

Residential School Survivors

From the 1830s to 1997, over 150,000 Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) children (some as young as three years old) attended government-funded, church-run Residential Schools. Many were taken from their homes, often forcibly removed, and separated from their families by great distances for long periods of time – this was a cruel attempt to eradicate all that was Indigenous.

While in Residential Schools, the great majority of these children suffered abuses that have had a deep and lasting impact. Courageous Survivors have come forward with disclosures that include: sexual, mental, emotional, and physical abuse; extreme discipline; severe punishments for speaking their languages; forced eating of substandard or rotten food, widespread hunger and thirst, bondage, confinement, isolation, forced labour; and illness, disease, and even deaths.

Up to 7 generations of Indigenous Peoples recall the trauma, neglect, shaming, flashbacks and pain they were forced to experience for much of their childhood and have been haunted by the impacts since. Survivors have suffered the pervasive loss of life and relationship skills, identity, family, feelings of safety and security, language, and culture as a result of their experience with priests, nuns, teachers, school administrators, etc. during their time in the schools.

Remarkably, in the face of this tremendous adversity, many Survivors and their descendants have retained their language and their culture and are continuing to work toward healing, but they still face inequity and injustice today. Canadians can play a role by helping to end racism and discrimination by becoming an ally and working with Indigenous Peoples toward Reconciliation.

150,000

Number of Canadian children forced to attend Indian residential school

1831-1997

When the first Residential School opened, when the last Residential School closed.

75,000

Estimated number of living Survivors

“My hope for the future
is to acknowledge
what has happened,
rise above it and
become the strong
people again that we were
before all this happened.”

- Marjorie Flowers, Survivor

What You Can Do



Talk to an Educator

Ask if they include this topic in their classroom. Lobby to have Indigenous curriculum funded in the schools.



Write Letters

Ask politicians to work to restore funding to community-based healing initiatives and to adequately fund Indigenous students and schools.



Visit our website

www.legacyofhope.ca



Learn More and Spread the Word

Read books, watch videos, reach out to local Indigenous organizations and attend their events, and visit websites about these important topics. Ask your family, friends and colleagues what they know about Residential Schools and share some of the LHF materials with them.

Legacy of Hope Foundation

We are a national, Indigenous charitable organization whose purpose is to educate and create awareness and understanding about the impacts of Residential Schools, including the intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and to support the ongoing healing process of Survivors.

Since 2000, we have been creating educational resources, curriculum, touring exhibitions, websites, training and workshops, publications, and videos in collaboration with Survivors. Our guiding belief is that our work must contribute to the health, safety, well-being, and healing of Survivors, their families and communities, and further Reconciliation.

Contact us at:

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The Legacy of Hope Foundation has educated and inspired thousands of people across Canada and, with your generous support, we will reach thousands more. To donate, please visit: www.legacyofhope.ca

Charitable number 863471520RR0001



Are you an educator looking for curriculum on the impacts of the Residential School System? Visit www.legacyofhope.ca to learn more and to request a copy of our K-6 or 7-12 curriculum and other resources.

Why It Matters

It matters because it continues to affect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families—people from vibrant cultures who were and continue to be vital contributors to Canadian society.

It matters because it happened here – a land considered to be a world leader in democracy and human rights and has remained Canada's hidden history for over a century.

It matters because it is one of the major causes linked to addiction, trauma, self-harming and self-defeating behaviours, poverty, homelessness, depression, violence, and suicide among Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

It matters because we share this land. We may not be responsible for what happened in the past, but we all benefit today from what First Nations, Inuit, and Métis have had to experience and relinquish over generations at the hands of church and government representatives and officials, and individuals tasked with “killing the Indian in the child.”

Please join the Legacy of Hope Foundation in fostering Reconciliation in Canada.

HEALING EDUCATION

