

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

“When the present does not recognize wrongs of the past, the future takes its revenge. For that reason, we must never, never turn away from the opportunity of confronting history together – the opportunity to right a historical wrong.”

-Former Governor General Michéle Jean

The creation of residential schools was a destructive policy that applied to Indigenous communities and that legacy is far-reaching. The recognition of September 30 as a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a response to Call to Action #80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, directed at the Federal Government. Given the national reckoning with the legacy of residential schools that has been thrust to the forefront, the day marks a solemn opportunity to reflect on how these legacies have forever altered Indigenous peoples and their communities and the personal action that every Canadian can take to effect change.

“The residential school system is a national tragedy borne by colonialism and propelled by systematic racism. Acknowledging this past and educating Canadians about the experiences of Indigenous children in these schools will ensure that this history is never forgotten. It is an important step toward in righting past wrongs. The introduction of Bill C-5 is a step forward in the healing process of the survivors that were harmed under the federally operated residential school system. Today is a day for commemoration and a day for Canadians to hope for a better future as we acknowledge a shameful past. Let us forever banish the racist ideology that allowed it to exist and happen. Let us honour the children who survived residential schools, and those who did not, by working together toward a renewed partnership built on respect, dialogue and recognition of rights.”

-The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services

Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: An Introduction to Jeremy Dutcher

Jeremy Dutcher is a “performer, composer, activist, and musicologist. A member of Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, Jeremy first did music studies in Halifax before taking a chance to work in the archives at the Canadian Museum of History, painstakingly transcribing Wolastoq songs from 1907 wax cylinders. ‘Many of the songs I’d never heard before, because our musical tradition on the East Coast was suppressed by the Canadian Government’s Indian Act.’ Jeremy heard ancestral voices singing forgotten songs and stories that had been taken from the Wolastoqiyik generations ago.”

Many indigenous languages are at risk of being lost forever and there are only 100 Wolastoqey speakers left.

You can learn more about Jeremy and listen to his music on his website: [Jeremy Dutcher • Order Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa](#)



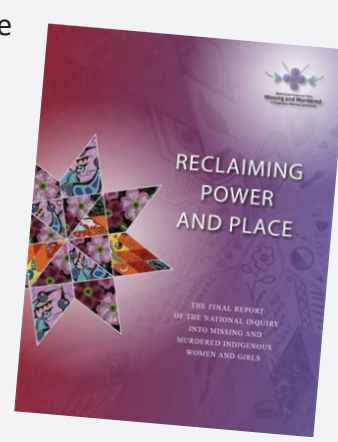
Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: The Status of Indigenous Women

Did you know that the Indian Act denied Indigenous women status? If an Indigenous woman married a non-Indigenous man, she lost her status within the meaning of the Indian Act as did any children of the couple. Between 1958 and 1968 alone, more than 100,000 women and children lost their status as a result. The Indian Act and its regulations are considered one of the primary causes of the vulnerability of Indigenous women today.

The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released on June 3, 2019 and delivers 231 Individual Calls for Justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians.

You can view the full report here: <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

Source: “21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act” by Bob Joseph



Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Gallery of Artistic Impressions

“Art is a powerful tool for commemoration. Public commemorations, through art, can help bring forward personal stories of colonial violence. Art as commemoration bears witness to injustice, recognizes human dignity of victims and survivors, and calls institutions, systems and structures to account. The National Inquiry is honored to share some of the hundreds of artistic expressions gifted throughout the Truth Gathering Process.”



You can view this powerful gallery here: [Artists | MMIWG \(mmiwg-ffada.ca\)](#)

Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: The History of Orange Shirt Day

Phyllis Webstad is Northern Secwepemc from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. She is the founder of Orange Shirt Day, which occurs on September 30 and was the basis for selecting that date as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Phyllis is the author of “The Orange Shirt Story” for readers aged 7-10 and “Phyllis’s Orange Shirt” is an adaptation for readers aged 4-6.



You can read and listen to more from Phyllis on CBC’s “The Next Chapter”: [Phyllis Webstad reflects on inspiring Orange Shirt Day and starting a movement | CBC Radio](#)

Source: [cbc.ca](#)

Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: Books by Indigenous Writers

David A. Robertson, a Cree author based in Winnipeg, curated a list of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and children’s books by Indigenous writers to understand residential schools. According to David, the reason he created this list was:

“My grandmother, Sarah Robertson, attended Norway House Indian Residential School in the 1920s and early 1930s. She died having never told her story, other than to remark to one of her granddaughters how sad it had made her when they cut her hair. And to tell my mother that her sister had died while attending Towers Island Day School, but she’d not found out until long after Maggie’s death.

Her experience is lost history, a story that will remain forever untold. At Norway House Indian Residential School, officials fed children rotten food. Girls slept outside on balconies because enrolment was always overcapacity. Kids were tied up so that they wouldn’t run away. In 1907, a boy, Charles Cline, ran away after getting beaten for wetting his bed. He lost six toes after seeking protection from the elements in a shed. And how were school officials held accountable? Charles’s mom was given a bag of flour every month for the rest of the school year.

My grandmother may have experienced similar trauma or may have avoided it by some miracle, but we’ll never know.”



The full list of books can be found here: [48 books by Indigenous writers to read to understand residential schools | CBC Books](#)

Source: [cbc.ca](#)

Today's Truth and Reconciliation Moment: 21 Things We Can Do to Change the World

Source: “21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act” by Bob Joseph

1. Attend or volunteer at a National Indigenous Peoples Day event.
2. Participate in a Walk for Reconciliation or organize one.
3. Attend and support Indigenous community events.
4. Donate books by Indigenous authors to school libraries.
5. Ask your children’s teachers if they include curriculum related to residential schools and the Indian Act.
6. Read books by Indigenous authors.
7. Read books by Indigenous authors to your children.
8. Donate sports equipment to remote Indigenous communities.
9. Donate time to coach Indigenous sports teams in your community.
10. Ensure you buy authentic Indigenous art.
11. Buy food from an Indigenous food truck; each in an Indigenous-owned restaurant.
12. Learn the Indigenous names for where you live and work.
13. Support Indigenous language revitalization.
14. Attend an Indigenous film festival.
15. Attend an Indigenous music festival.
16. Attend a pow wow.
17. Support efforts to stop inappropriate usage of Indigenous imagery for mascots.
18. Speak up when you observe cultural appropriation. Ensure you don’t promote cultural appropriation when choosing a Halloween costume.
19. Speak up when you hear someone making derogatory remarks about Indigenous people.
20. Write a letter to your MP to support the dismantling of the Indian Act.
21. Encourage family and friends to commit to helping change the world.

