



Media Release

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National Orange Shirt Day, September 30

Our Kids Network (OKN) joins the national campaign to commemorate the residential school experience and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation.

Halton Region, Ontario – Orange Shirt Day is commemorated in Canada on September 30 to honour Indigenous children sent to residential schools and to learn about the harmful history of these schools. [Phyllis Webstad](#) established Orange Shirt Day in 2013 to educate us about residential schools and to fight racism and bullying. She wants us to remember that, on Orange Shirt Day – and every day – every child matters.

“We know that intergenerational trauma is a legacy of the residential schools system in Canada. Our Kids Network recognizes this and has adopted an [Indigenous Reconciliation Plan](#) to ensure that the voices of residential school survivors, their families, and all Indigenous people in Halton, are heard and reflected in our work,” says Elena DiBattista, executive director of Our Kids Network.

On Wednesday, September 30 in Halton and across Canada, children, youth and adults will be wearing orange and participating in virtual events to learn about and create awareness of the experiences of survivors of the residential school system. They will be using social media to talk about what they can do to empower survivors, and their families, and help them heal.

Angela Bellegarde, OKN’s Indigenous reconciliation lead, says that it is time for us all to recognize the truth. “All Canadians have an opportunity to redress the atrocities that are the legacy of Canada’s Residential School system. This is what Truth and Reconciliation calls us to do. Wear an orange shirt in support of the survivors of the past...and the present.”

Some suggestions on how to observe Orange Shirt Day from orangeshirtday.org:

- Learn more. Read about Phyllis Webstad, residential schools and Orange Shirt Day.
- On September 30, attend the virtual conference, Every Child Matters: Reconciliation through Education hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. More information and [registration link](#).
- Empower young people to use their voice. Download [teacher resources](#) to stimulate learning and discussion with children and youth about the legacy of residential schools and fighting racism and bullying.
- Raise awareness. Wear orange on September 30 and use social media and virtual events to start conversations about Orange Shirt Day with friends, family members or co-workers.

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Facts about the Residential School System:

- Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools created to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools>
- An estimated 150,000 children attended residential schools between 1860 and 1998 – 6,000 died. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools>
- On Sept. 1, 2020, the Government of Canada announced the designation of two former residential school sites as national historic sites: the former Portage La Prairie Indian Residential School in Manitoba; and the former Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia. These designations are a part of the government's response to [Call to Action 79](#) of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/pensionnat-residential>

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[Our Kids Network](#) is a Halton-wide partnership of organizations and agencies serving children and youth that embraces the vision “All children and youth thrive”.