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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
Date: 9/28/2021 8:49:10 AM  
Subject: [Upcoming news release: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation \(September 29, 2021\)](#)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release on Wednesday, September 29 recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. It speaks to the Residential School System and Orange Shirt Day's history and calls on all citizens to advance Reconciliation in their communities. Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account at approximately 10:00 AM on September 29.

Best,  
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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**City of Vancouver**  
**News release**  
**September 29, 2021**

## **City commemorates Indigenous Peoples harmed by the Residential School System this National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

September 30th is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It is a time for all residents and visitors of Vancouver to reflect on the harmful legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School System, recognize the strength and resiliency of Indigenous Peoples in the face of colonial oppression, and act on the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#).

The City will close tomorrow to honour the children who survived residential schools and remember those who did not. Staff are encouraged to use this day to learn more about the intergenerational trauma and loss caused by Residential Schools and become active participants in the Reconciliation journey.

"To mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I'm asking all Vancouver residents to reflect on the intergenerational legacy of the Residential School System and the need to continue the

Reconciliation process,” said Mayor Kennedy Stewart. “As a City of Reconciliation we must today, and every day, commemorate and honour every Indigenous child, family and community subjected to harm caused by our ongoing legacy of colonialism and work to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.”

[September 30 is also recognized as Orange Shirt Day](#). The day was created by Phyllis Webstad, who was stripped of her new orange shirt, gifted from her grandmother, on her first day of residential school at six years old. On Orange Shirt Day, orange shirts are worn to honour the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and affirm that every child matters.

To commemorate the Indigenous Peoples harmed by residential schools, Mayor Kennedy Stewart issued a proclamation on behalf of the City declaring September 30<sup>th</sup> National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Vancouver, which Deputy Mayor Bligh presented to Phyllis Webstad on September 25<sup>th</sup>. To read the proclamation and view a message from Mayor and Council, [visit our website](#).

“It’s ok if you didn’t know about the dark legacy of Indian Residential Schools because you weren’t taught it in the Canadian Education System. But, now that you do know, it’s not ok not to act,” said Carleen Thomas, from Tsleil-Waututh Nation and member of Carnegie Community Centre’s Indigenous Advisory Group. “My hope is that Indigenous Peoples can be afforded the space, time, and resources to begin to deeply heal now that the truth is out and that we can work together as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to co-develop more inclusive governance systems that we can all benefit from.”

## **History of Indian Residential Schools**

From the 1870s to 1996, Canadian governments removed more than 150,000 Indigenous children from their families and communities. Children were forced into residential schools, including the St. Paul’s Indian Residential School in North Vancouver. As a result, children suffered familial and cultural alienation, loss of their Indigenous languages and identities, and severe mental, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Estimates are that more than 6,000 Indigenous children died while attending Canada’s Indian Residential School System. This has negatively impacted all Indigenous people, communities and all Canadians. Moreover, the harm has extended over time and ongoing impacts of traumas experienced at Residential Schools continue to be felt throughout generations.

Staff and leadership at the City grieve alongside Indigenous colleagues and with Indigenous communities across Canada. As a local government, the City acknowledges the responsibility it has, along with all levels of government, to repair the harms caused by Residential Schools and rebuild a healthy relationship between Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians.

## **Significance of September 30**

Schools in British Columbia must submit their enrollment numbers to the Province by September 30<sup>th</sup>, and the Province allocates funding to the schools based on how many students attend. Therefore, during the Residential School era, September 30<sup>th</sup> was when Residential School representatives would knock on doors to collect Indigenous children who hadn’t shown up to school.

While September is a joyous time of back to school for many children and families, their experience is in stark contrast to the harrowing reality of many Residential School survivors who were targets of forced separation from their families.

## City's role in the work of Reconciliation

Vancouver is located on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. The City is grateful to the Host Nations and is committed to building strong relationships through ongoing communication and partnership development.

In 2014, the City declared itself a [City of Reconciliation](#). Since then, it has been working to meet 27 out of 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action the City identified as having the jurisdiction and ability to implement. [View the 27 Calls to Action identified by the City here.](#)

The City recognizes there is still much work to be done before appropriate Reconciliation can be achieved.

Examples of recent actions the City has taken to advance Reconciliation include:

- Granted more than \$1.6 million to Indigenous-led organizations and majority Indigenous serving programs in the past year through Community Services, Indigenous Healing and Wellness, Childcare Enhancement, Urban Indigenous Child and Family Programs and COVID-19 Recovery grants.
- Became the first municipality in Canada to [unanimously pass a motion to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#) in February 2021. An update report including a work plan and requested budget will be presented to Council by late-fall 2021.
- Recognized 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Through 2020-2022 the City will develop an Indigenous Languages Action Plan. This work will explore appropriate ways for the City within its jurisdiction to support hən' q' əmin' əm and Skwxwú7mesh to be incorporated across the City with the necessary educational support.

For a complete update on recent Reconciliations the City has taken, view our most recent [Reconciliation report](#).

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