

Indigenous Education

North Vancouver School District

September 2020

Orange Shirt Day Primary Resource



Image reference



reference

Orange Shirt Day was created to honour Indigenous children who were taken away from their families and homes, and were forced to live in Indian Residential Schools. These schools were created by the Canadian Government and Canadian Churches.

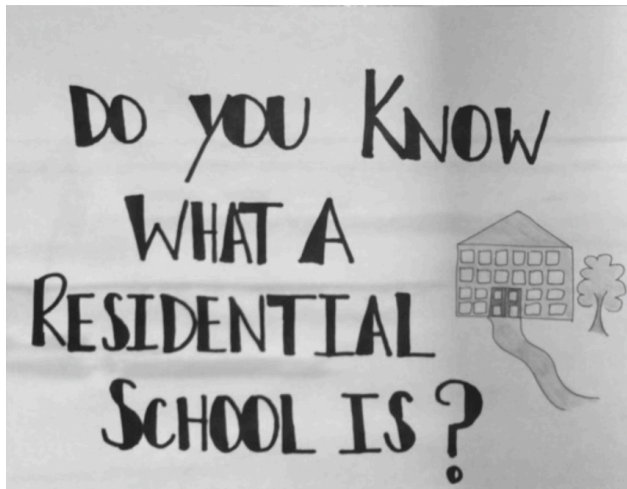
Phyllis Webstad, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (pictured above) was one of the children who was taken from her family and home and forced to live far away at a Residential School.

During a healing conference, Phyllis shared her experience of arriving at St. Joseph Mission Residential School in her brand new shiny Orange Shirts. As soon as she arrived she was given a school uniform and had to change out of her orange shirt. Phyllis never saw her orange shirt again. A compassionate women who heard the story asked Phyllis if she could share her story. This is how Orange Shirt day began.



Images from Phyllis Webstad's visit to Norgate Xwemélch'stn

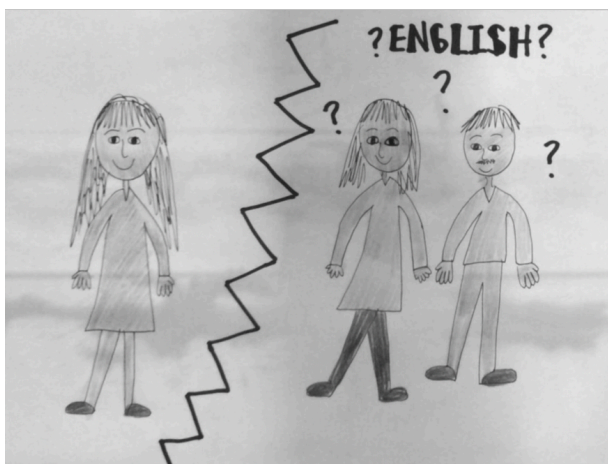
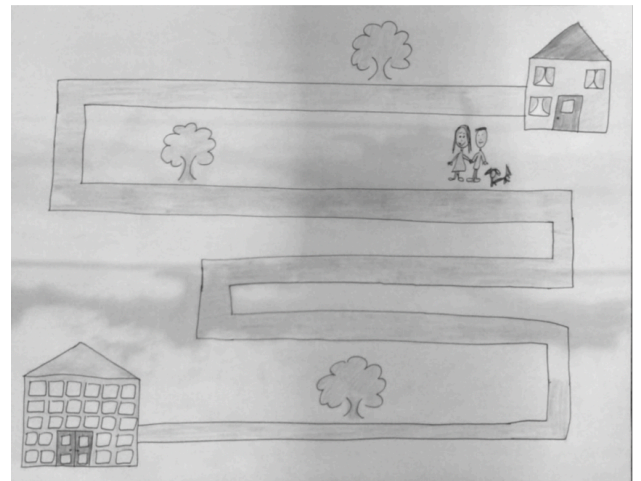
We would like to thank the Coast Salish people, specifically the Skwxwú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, whose unceded traditional territory the North Vancouver School District resides on. We value the opportunity to learn, share and grow on this traditional territory.



Residential Schools were established by the Canadian European Government in partnership with many Churches. The schools wanted to make Indigenous children the same as other children, including dressing alike and speaking either English or French only. Children could not speak their own Indigenous languages. This is called

First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were removed from their families and homes. Children lived at the school and did not go home at the end of the day to be with their families. Some children were allowed to go home during summer and Christmas break. Some children did not go home at all year.

Some of the adults at the Residential Schools were unkind to the children and sometimes hurt the children in different ways.



Indigenous children were not allowed to live their lives as they did at home with their families. They were not allowed to speak their traditional languages or sing their songs. If they spoke their language they would get in trouble. Because they were only allowed to speak English or French, the children lost their Indigenous language. This made it hard to understand and communicate with their parents when they went home.



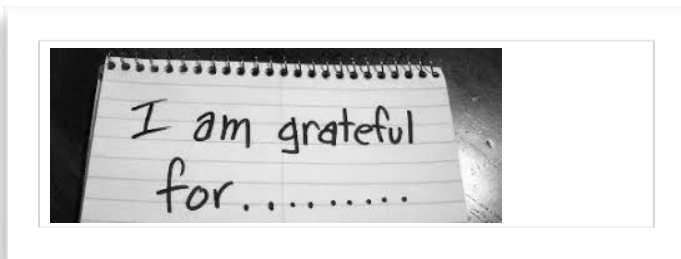
What are your thoughts about Indian Residential Schools?

What do you think about the creation of Indian Residential Schools?

How would you feel if your favourite thing(s) were taken or you could not bring them with you? (Phyllis' favourite thing was her orange shirt which she never got back).

How would it feel to live far away from home and your parents?

How would it feel to only be allowed to speak a language you don't know or understand? How would it feel to not be able to speak the same language as your parents?



Make a list of things that you are grateful to have that maybe Residential School Survivors did not have.

I am grateful for:

Did you know that there was a Residential School in North Vancouver?



reference



reference

From 1899 to 1959 over 2000 students, mostly from the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations attended St. Pauls Indian Residential School. Over six generations attended the school starting between the ages of 4-6. Students attended until the eighth grade, or until age 16. Students were not allowed to graduate with a diploma. There was no playground, only an empty flat concrete courtyard area for playing. Most of the children could see their homes from the atop the hill where the school was located.



reference



reference

St. Paul's Indian Residential School was located where the current St. Thomas Aquinas High School is today. This is Squamish Nation Elder, P'itsmuk, David Jacobs who attended St. Paul's Residential School, sharing his story with students at the St. Pauls Residential School Memorial.

By Dallas Guss, NVSD Indigenous Cultural Support Worker