

TRUTH IS THE FUNDAMENTAL BASIS OF RECONCILIATION

CANADIANS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF OUR SHARED HISTORY, WRITES STEPHANIE SCOTT



STEPHANIE SCOTT
Column

ment of Indigenous Peoples in the residential school system and other colonial institutions — and the lasting harm that was done.

It is also an opportunity to reflect on how we can all play a part in healing these harms.

Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation came not long after the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc announced that a large gravesite had been located on the grounds of the former Kamloops residential

school. This announcement, and findings across the country, has led Settler Canada to engage with the history of residential schools in a different way, allowing a new conversation to take place.

For too long, the honest truth of this shameful part of Canada's history was hidden and denied. The children were pressured not to tell their stories. Reports of abuse, neglect and suffering were ignored. In fact, significant efforts to acknowl-

edge this history, such as Canada's official apology and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, only happened because of years of persistent efforts by Survivors.

Even now, there are some who still deny the fundamental truth of the residential school system — that its explicit purpose was to destroy First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, communities and languages.

Truth is the fundamental basis of reconciliation. Without acknowledgement of the truth, it is impossible for Survivors to heal and for communities to rebuild.

The National Centre

for Truth and Reconciliation believes that all Canadians — and especially all students — need to understand the truth of our shared history. That's why we have worked with Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community partners to create a full week of free programming.

During Truth and Reconciliation Week, from Sept. 26 to 30, we will bring the voices of Survivors directly to classrooms from coast to coast and introduce young people to Indigenous culture, language and history.

Age-appropriate material for students in grades 1 through 12 will be freely available to watch at school or online. The content will be available for public access starting Sept. 29.

On Sept. 30, Canadians can honour the Survivors and the children who never came home by wearing orange, as a symbol of

their commitment to change. People can attend events in communities across the country and watch a live commemorative broadcast taking place from unceded Anishinabek Algonquin territory in Ottawa.

But reconciliation requires more than one day a year or one week a year. Reconciliation is the work of generations. What we can accomplish in the days ahead is to listen to Survivors, honour their truths, and learn how we can all contribute to reconciliation in our daily lives.

Stephanie Scott is executive director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Truth and Reconciliation Week programming is available for everyone through the NCTR YouTube channel and website (nctr.ca). Follow the centre on Twitter and Instagram at @nctr_um, and Facebook at @nctr.ca.



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Commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On September 30, we observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This day honours the survivors, victims, families and communities affected by Residential Schools. Truth and Reconciliation Day is an opportunity for all Canadians to continue the important conversation about Residential Schools and create meaningful discussions about their effects and the legacy they have left behind.

To find resources about this important day and more information about Halton's work to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous People and Communities, please visit halton.ca.



Meetings at Halton Region

Regional Council meetings are taking place through web conferencing until further notice. Videos will be posted to halton.ca.

Please contact us, as soon as possible, if you have any accessibility needs at Halton Region events or meetings.

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