

## **DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION September 30, 2022**

Over coffee in a café with a friend on Dog Creek Reserve in April 2013, Phyllis Webstad what she might say at the launch of St. Joseph's Mission Residential School Commemoration near Williams Lake in central British Columbia. At that time, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was gathering residential school survivors in a variety of communities from coast to coast to share their experiences. Phyllis Webstad decided to speak about her first day attending St. Joseph's Mission Residential School in September 1973. In preparation for her first day, her grandmother took her shopping so she could pick out a new shirt to wear. Her eye caught sight of an orange shirt with some lace down the front. She was feeling excited about going to school and this bright orange shirt reflected these feelings. However, when Phyllis Webstad arrived at this school, her new orange shirt was taken away from her. She felt that this gift from her grandmother connected her to her life at home with her family. Her heart was broken. She felt terrified and alone. During that first year in which she spent away from her family, Phyllis Webstad experienced many other traumas which led her to conclude that her life didn't matter. Two days after sharing her story and her feelings of worthlessness on her first day of residential school, a local union for the Caribou Regional District School Board asked permission to arrange the first Orange Shirt Day at the end of the first month in which children and youth returned to school. At a Truth and Reconciliation event in Vancouver, an Elder described September as "the crying month" at residential schools. The children and youth in residential schools experienced profound pain and were not consoled. At this Truth and Reconciliation event in Vancouver, members of the community sought to honour residential school survivors and those who did not return to their families and communities by wearing Orange Shirts for the first time on September 30, 2013. On the front of these first bright Orange Shirts, a circle of hands surrounded the message EVERY CHILD MATTERS. Last year, the federal government and some provincial governments declared September 30 as National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

**EVERY CHILD MATTERS!!!**

**WEAR SOMETHING ORANGE ON SEPTEMBER 30.**

**HONOUR THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS AND LISTEN TO WHAT THESE ELDERS HAVE TO SAY.**

**RESPECT THE PAIN OF THOSE WHO MOURN THOSE WHO DID NOT RETURN FROM RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TO THEIR FAMILIES AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.**

**REGISTER WITH OUR OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR AT TRINITY FOR THE UPCOMING TALKING CIRCLES TO COVER THE LAST FIVE CHAPTERS OF LISTENING TO INDIGENOUS VOICES.**

**BE CREATIVE IN FINDING WAYS TO BUILD RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.**