

# "Reconciliation Fund" to top \$200 million for healing centres

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tend nothing was wrong."

Six Nations has seen hundreds of its children sent to the former Mohawk Residential School on the Glebe property adjacent to Brantford. The school was operated by the Anglican Church and ran up until the 1960's.

During that time hundreds of children were sent to the school where survivors talk about suffering physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Some survivors describe being strapped for speaking Mohawk at what the students came to call the "Mush Hole" because of the oatmeal children

ate.

MacDonald said her grandfather was one of those.

"I can speak to my grandfather went through residential school, it had a direct impact on my mother and her children. My grandfather could speak all six languages and knew the medicines. But because of his experience at the school he refused to speak the languages or teach us medicines," she said.

"He told his kids, 'I don't want you to have to go through what I went through. If I don't teach you these things you won't have to go through what I went through.' The

impact of what happened to my grandfather directly impacted my mother and now I don't know the languages or medicines."

And she said the impacts have surfaced in problems with parenting skills. "People that went through that were raised with a heavy hand. So their parenting skills weren't based on parenting skills we would have enjoyed if our society had been unaffected."

As a result, she said parenting skills for a large number of local residents were developed through the school, in an institutional clinical type of format.

"So as we grow up and have children of our own, that impact is then, how they parent their own children, intentionally or not."

The fund, that is expected to be announced in the New Year, is intended to symbolize the government's break from past policies that were intended to assimilate natives, but it is likely to steer away from a direct apology in hopes of discouraging individual lawsuits for abuse suffered at residential schools.

The fund will be administered by a board of aboriginal leaders at arm's length from the federal government.

MacDonald said the fund will be the beginning of healing for many sufferers. "It's the final indication of respect from the government for those people who have been impacted, that they finally acknowledge what happened and they take responsibility for their actions."

The money is expected to be used to finance healing centres, native-language training and counselling programs on reserves.

The exact amount of the fund has not been confirmed--aboriginal sources say it will surpass \$300-million, while government offi-

cialists put the figure at more than \$200-million.

Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart, said the residential school system is to blame for many of the problems currently found in native communities.

Taking children away from their families and raising them in a school setting without traditional parenting had a huge impact she said.

While many may have received a good education at the schools, others suffered physical and sexual abuse. She added, "That reality has impeded their capacity to live a full and productive life.

Describing how the school system continues for several generations, she expressed horror at the thought of the impact on parents. "I'm a mom," said the mother of two. "and the fact that there are moms and dads who went through these circumstances and then had to send their own kids. I mean, Jesus," she said.

She said the impact of the schools has been felt across the country. The Inuit of northern Canada have told her of their experiences that were similar to those of natives in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario.