shopping at the T. Eaton Store. She had to ask the principal first and we were allowed to go as long as we returned by 6:00 p.m.

The T. Eaton Store was the company from which we used to make our mail orders from the catalogues, which were sent to all the Northern reservations. We used to look forward to receiving these catalogues. But we had no idea where the T. Eaton Store was and nobody offered to drive us there. We had no idea how to catch a bus either.”

~Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God’s Lake First Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 7)



“People were sad, there’s no kids around there after they went to school. All the kids are gone. Just for the summertime to come, we don’t have any kids when they went to school. There’s no kids around there when they started going to school in Dauphin. We can’t go visit, nobody help us to go visit in Dauphin until you finished school, that’s when I went over there. Indian Affairs doesn’t even help us to go visit. Nothing. And when somebody’s kids are sick there, just like Sylvia Saunders died over there and my brother died over there, we never even go see him. He went to the hospital right there after when he finished school. My mom used to cry lots taking it hard. Indian Affairs only coming there by plane from Ilford to tell my parents my brother is dying.”

~Dorothy Redhead, York Factory First Nation (YFFN 2012)



“I don’t really know how many of them had received their residential school compensation, which was a complicated process, hard to understand with all the forms involved. This is especially true for the Northern men and women. It was difficult and many gave up on their claims. As it was, many did not get professional

counsellors to help guide them or even counsel them on how to answer all their questions. It was a very emotional and discouraging process. To this day, there is all that unused compensation money. Do we even know what happened to it?"

~Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God's Lake First Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 9)



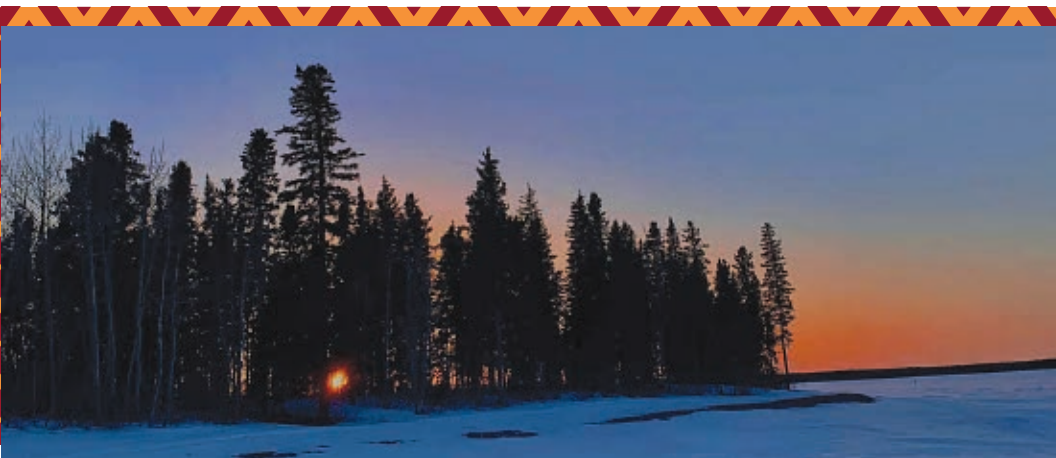
"I love what I do. Schools fly me in to do presentations on residential school. I love doing it."

~ Survivor and Band Councillor Hubert (Gilbert) Hart, Norway House Cree Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 72)



"Coming from such an abusive institution as St. Joseph's residential School, I felt very cautious, vigilant, and head onto trust issues that first year."

~Elder Betty Ross, Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 77)



"I didn't know that my father attended two residential schools while he was a child. Our parents didn't talk about it when we were growing up for they felt ashamed. If and when I did ask a question, the only answer I would get was it was hard. I only found out later that my father wasn't allowed to speak his language or practice his culture while attending the school. In fact, if they were caught, they were punished. I have helped family members with this process and it's been unbelievably haunting to do, for it's like getting them to relive those horrible moments... Then many Indigenous people faced prejudice when they came out and told their stories, for it was viewed as a way to get a financial payout. What many people don't realize is that residential school survivors didn't tell their story for the money, they told their story as a means to an end and a way to heal from it. These survivors needed to know what happened to them wasn't their fault and need to release the heaviness of it."

~Band Councillor Fred Stevens, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Laviolette 2021)



“Many non-Indigenous people don’t understand the trauma and negative impact that residential schools had on Indigenous people. Trauma can be passed down many generations and bring forward life damaging behaviours and habits that are hard to break. Imagine you are six years old and some stranger comes and rips you out of your mother’s arms.”

~Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation (Laviolette 2021)



“The discipline was cruel for young children to comprehend. Scrubbing large bathroom floor stalls with toothbrushes until it was squeaky clean. Being told not to speak my Dene language was confusing because that was the only language I understood.”

~Survivor Bernice Thorassie, Sayisi Dene Denesuline Nation



“I am a survivor of residential school. A survivor who worked at overcoming obstacles of genocide and colonization. It is a life-long process of generational healing.”

~Survivor Lorna Hart, O-Pipon Na Piwin Cree Nation



4.6 The Cree language and residential schools: Reflections upon the uncovering of 215+ unmarked graves

*By Dr. Stewart Hill, MKO Senior Research and Policy Analyst,
God's Lake First Nation*

I went for a walk during the lunch hour and I was thinking about these priests, "brothers," nuns and preachers that killed these children.

In our Ininiw language, we call a priest or preacher, "Amekimow" (A-meh-ki-mow) or "one that talks to Manitou/ Creator" or even, "the gifted one that talks to Creator," a very high and prestigious title.

But when a human being kills another human being, they become known as "Onipatakew" or "murderer"... in this case, the priests or preachers (or anybody for that matter) becomes known by this word, Onipatakew (murderer).

In essence, as the names of these priests become known, they are stripped of their title in our language of Amekimow and become known as Onipatakew (murderer).

That is how truthful and honest our Ininiw language is... those that killed should never be called Amekimow, but Onipatakew.

To make the world understand the devastation that was caused to us as a Peoples, we need to explain these residential "institutions" or these genocidal camps (I do not like calling them "schools" because their basic intent was never to "educate" or benefit, but to "kill the Indian in the child") in terms of our culture and language as I do above, and not so much from our colonized minds.

I heard a presentation one time by Barbara Hill in Ottawa, of no relation, but she had little time and she is Algonquin. She explained our social structure in a circular format or series of circles. She said the children were in the center of Indigenous society, next were the Elders who taught the children, and next were the women who took care of the Elders and children and on the outer circle were the men who protected, hunted, and

provided for the society. Everyone had a role and responsibility, and as the boys and girls became older, they went through a "right of passage" and joined the men or women and learned from them, so you can imagine a living, moving dynamic social system. Each circle or social level had a "bundle," but she did not have time to explain these. I have the impression there is a lot more to it than I explain here, especially the "bundles." As the children were taken away by the government and churches to be "killed," this dynamic social system began to "implode" or collapse because the children were the foundation of our societies.

The point is, in the reconciliation process, our culture, language and social conditions need to be understood and a key consideration in the healing of not only our people, but the healing of everyone involved. But the process needs to start with the respect and recognition of us, as the Indigenous Peoples of this land. Healing will require a lot of hard conversations on both sides of the pain caused by residential institutions, and it needs to begin with listening to and acknowledging the cultures and experiences of Indigenous Peoples.



5. Resources: Learning more about residential schools:

There is a growing number of resources that can help you learn more about residential schools in Canada. We have shared some ideas below:

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation used to carry out a lot of research and published many comprehensive documents about residential schools. Although the Foundation is closed on September 30, 2014, you can still access their publications online at <https://www.ahf.ca/>

Legacy of Hope: Where are the Children?

<http://legacyofhope.ca/wherearethekids/>

This website includes a wide range of resources about residential schools, including survivor stories available on video. There are stories from people who attended residential schools in Manitoba.

Legacy of Hope Foundation: National Exhibition Catalogue

<http://legacyofhope.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/LHF-Exhibition-Catalogue.pdf>

Mackay Residential School Gathering Inc.

<https://mackayrsgathering.ca/>

This website is run by former students of the Mackay Indian Residential School in Dauphin, Manitoba. The group holds gatherings and plan initiatives aimed at healing, sharing, and supporting one another. The website is updated regularly.

Residential Schools in Canada: Education Guide

http://education.historicacanada.ca/files/32/ResidentialSchools_English.pdf

Shattering the Silence: The Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in Saskatchewan eBook:

<http://www2.uregina.ca/education/saskindianresidentialschools/>



“We had pretty good teachers and a few people nobody ever liked. With all the teachers in the world, it’s always that way.”

