

TRIGGER WARNING This website contains subject matter that may be disturbing to some visitors, especially to Survivors of the Residential School System. Please call the crisis line if you or someone you know is triggered while reading the content of this website.

Why do we have orange shirts, pins, decals, and ribbons?

On May 27, 2021 Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation recovered remains of 215 children buried using ground-penetrating radar at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Some were as young as three-years-old.

Since then, there have been other recoveries across Canada. This number is [expected to continue to grow](#).

Orange ribbons were used to acknowledge the unmarked graves of these recovered Indigenous children on the properties of government funded Indian Residential Schools across Canada. These orange ribbons correspond with Orange Shirt Day.

The orange ribbons and shirts are not enough. They are great ways of showing support but without an understanding of the history and lasting impacts of Residential schools, it diminishes the purpose of the support. That is why we have included information, support lines, ways to show support, donation links, and educational links. Please take the time to read as this is just as important as showing support.



What is Orange Shirt Day?

Residential school survivor, Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, tells the story of her first day at residential school. Her grandmother had gifted her a shiny new orange shirt. The shirt, a symbol for her connection to her family, was immediately taken from her. She was not allowed to have any connection to home. She was just six years old.

Orange Shirt Day is an annual event on September 30th that creates meaningful global conversations on all aspects of Residential Schools, including the lasting impacts felt today. It is a day to actively listen to stories of survivors and their families with open hearts, and to remember those who didn't make it home, and to reaffirm that survivors matter and so do their stories.



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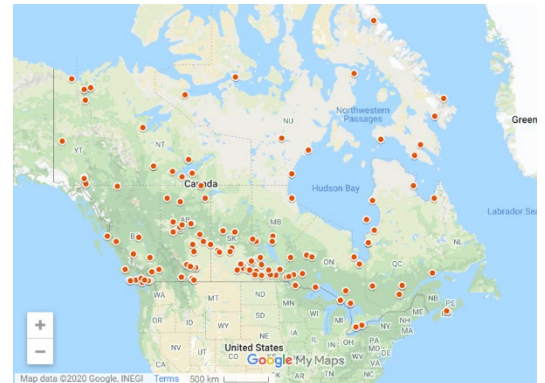
What are Residential Schools?

Indian Residential Schools were created by the Church and the Canadian government to assimilate Indigenous children into Canadian colonial society and commit cultural genocide posed as 'education'. Education at residential schools was substandard as the lessons were utilized as a way enforcing colonial ways of living, language, gender roles, and beliefs onto Indigenous children. For example, survivors of residential schools describe in detail how children faced harsh punishment for speaking their own languages. Many children at residential schools suffered various forms of abuse; often at the hands of officials charged with caring for them. These schools disrupted lives and communities, causing long-lasting intergenerational trauma among Indigenous peoples, including many staff here at Wanuskewin.

The Indian Act made attendance at Indian Residential Schools compulsory for Indigenous children. The forceful apprehension of children from their family, homes and communities was assisted by the North-West Mounted Police, which has transitioned into Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). If family refused to comply with the compulsory attendance order, they were threatened with fines, arrest, jail time, and threat of the schools withholding their children during holidays. An estimate of 150,000 children were forced to attend Canadian government operated residential school. Many schools were purposely built far from the children's home communities, which made it difficult for parents to contact their children and to discourage children from escaping to return home.

Over 130 government-run residential schools operated in Canada between 1831 and 1996, and the Canadian government acknowledges all. Other schools were operated by the church and provincial governments but these institutions still refused to acknowledge their participation in their operation. By refusing to acknowledge their roles in operating these schools, the church and provincial government have excluded these survivors from any government support and settlement.

Some of the last residential schools to close in Canada were located here in Saskatchewan. The Gordon Residential School in Punnichy and St. Michaels Residential School in Duck Lake both closed in 1996. Even though these schools are all closed, the impact on Indigenous people is still felt today. It is important that we acknowledge written and oral Indigenous Canadian history, and its lasting legacy. Acknowledgement creates conversation, spaces, and actions towards change in our communities, societies, and homes that can improve the lives of everyone residing on Indigenous lands.



