

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release



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FNLC Celebrates Orange Shirt - Every Child Matters Day to Honour Residential School Survivors

Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh Traditional Territory/Vancouver:

Today, all leaders and staff of the First Nations Leadership Council (UBCIC, BCAFN and FNS) are wearing Orange Shirts to honour and recognize survivors of residential schools. Orange Shirt Day is a day of affirmation for survivors and their families to let them know that we are here to support them and remember those who are no longer with us. All Canadians are encouraged to participate as an act of reconciliation toward restoring relationships between Canada and First Nations.

“I raise my hands to the Elders and survivors of the Residential School system who raised their voices and fought to be heard as they told their stories. Their courage and resilience bring hope and change for future generations as we strengthen and revive our traditions, languages and cultural roots,” stated BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, stated, *“We come together today in solidarity to raise awareness of the history of the extreme unbalanced and unjust relationship that existed between First Nations and Canadian society. Orange Shirt Day-Every Child Matters is an opportunity for all of us to come together to share and demonstrate respect and value of people, land, life and the Creator.”*

“The Orange Shirt represents the value and significance we hold for ourselves and each other. By participating and wearing this shirt we are joined together in an act of healing and reconciliation. Canadians must continue to counter the effects and legacy left by the Residential School system as we continue to fight for a balanced and just society,” stated Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit political executive.

Orange Shirt Day is a movement that officially began in 2013 and is rooted in the story of six-year Phyllis Webstad who attended her first day at

St. Joseph Mission Residential School, near Williams Lake, BC., proudly wearing a brand-new orange shirt. She was stripped of her prized shirt and it was replaced with the school's institutional uniform. It is estimated that 150,000 Indigenous children were absorbed into the residential school system imposed by the Canadian federal government.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

For further comment please contact:

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