



Show Your Support for *Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters* Saturday in Centennial Square

Date: Friday, September 29, 2017

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The community and media are invited to wear orange and attend *Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters* on Saturday, September 30 from noon – 4 p.m. in Centennial Square. The grassroots event recognizes the harm that Canada's residential school system had on generations of Indigenous families and their communities. Every year on September 30, Canadians are asked to wear orange as a sign of support.

Emceed by local artist Bear Horne who designed this year's T-shirt, the formal portion of the free event will begin at 1 p.m. with a First Nations blessing, flag raising and welcome by Councillor Gary Sam of the Songhees Nation and Chief Andy Thomas of the Esquimalt Nation.

Personal stories of reconciliation will be shared by *Orange Shirt Day* founder Phyllis Webstad, First Nations musician and public speaker Luke Dandurand, and event organizers Eddy Charlie and Kristin Spray. The event will include performances by ANSWER drum group, City of Victoria Indigenous Artist in Residence Lindsay Delaronde, and First Nations singer Hannah Gentes. Guest speakers will also include Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands and Leader of the Green Party of Canada Elizabeth May, Member of Parliament for Victoria and NDP House Leader Murray Rankin, and Mayor Lisa Helps.

Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters grew out of Phyllis Webstad sharing her story in 2013 with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, of having her sparkly orange shirt taken away on her first day of St. Joseph Mission residential school. The Commission encouraged her to share her story with others, and since then, *Orange Shirt Day* has become an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

September 30 was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools. As September 30 falls on a Saturday this year, many schools will recognize *Orange Shirt Day* on Friday.

Residential school survivor Eddy Charlie and friend Kristin Spray are organizing the event, which they developed in 2015 while attending the Indigenous Studies program at Camosun College. This year, they are partnering with the City of Victoria and Bridges for Women Society to mark the City's commitment to reconciliation.

The event will include food trucks and complimentary treats. The Greater Victoria Public Library will have a table with a display of books on residential schools. *Orange Shirt Day* T-shirts will be available for purchase for \$20. For more information, visit: victoria.ca.

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