



Office of the President
#417 – 645 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1G2

Tel 250-592-3133
Fax 250-592-0234
Email mzarowny@ssabc.ca

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The Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of British Columbia

By Email

Dear Premier Horgan,

As a follow up to my email on June 11th, thank you for your patience as we have worked to clarify information regarding the Sisters of Saint Ann (SSA) and public access to our Archives, in light of the discovery of 215 unmarked graves in Kamloops BC.

I am pleased to share the news that today we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal BC Museum regarding the Archives of the Sisters of Saint Ann which are held at the museum. The MOU will ensure that our records and the processes around access are transparent.

During the course of the last few weeks, misinformation regarding the Archives of the Sisters of St. Ann, as well as how we have provided records to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) have come into question. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify some of this information.

1. The Sisters of Saint Ann provided all our records related to Indian Residential Schools to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in November 2012. Prior to sending the records, TRC staff visited our archives on several occasions and worked with us to determine the proper format for sending. We have numerous documents that show our continuing communication and collaboration with both the TRC and the NCTR.
2. As you may have heard, we did not approve of two sets of documents being transferred to the NCTR: We are now working to resolve the outstanding issues related to those documents.
3. At the request of the TRC, we did a thorough search of all our documents to identify the names of any children who became ill, died or were missing. We provided that list to the document gatherers of the TRC, as requested.
4. As teachers in the Indian Residential Schools, no official school records, including class registers were our property and are therefore not in our archives. These were all turned over to the administration and were the property of the Department of Indian Affairs, the federal government department that ran Indian Residential schools.

Continuing the Legacy

5. From the time we first heard of abuse in the schools it was of utmost importance to us to learn the truth and to do whatever we could to contribute to making the truth known, to bring about a just resolution and to participate in activities that could lead to healing and reconciliation.
6. To that end, we committed ourselves to fully participate in the Truth and Reconciliation process, to make our documents available, and to continue to educate the public, through speaking and writing, on both this tragic history as well as the continuing history of the Canada's unjust relationship with First Nations and other Indigenous people.
7. We affirm our commitment to collaborate in finding the truth and will assist in the process in whatever way we can. The SSA Archivist is in communication with the archivist for the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation and is available to work with her on our records.

Before closing I want to reaffirm the significance of the relationship between the SSA Archives and the RBCM. Having arrived in Victoria in 1858, our history parallels that of BC. It was important to us that our archives remain in BC and be accessible to the public in perpetuity. It was out of this commitment that we worked with the BC Archives and the RBCM for the current deposit and subsequent transfer of ownership of our entire archive. We trust that this MOU will enhance even further our working relationship with the RBCM.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or if I can clarify any information.

Best regards,



Sister Marie Zarowny, SSA
The Sisters of Saint Ann
President, Chair of the Board

cc. Dr. Daniel Muzyka