



## JOINT NEWS RELEASE

Distributed September 14, 2022

### **Honouring our children by honouring a Snuneymuxw way of being**

#### *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation event*

On September 30, the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools are honouring our Ancestors, survivors and families by honouring a Snuneymuxw way of being.

The public is invited to honour all those that were impacted by government Indigenous assimilation policies, including residential and day schools. By following in the footsteps of the Ancestors and honouring a Snuneymuxw way of being with Snuneymuxw protocol, art and a new hul'q'umi'num' place name, we honour the Land and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in keeping Snuneymuxw culture alive.

While what was taken from First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities can never truly be reconciled, we encourage individuals and organizations to engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and identify how to respond with meaningful action.

"Since we announced the first Truth and Reconciliation event last year, thousands of our neighbours and relatives have stood in solidarity with Snuneymuxw, acknowledging the atrocities that were inflicted upon our beloved children. The church and government's role in the genocide perpetrated against Snuneymuxw people includes operating residential schools and hospitals in B.C. between 1863 and 1985. Understandably, our families are still living with the consequences of these recent systematic abuses.

"We love our kids. Our ongoing commitment to their wellbeing and future produced Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh Community School with Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. For the last three years the school has been an example of how we can nurture the whole child and prepare them for the future. The Snuneymuxw way of being recognizes that we are all connected and therefore we built QQS for all students, knowing that all children living on these great lands can benefit from Snuneymuxw care and knowledge.

"We can continue to walk forward together and make things right for our families and future generations. We invite you to stand tall with us, in honour of the children in our lives and the ones who never came home." – Acting Chief Sqwulutsultun William Yoachim

"Let us again come together in friendship, to recognize the painful truth of our history and renew our collective commitment to honouring our relationship with the First People of this land, Snuneymuxw First Nation. We commemorate all residential school survivors, their families, and those whose lives were taken. We covenant to work towards justice and reconciliation, for the betterment of all of us, especially our children." – Mayor Leonard Krog

"The Board of Education is humbled to be a partner with Snuneymuxw First Nation and the City of Nanaimo for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We come together to remember the children who never came home, the survivors of residential schools and government hospitals and their families. We recommit to honouring the knowledge of the land and the Snuneymuxw way of being as we walk together creating a stronger community for all who live here." – Board Chair Charlene McKay

#### **SNUNEYMUXW ART AND HUL'Q'UMI'NUM' PLACE NAME**

Hul'q'umi'num' is the language of this Land and when we speak hul'q'umi'num', we honour the Land and her communities, while bringing her language back to life.

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Snuneymuxw has given the hul'q'umi'num' word, q'unq'inuqwstuxw, to the NDSS community field within the Stadium District.

The word, q'unq'inuqwstuxw (pronounced ki-KIN-ish-TOOK), translates to "return/give back". The word has different meanings within the Snuneymuxw way of being. In this context, the word has two meanings:

The new name of the field, q'unq'inuqwstuxw, along with the Snuneymuxw artwork by Noel Brown placed at the entrance of the field, is the first step in honouring the Land and is a reminder to give back more than we take from the Land.

In a sports context, q'unq'inuqwstuxw is used in ball games, to ask for the ball back from fellow players.

The new Snuneymuxw artwork and field name bring healing to the Land and its communities – past, present and future, while enhancing the sport and recreation experience within Stadium District for all.

## EVENT DETAILS

Event location: Stadium District | 745 Third St, Nanaimo

Event schedule:

10am – 11am

Opening ceremony will take place at the Rotary Bowl. Community members are invited to witness this event and wear orange to show support. Snuneymuxw and Nanaimo community leaders speak; Snuneymuxw community members share their truths about the impacts of residential schools; a new hul'q'umi'num' place name and art by Snuneymuxw carver Noel Brown are honoured.

11am – 3pm

Snuneymuxw performances on main stage at the Rotary Bowl.

12pm-4pm

Free sport and recreational activities, including swimming and skating, and information booths will be available throughout the Stadium District. Local sport organizations will host demonstrations and clinics and food vendors will be set up.

A shuttle service will be provided by the Regional District and the Bike Valet will be on site safely guarding bikes for those who wish to ride to the event. Details will be provided on the website event page [www.nanaimo.ca/goto/truth](http://www.nanaimo.ca/goto/truth).

## KEY POINTS

- On September 30, 2022, Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation builds on Orange Shirt Day. This day grew from Phyllis Webstad's story of having her new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school at the Mission Residential School.
- To recognize this important date, Snuneymuxw First Nation, City of Nanaimo, and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, are jointly hosting a community event to honour a Snuneymuxw way of being and stand in solidarity with all those that have been impacted by Residential and Day Schools, Indian Hospitals and other Government Indigenous assimilation policies.

Learn more about the September 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation event: <https://bit.ly/3PZuoaE>

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

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