The Canadian Encyclopedia - Residential Schools in Canada Interactive Map

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If you need help:

Learning about the Residential schools can be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually difficult. It is important to learn and educate yourself, support survivors by advocating and amplifying Indigenous voices, but it is also important to **take care yourself**. Please do not hesitate to use these supports.

Residential School survivors:

Indian Residential School Crisis Line: [1-866-925-4419](tel:1-866-925-4419)

Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581971225188/1581971250953>

Indian Residential Schools Survivor Society: [1-800-721-0066](tel:1-800-721-0066)

MMIWG2S survivors:

Nation Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Toll- free Support Phone Line: [1-844-413-6649](tel:1-844-413-6649)

Family Survivor Circle: <https://familysurvivorscircle.ca>

Additional Resources:

Hope for Wellness Help Line: [1-844-242-3310](tel:1-844-242-3310)

Saskatoon Community Mental Health Intake line: [1-306-655-7777](tel:1-306-655-7777)

Saskatchewan Health line: [811](tel:811)

Kids Help phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868)

Mobile Crisis Helpline: [1-306-757-0127](tel:1-306-757-0127)

Crisis Line [Suicide Prevention] call: [306-525-5333](tel:306-525-5333)

Saskatoon 24 Hour Crisis Line: [306-933-6200](tel:306-933-6200)

How you can support:

Stay educated and up to date

- Learn about Indigenous Canadian history from the Indigenous perspective.
- Read the Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action.
- Listen to the truths shared. Remember, do not retell stories that are not your story to tell.
- Acknowledge the human and Indigenous rights violation and their impact.
- Become an Ally.
- Continue to educate yourself and do research.
- Support others in every relationship and encounter you take part in.

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- Support the community – Amplify the voices of BIPOC.
- Be respectfully active in the community.
- Actively work to break down barriers.
- Speak out against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia and transphobia in the home, work, and community.
- Donate.
- Teach or encourage others to do the same!

Where to donate:

[Orange Shirt Society](#)

Orange Shirt Society works to raise awareness of intergenerational trauma caused by the residential schools and commemorate the experiences of survivors.

[Indian Residential School Survivors society](#)

IRSSS provides essential services to Residential School Survivors, their families, and those dealing with Intergenerational traumas.

[Reconciliation Canada](#)

Reconciliation Canada is an Indigenous- led charitable organization that focuses on workshops and community outreach to further the dialogue around reconciliation.

[Legacy of Hope Foundation](#)

Legacy of hope foundation is a nation Indigenous charitable organization that goal is to educate and create awareness and an understanding about the residential schools, intergeneration impacts and foster an understanding to inspire action.

Educational Links:

Truth and Reconciliations Commission of Canada: Calls to action - [PDF](#)

Nation Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) was created as part of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The TRC was charged to listen to Survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and educate Canadians about their experiences. The resulting collection of statements, documents and other materials now forms the sacred heart of the NCTR.

[Main Page - Reports](#)

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Indigenous foundations was developed by the First Nations Studies Program at the University of British Columbia to support students in their studies, and to provide instructors, researchers and the broader public with a place to begin exploring topics that relate to Aboriginal peoples, cultures, and histories.

[Main Page](#) – [Residential school system](#)

The Canadian Encyclopedia – free multimedia site that has an enormous collection of articles that provides Canadians and others with accurate, updated information about our people and country.

[Main Page](#) – [Residential School in Canada](#)

Canadian Human Rights Museum is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is the first museum solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights.

[Main Page](#) – [A childhood denied](#)

Inter-generational Effects on Professional First Nations Women Whose Mothers are Residential School Survivors - [PDF](#)

Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children - [PDF](#)

Orange Shirt Day – Every Child Matters – Orange Shirt Society website

[Main Page](#) – [Teacher Resources](#)

Eugene Arcand: A Story of Sports and Survival in Canadian Residential School - [link](#)

Leonard Peltier Shares His Indian Boarding School Story - [link](#)