~Survivor and Band Councillor Hubert (Gilbert) Hart, Norway House Cree Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 69)



5.1 Solidarity actions for allies

There are many non-Indigenous people who would like to show their support while we continue to uncover unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. In solidarity, here are some actions you can do:

- Listen to Indigenous people and build friendships with us



- Personalize and internalize what happened to survivors, families, and communities—honestly imagine if the

government came for your children and you could do nothing about it.

- Seek out Indigenous knowledge, including stories we have written ourselves
- Purchase books by Indigenous authors
- Share your books with others once you are done reading them
- Attend pow wows and other similar events when it's safe to do so
- Keep your Indigenous friends in your thoughts and prayers
- Keep the children who didn't make it home in your prayers
- Check in with your Indigenous friends to see how they are doing
- Bring/send your Indigenous friends and neighbours some food
- Make food for people who are living on the street
- Wear an orange shirt
- Buy an orange shirt from an Indigenous company



- Tie orange ribbons on the trees, fences, street posts, and hand rails in your area
- Hang an orange t-shirt up somewhere in a visible place
- Listen to what First Nations leaders are saying
- Support their advocacy work by making calls and sending letters/emails to your local Member of Parliament, your Member of the Legislative Assembly, your Premier, and your Prime Minister
- Stand up to racism
- Donate to Indigenous causes/charities/non-profit organizations
- Support Indigenous businesses and artisans
- If you are in a position of influence, make space for Indigenous people at the table, in the boardroom, etc.
- Volunteer your time to help with Indigenous events, non-profit organizations etc.
- Visit and follow Reconciliation Canada (<https://reconciliationcanada.ca/>) on social media (<https://www.facebook.com/ReconciliationCanada>)

5.2 Recommended Readings on Residential Schools: Office of the Treaty Commissioner

The following book list was created by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

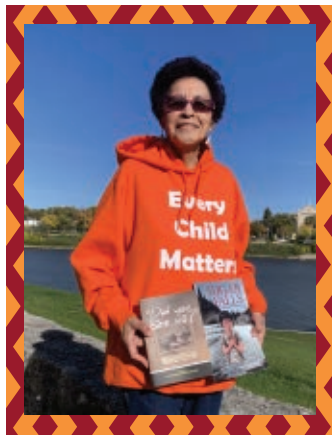
For Adults & Young Adults

- Indian Horse - Richard Wagamese
- Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City - Tanya Talaga
- In Search of April Raintree - Beatrice Mosionier
- The Break - Katherena Vermette
- Porcupines and China Dolls - Robert Arthur Alexie
- The Marrow Thieves - Cherie Dimaline



- Five Little Indians - Michelle Good
- One Story, One Song - Richard Wagamese
- The Red Files - Lisa Bird-Wilson
- The Education of Augie Merasty - Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter
- They Called Me Number One - Bev Sellers
- I Lost My Talk (poem) - Rita Joe
- Moon of the Crusted Snow - Waubgeshig Rice
- Up Ghost River - Edmund Metatawabin with Alexandra Shimo
- For Children
- Phyllis's Orange Shirt - Phyllis Webstad
- Shi-shi-etko - Nicola Campbell
- Shin-chi's Canoe - Nicola Campbell
- The Train - Jodie Callaghan

- Fatty Legs - Christy Jordon-Fenton & Margaret-Olemaun Pokiak-Fenton
- I Am Not A Number - Jenny Kay Dupuis
- When We Were Alone - David A. Robertson & Julie Flett
- A Stranger At Home - Christy Jordan Fenton & Margaret-Olemaun Pokiak-Fenton
- When I Was Eight - Christy Jordan Fenton & Margaret-Olemaun Pokiak-Fenton
- Stolen Words - Melanie Florence
- We Feel Good Out Here - Julie-Anne Andre & Mindy Willett
- When We Play Our Drums, They Sing! / Lucy and Lola - Richard Van Camp & Monique Gray Smith
- Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story - David Robertson
- As Long as the Rivers Flow - Larry Loyie
- I'm Finding My Talk - Rebecca Thomas
- Amik Loves School - Katherena Vermette
- I Can Make This Promise - Christine Day

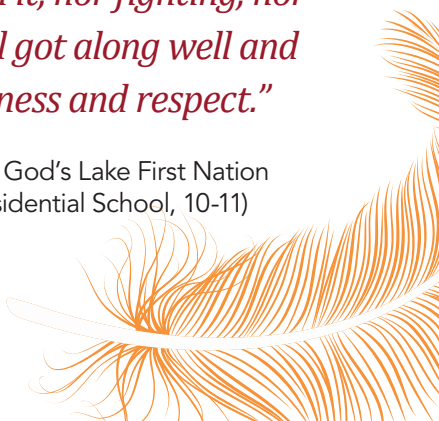


Elder and Survivor Betty Ross



“There was no such thing as ‘bullying’ in our school. I don’t recall any encounters with it, nor fighting, nor arguing among the girls. We all got along well and treated each other with kindness and respect.”

