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Raising Awareness

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Why We Recognize September 30th

Today, as we observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it is important to understand the meaning behind the day and its significance in the reconciliation process. It is critically important for all Canadians to listen to Survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and educate Canadians about their experiences. The following information is intended to start the education process and encourage you to continue the conversation. We encourage you to forward this bulletin to your employees to encourage discussion on this topic.

**HR Performance & Results recognizes that this commitment to learning extends far beyond September 30th. We encourage you to continue the conversation and commitment to learning throughout the year.*

A Brief History of Colonization in Canada

Before the arrival of European explorers and traders, Indigenous Peoples were organized into complex, self-governing nations throughout what is now called North America. In its early days, the relationship between European traders and Indigenous Peoples was mutually beneficial. Indigenous Peoples were able to help traders adjust to the new land and could share their knowledge and expertise. In return, the traders offered useful materials and goods, such as horses, guns, metal knives, and kettles to the Indigenous Peoples. Colonizers used their numbers, laws, policies, and powers to gain control of Indigenous Peoples, thus leading Indigenous Peoples to be dependent on colonizers.

First introduced in 1876, the Indian Act subsumed a number of colonial laws that aimed to eliminate First Nations culture in favour of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. It is the primary law the federal government uses to administer Indian status, local First Nations governments and the management of reserve land. It also outlines governmental obligations to First Nations peoples.

Residential Schools in Canada

For a period of more than 150 years, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation children were taken from their families and communities to attend schools which were often located far from their homes. More than 150,000 children attended Indian Residential Schools. Many never returned.

The first church-run Indian Residential School was opened in 1831. By the 1880s, the federal government had adopted an official policy of funding residential schools across Canada. The explicit intent was to separate these children from their families and cultures. In 1920, the Indian Act made attendance at Indian Residential Schools compulsory for Treaty-status children between the ages of 7 and 15. The last school closed in 1996.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) concluded that Residential Schools were “a systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples.”

The schools were often underfunded and overcrowded. The quality of education was substandard. Children were harshly punished for speaking their own languages. Staff were not held accountable for how they treated the children. The system forcibly separated children from their families for extended periods of time and forbade them to acknowledge their Indigenous heritage and culture or speak their own language. Children experienced horrific physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse. These abuses, along with overcrowding, poor sanitation, and severely inadequate food and health care, resulted in a shockingly high death toll.

The purpose of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is to provide an opportunity to recognize and commemorate the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools, and to honour their survivors, their families, and communities.

On this day, Canadians are encouraged to take time to educate themselves on the harmful legacy of the residential school system in Canada, as well as on the many different Indigenous communities across Canada and their unique cultures, histories, and traditions. We have included some resources to help to educate you below, including videos, news articles, books, and podcasts by Indigenous people. You can also join us today in wearing the colour orange to raise awareness about the history and legacies of the residential school system in Canada.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is recognized as a statutory holiday in the following provinces and territories: British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon, as well as federally regulated workplaces.

Resources

Articles and Books




[Namwayut - A Pathway to Reconciliation](#)

This article features an excerpt from the book, which explores Chief Robert Joseph's experience as a survivor of the Canadian residential school system and provides a platform for reconciliation moving forward.

 [21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act](#)

This article is written by Chief Robert Joseph and provides a comprehensive overview of the Indian Act.

 [On National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Murray Sinclair challenges Canadians to be mindful year-round](#)

An article by the CBC features words from Murray Sinclair on the importance of continuing the conversation about reconciliation year-round.

 [Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation & Residential School](#)

This book is a collection of personal essays from residential school survivors and their experiences.

 [5 Little Indians](#)

This is an award-winning novel by Michelle Good, a Cree author, about Indigenous children taken from their families and sent to residential schools.

 [Books by Joshua Whitehead](#)

Joshua Whitehead has written a number of poems, essays, and novels. He is an Oji-Cree, Two-Spirit author, academic and storyteller.

Podcasts

 [A Day to Listen 2024](#)


This year's theme for this podcast is All My Relations, which is a term used by Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island to convey that everything is interconnected - humans, animals, plants, insects, and inanimate objects.

 [A Collection of Indigenous Podcasts by CBC](#)

CBC article exploring 7 Indigenous podcasts available to stream. The podcasts cover a variety of topics, including Canadian Indigenous history, an exploration of reclaiming language used to hurt Indigenous peoples, a history of Métis peoples, Indigenous self-discovery, and more.

 [Native Currents](#)

A podcast exploring current events and topics that relate to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

 [All My Relations](#)

A podcast that explores relationships between Indigenous peoples and what being an Indigenous person is like in North America.

Coffee with My Ma

A storytelling podcast hosted by a daughter who speaks to her mother about various stories from her life as an Indigenous woman.

Videos

Residential Schools in Canada - A History

A video by Historica Canada that details the history of residential schools in Canada.

Residential School Survivors on the Scars of Abuse

Three residential school survivors speak about their experiences and the abuse suffered. **Warning:** video contains upsetting content.

Namwayut: We are all one. Truth and Reconciliation in Canada

Chief Robert Joseph speaks about his experience attending a residential school as a child. **Warning:** video contains upsetting content.

Murray Sinclair: Moving Reconciliation Forward in Canada

Murray Sinclair speaks to the CBC about how Canada can move towards reconciliation. **Warning:** video contains upsetting content.

Indigenous Feature Films

Reel Canada provides a selection of diverse feature films created by Indigenous filmmakers from across Canada.

Websites

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

The NCTR was created as one of the directives from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), and is intended to be a centre of truth, education, and conversation. The NCTR has statements, documents, and research collected by the TRC that can be accessed via their archives.

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

IWGIA is a human rights organization who works globally to protect and promote Indigenous peoples and their rights.

Indigenous Works

Indigenous Works is a non-profit organization that works to engage and include Indigenous peoples in the Canadian workforce.

National Association of Friendship Centres

The NAFC represents provincial and territorial associations and friendship centres across Canada. Friendship centres provide crucial supports and services to urban Indigenous peoples.

Blog



SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

'Indigenous peoples' is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices, and...

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