

CAYC National Board Statement regarding the Unmarked Burial Sites of the Kamloops Residential School

This message is written with profound sadness in response to the confirmation of an unmarked burial site of 215 children found at the Kamloops Residential School on the unceded and ancestral territories of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation. This confirms the testimonies of survivors and the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that many of the children forced to endure Residential School never returned home to their families and loved ones.

The traumatic legacy of Residential Schools is ongoing. The location of the burial site on the Kamloops Residential School is reopening painful and persistent wounds for many Residential School survivors, their families and communities. As noted by survivors and the TRC, there are many more sites that await unearthing, including ones the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in Manitoba have been currently working to identify at the Brandon Indian Residential School.

For those of us who are settlers living uninvited on the lands of many Indigenous people, now is a time to humbly and respectfully follow the lead of the Tk'emlúps Te Secwépemc Nation as shared by Chief Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir here. As settlers we are well-schooled to take control of what responses should be while avoiding any implications. Therefore, our responses need to be contextual, thoughtful, and respectful of Indigenous communities.

Therefore we recommend that we begin by answering Chief Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir's call to intentionally read the Truth and Reconciliation Report, the Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) so as to acquaint ourselves with the Canadian history that led to the epistemicide of Indigenous culture through many violences, including residential school, whose trauma and legacy continue to the present. It is not enough to acquaint ourselves with this history. Those of us who are settlers must acknowledge how we are implicated and benefit from colonialism. In so doing, we must commit to act in ways that lead to the transformation of the educational project in ways that actively disrupt the legacy of colonialism.

We call on ourselves and on CAYC members to commit to working with provincial, territorial, municipal, and federal governments and to work in solidarity with other organizations to support all involved in projects of education and other life activities. We must all take action and work in earnest to disrupt daily practices that maintain the legacy of colonization.

CAYC National Board