~Elder Dorothy Ann Crate (nee James), God’s Lake First Nation
(Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 10-11)



For school:

- Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City - Tanya Talaga
- Indian Horse - Richard Wagamese
- Dear Canada, These Are My Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens - Ruby Slipperjack
- In Search of April Raintree - Beatrice Mosionier
- My Name is Seepeeetza - Shirley Sterling
- I Am Not A Number - Jenny Kay Dupuis
- We Feel Good Out Here - Julie-Anne Andre & Mindy Willett
- When We Play Our Drums, They Sing! / Lucy and Lola - Richard Van Camp & Monique Gray Smith
- Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story - David Robertson
- As Long as the Rivers Flow - Larry Loyie
- The Red Files - Lisa Bird-Wilson
- The Education of Augie Merasty - Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter
- Speaking Our Truth - Monique Gray Smith
- I Lost My Talk (poem) - Rita Joe
- 7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga - David A. Robertson
- Amik Loves School - Katherena Vermette



"People talk about their own personal residential school experience. That's only my own personal experience. Nobody else has it."

~Survivor and Band Councillor Hubert (Gilbert) Hart, Norway House Cree Nation (Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, 72)



6. The 94 Calls to Action: Truth & Reconciliation

In the 1980s and 1990s, Survivors began to speak out about the abuses they had experienced in the residential schools. They took the Government of Canada and the churches involved to court for damages and compensation.

By 2001, an estimated 78,500 people had gone to court or were preparing to do so. Most of these people were working together in a number of class action lawsuits. Faced with a deluge of lengthy court battles, the Government of Canada and the churches entered into a negotiated settlement with the Indian residential school Survivors. The result was the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, reached in 2005. It was ratified in provincial courts in 2006 and implemented in 2007.

One of the legacies of the Agreement was the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ("the Commission") in 2008. The Commission delivered its final report in December 2015. More than 6750 people gave statements to the Commission. The Commission identified 94 recommendations, or Calls to Action, which are specific ways that Canadian society can help make amends for the injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples, particularly the legacies of the Indian residential school system.



Many of the Calls to Action call for the Government of Canada to take action, while others include provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. Many of the Calls to Action appeal to the Canadian people to honour the legacy of the residential schools and to help right injustices through concrete actions.

