

What is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation?

National Day for *Truth and Reconciliation*, September 30th will now be a statutory holiday, to commemorate the tragic legacy of residential schools in our country. This date coincides with Orange Shirt Day, which began in 2013, and involves wearing orange shirts to honour Indigenous children forced to leave their families to attend residential schools.

What is Residential School?

Residential schools were church-run schools where approximately 150,000 Métis, Inuit and First Nations children were sent between the 1860s and the 1990s. The schools harmed Indigenous children by removing them from their families, forcing them to speak English or French instead of their ancestral languages, disconnecting them from their culture and traditions and forcing them to adopt Christianity in order to assimilate into Canadian society. The government has since acknowledged that this approach was wrong, cruel and ineffective, and offered an official apology to the Indigenous people of Canada in 2008.

Why September 30th?

September 30th falls during the time of year when Indigenous children were taken away to residential school.

What is Orange Shirt Day?

Orange Shirt Day (September 30th) is a day when we honour the Indigenous children who were sent away to residential schools in Canada and learn more about the history of those schools.

Why the Orange shirt?

The “orange shirt” in Orange Shirt Day refers to the new shirt that Phyllis Webstad was given to her by her grandmother for her first day of school at St. Joseph’s Mission residential school in British Columbia. When Phyllis got to school, they took away her clothes, including her new shirt. It was never returned. To Phyllis, the colour orange has always reminded her of her experiences at residential school and, as she has said, “how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.”

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How can we support?

Find an Orange Shirt Day Event. We are hosting an information table & candle light vigil. Look for other community events at schools, community groups, and Indigenous communities across Canada.

- Learn about residential schools. Find out more about the history of schools, the experiences of Survivors, and the impact that residential schools have had on Indigenous people and communities.
- Learn about assimilation and colonization in Canada and understand residential schools as one part of a much bigger systemic problem.
- Hold space for Survivors and their families, listen to their experiences and honour them.
- Wear an orange shirt on September 30th, participate in an event, or work with a group to host an event of your own
- Raise awareness. Share information about residential schools and survivors with your friends, family, classes, or social media followers.

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