

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

“Ka-kí-kiskéyihétan óma, namoya kinwés maka aciyowés pohko óma óta ka-hayayak wasétam askihk, ékwa kakwéy miskétan kiskéyihitamowin, iyinísiwin, kistéyitowin, mina nánisitotatowin kakiya ayisiniwak, ékosi óma kakiya ka-wahkotowak.”

“Realize that we as human beings have been put on this earth for only a short time and that we must use this time to gain wisdom, knowledge, respect and the understanding for all human beings since we are all relatives.”

Cree Proverb



Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School (1891-1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events that took place in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in May 2013. This project was the vision of Esketemc (Alkali Lake) Chief Fred Robbins, who is a former student himself. It brought together former students and their families from the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'at'imc Nations along with the Cariboo Regional District, the Mayors and municipalities, School Districts and civic organizations in the Cariboo Region.

The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30th opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind. A discussion all Canadians can tune into and create bridges with each other for reconciliation. A day for survivors to be reaffirmed that they matter, and so do those that have been affected. Every Child Matters, even if they are an adult, from now on.

The date was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year.

It is an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