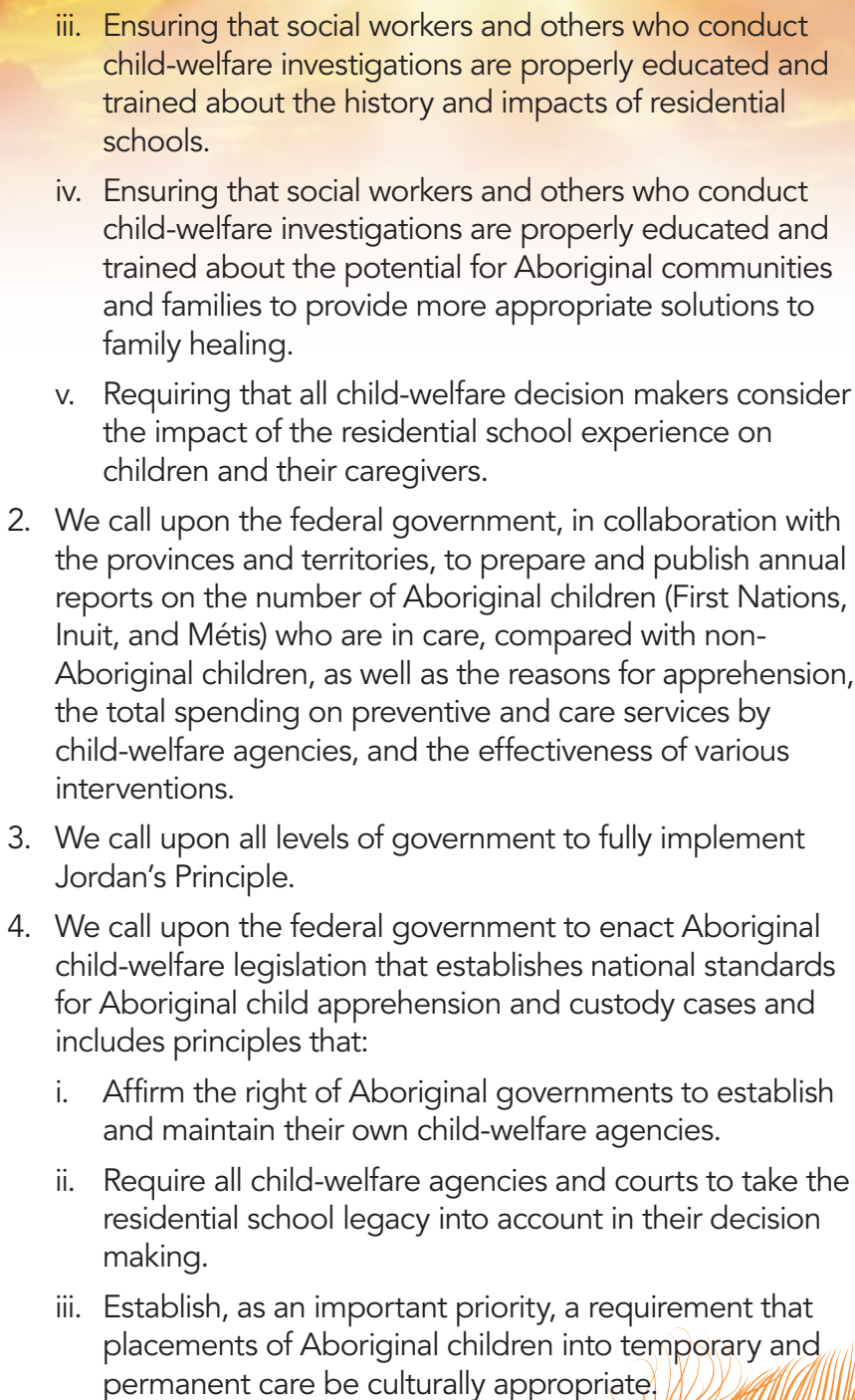
We are including all 94 Calls to Action in this booklet for anyone who is interested in reading them.

To redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action:

Legacy Child welfare

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:
 - i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.
 - ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.



- 
- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
 - iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
 - v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.
 3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.
 4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:
 - i. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
 - ii. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
 - iii. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.



5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

Education

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.
7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed

consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
 - ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
 - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
 - vi. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
 - vii. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
 - viii. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
 - ix. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

Language and culture

13. We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.
14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:
- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
 - ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
 - iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide

sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.

- iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
- v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.



- 15. We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-languages initiatives.
- 16. We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
- 17. We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth

certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

Health

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
20. In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.
21. We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.
22. We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment

of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.

23. We call upon all levels of government to:

- i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.
- ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- iii. Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.



24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Justice

25. We call upon the federal government to establish a written policy that reaffirms the independence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to investigate crimes in which the government has its own interest as a potential or real party in civil litigation.
26. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to review and amend their respective statutes of limitations to ensure that they conform to the principle that governments and other entities cannot rely on limitation defences to defend legal actions of historical abuse brought by Aboriginal people.
27. We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
28. We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law



students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism.

29. We call upon the parties and, in particular, the federal government, to work collaboratively with plaintiffs not included in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to have disputed legal issues determined expeditiously on an agreed set of facts.
30. We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.
31. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.





32. We call upon the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to allow trial judges, upon giving reasons, to depart from mandatory minimum sentences and restrictions on the use of conditional sentences.
33. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize as a high priority the need to address and prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and to develop, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.
34. We call upon the governments of Canada, the provinces, and territories to undertake reforms to the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), including:
 - i. Providing increased community resources and powers for courts to ensure that FASD is properly diagnosed, and that appropriate community supports are in place for those with FASD.
 - ii. Enacting statutory exemptions from mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment for offenders affected by FASD.

- iii. Providing community, correctional, and parole resources to maximize the ability of people with FASD to live in the community.
 - iv. Adopting appropriate evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of such programs and ensure community safety.
35. We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system.
36. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work with Aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence, and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused.
37. We call upon the federal government to provide more supports for Aboriginal programming in halfway houses and parole services.
38. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.



