



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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100 Back Street, Unit 200 Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO WALK FOR RECONCILIATION ON ORANGE SHIRT DAY

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum encourages all members of the Thunder Bay and area community to join together and walk for reconciliation during NAN's fourth annual Orange Shirt Day event on Saturday.

"It is encouraging to see our community come together on Orange Shirt Day to honour the stories of the survivors and remember those who did not return from Indian Residential School" said Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum. "The orange shirts worn today are a symbol of solidarity and support for all students who attended Residential Schools."

The Every Child Matters "Walk for Healing" Indian Residential School Awareness Walk begins at 11 a.m. at Paterson Park. Participants will walk to Pope John Paul II Elementary School, the former site of the St. Joseph's Indian Residential School, where a traditional ceremony and blessing will be held.

The event will begin with an opening prayer by Elder Sam Achneepineskum followed by a song from the Women's drum group. Chief Peter Collins, Fort William First Nation, will provide opening remarks along with Councillor Frank Pullia, MP Don Rusnak and Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum. The event will conclude with a closing song from the NAN Drum at Pope John Paul II Elementary School.

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy project of the St. Joseph Mission Residential School (1891-1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events held in Williams Lake, British Columbia in 2013. Now an annual event, it is named for Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, whose shiny new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her as a six-year-old girl on her first day at Residential School.

There are six documented cases of First Nation children who died while attending the St. Joseph's school and 16 children are still unaccounted for. At least 4,000 children died in more than 150 Residential Schools that operated across Canada for 150 years. Approximately 5,000 NAN members attended Residential Schools.

***For more information please contact: Michael Heitzman, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation
(807) 625-4965 or by email mheitzman@nan.on.ca***