



## Show Your Support for *Orange Shirt Day*: *Every Child Matters*, Sunday in Centennial Square

Date: Friday, September 28, 2018

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The community and media are invited to wear orange and attend *Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters* on Sunday, September 30 from noon – 4 p.m. in Centennial Square. The free, 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.

WHAT: Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters  
WHEN: Sunday, September 30, noon – 4 p.m. (Ceremony will begin at noon)  
WHERE: Centennial Square

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 will be the second year they are partnering with the City of Victoria and Bridges for Women Society to mark the City's commitment to reconciliation.

Bridges for Women Society Executive Director Victoria Lea Pruden will emcee the event, which will consist of a First Nations blessing and welcome, blanketing ceremony, flag raising and performances by the ANSWER Drum Group and singer Hannah Gentes. Personal stories will be shared by Indigenous residential school survivors and family members. There will be an opportunity for those impacted by residential schools to be heard.

Mayor Lisa Helps will be joined by Hereditary Chief Edward Thomas of the Esquimalt Nation and representatives of the Songhees Nation, federal and provincial governments.

Following the flag raising, guests will be invited to participate in a moment of silence to honour and remember the more than 4,000 Indigenous children who did not survive Canada's residential schools.

Husband and wife team Alex and Nella Nelson will speak to their experiences of reconciliation. Alex was inducted into the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame for his work with the North American Indigenous Games and the Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of B.C. Nella Nelson recently retired having worked 40 years for the Victoria School District – 10 years as a teacher and 29 years as the district administrator for Aboriginal education.

Secwepemctsin Elder Cecilia DeRose, who attended St. Joseph Mission residential school with *Orange Shirt Day* founder Phyllis Webstad, will also share her story. A retired school teacher, Elder DeRose has worked with universities to develop Indigenous language programs and is well known for her traditional crafts and artistry.

The event will include authentic cuisine for purchase from Chef David Roger's Songhees Seafood and Steam Food Truck. Complimentary treats will be available courtesy of Red Barn and Discovery Coffee, and there will be tented seating in the event of rain. The community is reminded to wear orange and dress warmly for this outdoor event.

*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 Sunday this year, many schools and organizations will recognize *Orange Shirt Day* today.

*Orange Shirt Day* T-shirts designed by artist Bear Horne are \$20 and are available at the following retailers:

- Big Wheel Burger, Cook Street Village at 341 Cook Street
- Big Wheel Burger, Westside Village at 172 Wilson Street
- Big Wheel Burger, Gateway Village at 703-711 Vernon Avenue
- Caffé Fantastico, 965 Kings Road (at Quadra Street)
- delhi Restaurant, 2504 Government Street (at Bay Street)
- Fernwood Yoga Den, 1311 Gladstone Avenue
- Songhees Cultural Centre, 480 Belleville Street (located under the Robert Bateman Centre Gallery)

T-shirts will also be available for purchase at the event (cash only), in addition to official *Orange Shirt Day* blankets, and Phyllis Webstad's recently released children's book *The Orange Shirt Story*.

For more information, visit [www.victoria.ca](http://www.victoria.ca).

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