

# 'THIS IS A CALL TO RESPONSIBILITY'

## HALTON URGES FEDS TO SEARCH ALL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SITES

MELANIE HENNESSEY  
mhennessey@metroland.com

As the remains of Indigenous children continue to be found at former residential school sites, Halton is pushing the federal government to declare a national day of mourning and authorize an immediate search for additional unmarked and mass graves.

Regional council unanimously passed a motion during its latest meeting with these requests, along with a call for the Trudeau government to continue its efforts to implement the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission — specifically actions 71 to 76 regarding missing children and burial information.

The resolution, put forth by Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward and Councillor Rory Nisan, also asks for a national initiative to commemorate and protect residential school burial sites across Canada through a process that must be Indigenous-led and carried out through ceremony.

"It's critical that we add our voice to those calling for the national day of mourning and finding the locations of these unmarked mass graves," said Nisan.

During the meeting, council heard from Chief R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who said the

discovery of the 215 children at the former Kamloops residential school was "an awakening for the people of this land."

"This is a call to responsibility, not only for those involved, but for all of us. I see this as a call to action," he said.

"Let us choose to go forward together. Let's choose a path of understanding, peace and friendship. Let this moment of sorrow be a light to guide us onto a better path."

The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation were the original owners of the territory where Halton sits, and still have treaty lands in the region.

Laforme said he appreciates and respects the relationship that has been developed between Halton and the Mississaugas of the Credit.



Scott Gardner/ Metroland file photo  
Chief R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

"I look forward to working together to address the crises that is before us," he said.

In addition to the national day of mourning motion, regional council approved several actions as part of its Indigenous relationship building initiative.

This included the endorsement of:

- The Truth and Recon-

ciliation Commission report and Calls to Action

- The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

• An Indigenous land acknowledgement and its uses

• Permanently flying the flag of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation at the Halton Regional Centre on Bronte Road in Oakville

- A working partnership

with Indigenous peoples and local First Nations, Métis and Inuit people to establish a Halton Indigenous Advisory Group.

"Endorsing this initiative to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples based on cultural understanding, empathy and respect is an essential part of Halton's responsibility for reconciliation and commemoration," said Regional Chair Gary Carr.

"Indigenous peoples have been connected to these lands for generations and have helped build the foundation of our communities that we enjoy today. These actions are a step in the right direction, but we know that more work still needs to be done, and I look forward to continuing these efforts together."

Council also heard an update from its Indigenous advisor, Eddy Robinson, who spoke of the relationships he's helping Halton build with Indigenous communities.



**McDonald's**  
**ORDER AHEAD,**  
PICK UP AT CURBSIDE.  
JUST USE THE **M** APP  
App download, registration and activation required.  
Curbside service available at participating McDonald's restaurants in Canada, curbside hours vary.  
185 Guelph Street, Georgetown  
374 Queen Street East, Acton

**DEKER** eLeCTRIC Ltd.  
ESA #7003060  
**905-702-0515**  
info@dekerelectric.ca  
www.dekerelectric.ca

**MARKETPLACE DENTAL CENTRE**  
Georgetown Marketplace Mall  
**Family & Cosmetic Dentistry**  
New Patients & Emergencies Welcome!  
Asleep Dentistry Available, Teeth Whitening  
Proudly Serving Georgetown Since 1994.  
Located inside Georgetown Marketplace Mall  
**905-877-CARE (2273)**  
georgetowndental.com

*Please Stay Safe  
this Holiday.  
Don't Drink  
And Drive!*