

Honouring our Children and Survivors on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Snuneymuxw First Nation, City, Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools to host event

September 28, 2021 Nanaimo/Snuneymuxw, B.C.: This Thursday marks **the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**; a day to honour First Nations, Inuit, and Métis residential school survivors, their families, and communities. To recognize this important day, Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will observe September 30 as a day to remember and honour our children who were lost, those who survived, and the families who have suffered the long-lasting impacts of the residential school system. This day brings us together to work together differently. Committing to truth-telling brings the opportunity to listen and learn with an open mind in order to move forward. The truths are for our children, and we see this day as a strong reminder that walking together is going to create a better future for all of us.

To honour the past and to celebrate the future, we are jointly hosting the event **“Honouring our Children and Survivors on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation”**. This will take place on September 30, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Maffeo Sutton/ Swy-a-Lana Park in Nanaimo. Community leaders will speak, Snuneymuxw community members will share their truths about the impacts of residential schools, we will honour a welcome pole by Snuneymuxw carver Noel Brown, the Snuneymuxw Flag will be recognized, there will be cultural performances by Snuneymuxw Dancers and School District children and youth, plus activities for children. Community members are invited to witness this event and wear orange to show their support.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation builds on September 30 being recognized as Orange Shirt Day. This day grew from Phyllis Webstad's story of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school at the Mission residential school. Since then, Orange Shirt Day (www.orangeshirtday.org) has become an opportunity to have open discussion around the still-present legacy and impacts of the residential school system.

The significance of commemorating September 30 as a national day of reflection has been reinforced by the tragic discovery of the children's graves found at Kamloops Indian Residential School on Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation Territory during the summer of 2021, the hundreds more that have been found across the country since and the continued searches for unmarked burial sites.

These findings provide clear evidence of the harsh truth and realities faced by Indigenous children, many of whom died as a result of the residential school system.

KEY POINTS

* On September 30, 2021, Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will recognize the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

* To recognize this important date, Snuneymuxw, the City of Nanaimo, and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, are jointly hosting a community event to honour and stand in solidarity with residential school survivors, their families and communities.

*The event called **Honouring our Children and Survivors on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** will take place on September 30, 2021 from 10 am to 2 pm at Maffeo Sutton/Swy-a-Lana Park in Nanaimo. This event will include messages from community leaders, sharings from Snuneymuxw community members impacted by residential schools, honouring a welcome pole by Snuneymuxw carver Noel Brown, Snuneymuxw Flag recognition, cultural performances by Snuneymuxw Dancers and School District children and youth, and activities for children. Community members are invited to witness this event and wear orange to show their support.

"Nobody is immune to the dark and tragic truths of the Canadian residential schools and Indian Hospitals forcefully imposed on Snuneymuxw People, including all First Nations peoples. The individual and collective harm, injury and continued inequitable treatment onto our people lie squarely at the feet of all levels of government and the church. Despite this and the intergenerational impact, our people are incredibly resilient and strong to persevere through generations and stand tall and open to live together harmoniously. Justice must be done. All Canadians must rise to this occasion and conquer the opportunity to make things right so that children and grandchildren have a chance at a better life. I would encourage you to reflect on how this has impacted you and begin a process of deeper healing and deeper of understanding."

Michael Wyse

Chief

Snuneymuxw First Nation





Honouring our children and survivors on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



“We honour the strength and resilience of Snuneymuxw and many other Indigenous peoples and communities who have survived despite the impacts of government policies intended to erase their cultures. On September 30, I encourage everyone in our community to join us to stand together with Snuneymuxw First Nation and all Indigenous Peoples to honour the children lost, and the survivors of the residential school system. This is a time to educate ourselves, reflect on the truth of this dark past and, commit to personal and collective actions to advance reconciliation and healing, so that every Indigenous child and adult can thrive in our communities knowing that they matter.”

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

“Thank you to Snuneymuxw’s Chief and Council for inviting the school district to take part in this historic day. September 30 is not a day of celebration, but of reflection and honour for those that did not return home and for those who continue to be deeply affected by Canada’s residential school system. The Board is committed to teaching the truth of our country’s dark past in our classrooms and acknowledges this as the basis on which we move forward with reconciliation in our school communities. Today, we recommit to our goal of Truth and Reconciliation, and are reminded that we must never allow history to repeat itself.”

Charlene McKay
Board Chair
Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools

LINKS

Shaw TV will Livestream the event
<https://youtu.be/FyqIWwZR13s>

Learn more about National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

Learn more about Orange Shirt Day
<http://www.orangeshirtday.org/>





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