39. We call upon the federal government to develop a national plan to collect and publish data on the criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization.
40. We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.
41. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry's mandate would include:
 - i. Investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.
 - ii. Links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.
42. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems in a manner consistent with the Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by Canada in November 2012. Reconciliation Canadian Governments and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation

45. We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:
- i. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.
 - ii. Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
 - iii. Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.
 - iv. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indigenous laws and legal traditions in negotiation and implementation processes involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements.
46. We call upon the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to develop and sign a Covenant of Reconciliation that would identify principles for working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in Canadian society, and that would include, but not be limited to:
- i. Reaffirmation of the parties' commitment to reconciliation.
 - ii. Repudiation of concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such



as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and the reformation of laws, governance structures, and policies within their respective institutions that continue to rely on such concepts.

- iii. Full adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
 - iv. Support for the renewal or establishment of Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.
 - v. Enabling those excluded from the Settlement Agreement to sign onto the Covenant of Reconciliation.
 - vi. Enabling additional parties to sign onto the Covenant of Reconciliation.
47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

Settlement Agreement Parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation. This would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:

- i. Ensuring that their institutions, policies, programs, and practices comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- ii. Respecting Indigenous peoples' right to selfdetermination in spiritual matters, including the right to practise, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent



with Article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- iii. Engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- iv. Issuing a statement no later than March 31, 2016, from all religious denominations and faith groups, as to how they will implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



49. We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.

Equity for Aboriginal People in the Legal System

50. In keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.



51. We call upon the Government of Canada, as an obligation of its fiduciary responsibility, to develop a policy of transparency by publishing legal opinions it develops and upon which it acts or intends to act, in regard to the scope and extent of Aboriginal and Treaty rights.
52. We call upon the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the courts to adopt the following legal principles:
- Aboriginal title claims are accepted once the Aboriginal claimant has established occupation over a particular territory at a particular point in time.
 - Once Aboriginal title has been established, the burden of proving any limitation on any rights arising from the existence of that title shifts to the party asserting such a limitation.

National Council for Reconciliation

53. We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed

by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations, and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Monitor, evaluate, and report annually to Parliament and the people of Canada on the Government of Canada's post-apology progress on reconciliation to ensure that government accountability for reconciling the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown is maintained in the coming years.
- ii. Monitor, evaluate, and report to Parliament and the people of Canada on reconciliation progress across all levels and sectors of Canadian society, including the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.
- iii. Develop and implement a multi-year National Action Plan for Reconciliation, which includes research and policy development, public education programs, and resources.
- iv. Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation.

54. We call upon the Government of Canada to provide multi-year funding for the National Council for Reconciliation to ensure that it has the financial, human, and technical resources required to conduct its work, including the endowment of a National Reconciliation Trust to advance the cause of reconciliation.

55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to:

- i. The number of Aboriginal children—including Métis and Inuit children—in care, compared with non-Aboriginal



children, the reasons for apprehension, and the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies.

- ii. Comparative funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves.
- iii. The educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
- iv. Progress on closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- v. Progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in youth custody over the next decade.

- vi. Progress on reducing the rate of criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization and other crimes.
 - vii. Progress on reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice and correctional systems.
56. We call upon the prime minister of Canada to formally respond to the report of the National Council for Reconciliation by issuing an annual “State of Aboriginal Peoples” report, which would outline the government’s plans for advancing the cause of reconciliation.

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Church Apologies and Reconciliation

58. We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.
59. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church’s role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools,

and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.

60. We call upon leaders of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, Survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.



61. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement, in collaboration with Survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for:
- i. Community-controlled healing and reconciliation

projects.

- ii. Community-controlled culture- and language revitalization projects.
- iii. Community-controlled education and relationship building projects.
- iv. Regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation.

Education for reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
 - ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
 - iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
 - iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal



peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
 - iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
 - iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.
64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

Youth Programs

66. We call upon the federal government to establish multiyear funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

Museums and Archives

67. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.

68. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and the Canadian Museums Association to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 by establishing a dedicated national funding program for commemoration projects on the theme of reconciliation.

69. We call upon Library and Archives Canada to:

- i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Ortlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.
- ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public.
- iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.



70. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices to:
- i. Determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.
 - ii. Produce a report with recommendations for full implementation of these international mechanisms as a reconciliation framework for Canadian archives.



Missing Children and Burial Information

71. We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

72. We call upon the federal government to allocate sufficient resources to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to allow it to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.
74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location, and to respond to families' wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.
75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.
76. We call upon the parties engaged in the work of documenting, maintaining, commemorating, and protecting residential school cemeteries to adopt strategies in accordance with the following principles:
- i. The Aboriginal community most affected shall lead the development of such strategies.
 - ii. Information shall be sought from residential school

Survivors and other Knowledge Keepers in the development of such strategies.

- iii. Aboriginal protocols shall be respected before any potentially invasive technical inspection and investigation of a cemetery site.



National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

- 77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
- 78. We call upon the Government of Canada to commit to making a funding contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, plus an additional amount to assist communities to research and produce histories of their own residential school

experience and their involvement in truth, healing, and reconciliation.

Commemoration

79. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:
- i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
 - ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
 - iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.
80. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday,



a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

81. We call upon the federal government, 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 National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.
82. We call 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.
83. We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

Media and Reconciliation

84. We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada's national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Increasing Aboriginal programming, including Aboriginal-language speakers.
 - ii. Increasing equitable access for Aboriginal peoples to jobs, leadership positions, and professional development opportunities within the organization.



iii. Continuing to provide dedicated news coverage and online public information resources on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians, of Canada including the history and legacy of residential schools and the reconciliation process.

85. We call upon the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, as an independent non-profit broadcaster with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal peoples, to support reconciliation, including but not limited to:

- i. Continuing to provide leadership in programming and organizational culture that reflects the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.
- ii. Continuing to develop media initiatives that inform and educate the Canadian public, and connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

86. We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.

Sports and Reconciliation

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
89. We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.
90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
 - i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
 - ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
 - iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
 - iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs.



91. We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.

Business and Reconciliation

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the

corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Newcomers to Canada

93. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.
94. We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.



"The more I share my story and these experiences, the stronger and more resilient I become as a result of it. I always tell people, we can't forget about the children who never came back from residential school."

~Band Councillor Fred Stevens, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Laviolette 2021)



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“My mom had prepared me in a Native clothing. She had made me a buckskin jacket, beaded with fringes.... And my mom did beautiful work, and I was really proud of my clothes. And when I got to residential school, that first day I remember, they stripped us of our clothes.”

~Survivor Martin Nicholas, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (TRCC 2015)



“My 17-year-old once shared with me that the legacy of First Nations in this country is very sad and bad at times; it can be hard to be proud of being Indigenous. The schools don’t celebrate First Nation achievements enough. As a mother, this makes me concerned about the intergenerational impacts of residential schools on our young people. There is much work to be done as we work towards truth and reconciliation.”

~Agnes Dantouze, Northlands Denesuline First Nation





Message from the author: Melanie Ferris

Ekosi, masi cho, miigwetch, and thank you to the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy for the opportunity to put together this book, Honouring the Ancestors: Remembering the Legacy of the Residential School System in Northern Manitoba. As an intergenerational Survivor, I'm very interested in hearing the stories of Survivors and to learn more about the ongoing

impacts of the school system.

I'm thankful to be able to have the opportunity to listen to Survivors. Please keep sharing your stories. If you are a Survivor from Northern Manitoba who is interested in sharing your story for a future publication, email: melanie.ferris@mkonorth.com

A note about the pictures and artwork in this book

Many of the photos in this booklet come from MKO youth between the ages of 12 and 18. These young people took part in an online youth cultural festival earlier this year called Honouring the Gifts. The pandemic, followed by the ongoing discovery of unmarked graves at residential school, is extremely difficult for many people, including children and youth. I enjoyed being able to see all the contest entries and know many people felt very thankful to the youth for sharing their gifts with the world during this difficult time.

There are many young people struggling now. It is my hope that this booklet helps youth learn more about what our family members have survived. We come from strong people. It is my hope youth enjoy seeing their creative talents reflected in this booklet.

Other photos by: Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Yawhann Chong, Melanie Ferris, River Johnson, Robert Rideout

Residential school photos in chapter 3 are from the website of Library and Archives Canada







HONOURING OUR ANCESTORS

REMEMBERING THE LEGACY OF THE RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL SYSTEM IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

