

# Mayor Frank Champion's statement on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

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September 30 will forever take on new meaning, as this year, we honour Indigenous survivors, families, and communities on the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

This day marks the long-overdue acknowledgement of the devastating effects of the residential school system. It also marks the opportunity to promote Indigenous history and culture and how the Indigenous community weaves their threads in the fabric of Canadian Culture and nationality.

Though it is impossible to fully understand the residential school system's impacts on the Indigenous cultures and generations, it should not prevent us from trying. We must take time, not just on September 30, but at the turn of every corner, to learn about Indigenous culture in our community and beyond. We must open our minds to accepting new ideas and traditions of the past of cultures, not our own. And we must commit to calling out injustices toward Indigenous communities at the moment, not after the fact.

The City of Welland is proud to acknowledge and support the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and will provide staff with resources to learn more about Indigenous history and culture. Staff are encouraged to participate in Orange Shirt Day, whereby donations will support Indigenous organizations. Additionally, the City will amplify information and resources about Truth and Reconciliation by posting content on its social media feeds on September 30 about this topic only.

The Welland Public Library is organizing a free presentation and Q&A session on September 30 from 6-8 p.m. They will be joined by Irene Goodwin and Teresa Edwards from Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF). Irene is a Survivor of the Indian Day School System, and both Irene and Teresa are Intergenerational Survivors.

But this is just the beginning of our journey to understand and reconcile. We cannot stop here. We must not stop here. Each day is an opportunity, and as we move past the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we must build towards the next.

I invite Indigenous groups and organizations to connect with staff to assist the City in further embracing and incorporating Indigenous culture into the community.



Mayor Frank Champion

