



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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BCAFN Honours Residential School Survivors on Orange Shirt – Every Child Matters Day

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – September 30, 2020) – The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) stands in solidarity to honour residential school survivors on this day (September 30th) by remembering the past to create a better future. Today is an opportunity for all Canadians to embrace reconciliation and learn more about the recent history of Indigenous people's experience in the Residential School System, which was created and enforced by the Canadian government for over a century.

“Today we are all encouraged to engage with the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the residential schools in a way that will contribute and foster mutual respect and empathy,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “The story of the Phyllis Webstad and the loss of her orange shirt informs each of us about the powerlessness, pain and grief imposed on First Nations children during this long, dark period. Now we embrace the “Orange Shirt” to celebrate the freedom of individual expression and anti-racism.”

The celebration of Orange Shirt Day has been building stronger each year as First Nations retell the story of Phyllis Webstad who, on her first day at St. Joseph Mission Residential School (near Williams Lake, BC.), had her brightly coloured and prized shirt stripped from her. The policy of assimilation caused great harm and similar patterns of oppressive systems, that created the Residential School System, must never happen again. The struggle against hatred and racism requires continued vigilance and understanding of our past.

Background links:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Orange Shirt Day <https://www.orangeshirtday.org>

-30-

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BC Assembly of First Nations

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