

First Nations Summit

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
SEPTEMBER 29, 2021**

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day for all Canadians to learn about Indigenous issues and Canada's colonial history

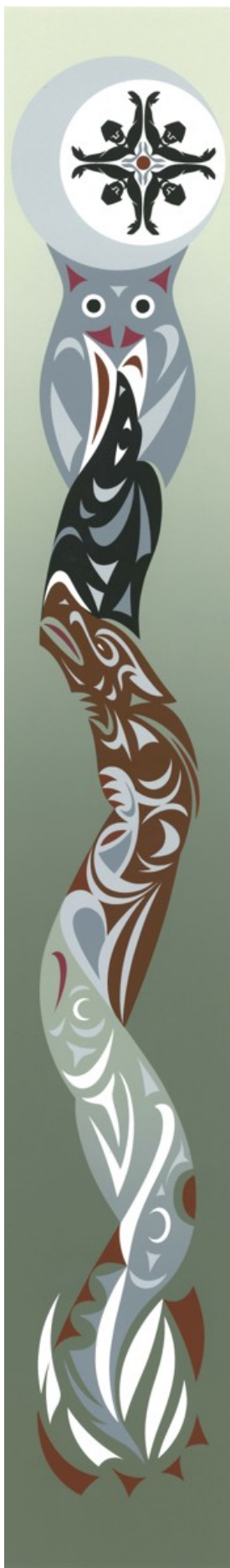
(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) – First Nations Summit leaders are pleased that, what has traditionally been known as “Orange Shirt Day”, has been established as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a federal day of observance to honour the lost children and Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to pause and learn about Indigenous cultures and issues and the deeply traumatic and negative effects of Canada's colonial history, including the horrific residential school system.

“On this important day, first and foremost, we wear orange and hold our hands up in recognition of all residential school survivors and we honour all of the children who never went home, who never got to lead fulsome lives, and who were lost forever to their families,” said Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

“We are not wanting Canadians to be shamed for this terrible legacy, we are asking Canadians to use this important day as a time to educate themselves about and recognize the devastating impacts that colonialism has had, and continues to have, on indigenous communities and to stand with us in partnership to break down the systemic colonialism and racism that still exists today,” said Lydia Hwitsum of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

“It has been six long years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its findings and the 94 Calls to Action. While there have been some significant strides, we are a long way from having all 94 Calls implemented. Now that the most recent federal election is past, we are at the time for the new minority Liberal government to work with First Nations to take concrete actions with measurable outcomes in an effort to close the disparate socio-economic gaps faced by our communities. This starts with the fulsome and immediate implementation of all 94 Calls To Action, as well as the recently passed federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDRIP Act),” concluded Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit Political Executive.

While Canadians and many across the globe are shocked and saddened by recent confirmations, at numerous former Indian Residential School sites, of unmarked burials containing the remains of thousands of children, these discoveries are no surprise to Indigenous people, who have always known the sad and horrific reality that many Indigenous children taken away to residential schools, never returned home, and many others were victim to physical, mental, and sexual abuse. The goal of these horrific institutions was to strip the Indigenous identity, culture, and language out of the children who attended. Despite these appalling colonial goals, our deeply rooted Indigenous cultures have survived, are continuing to grow in strength, and will flourish for time eternity.



September 30th of every year, now the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, is a time to recognize and remember the atrocities of Canada's Indian Residential School system and to acknowledge the tenet that "Every Child Matters". The First Nations Summit encourages all Canadians to wear orange tomorrow as a symbol that you are willing to acknowledge the destruction and pain caused by Indian Residential schools and Canada's colonial history, to remember the children who never went home, and to stand with us in partnership on our collective path forward.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:

Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive	778-875-2157
Lydia Hwitsum, FNS Political Executive	604-868-0032
Robert Phillips, FNS Political Executive	778-875-4463

For additional information please visit these online resources:

<i>Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:</i>	www.trc.ca
<i>Reconciliation Canada:</i>	www.reconciliationcanada.ca
<i>Indian Residential School Survivors Society:</i>	www.irsss.ca
<i>UBC Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre:</i>	www.irshdc.ubc.ca
<i>First Nations Education Steering Committee Education Resources:</i>	www.fnesc.ca/irsr/

Supports are available for residential school survivors and intergenerational survivors. Please reach out to one of the following if in need:

<i>IRSSS Toll-Free Line:</i>	<i>1-800-721-0066</i>
<i>24hr National Crisis Line:</i>	<i>1-866-925-4419</i>
<i>KUU-US Crisis Line:</i>	<i>1-800-588-8717</i>
<i>Tsow-Tun-Le Lum Cultural Support or Outreach Services:</i>	<i>1-888-403-3123</i>