

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN ACTION

SPECIAL EDITION: The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



The Truth About Orange Shirt Day - Educational Series

During the last week of September, students across Thames Valley were engaged in important discussions and reflections around the Canadian Residential Schools and the lasting impact they have had on Indigenous families and communities.

In addition to the lessons being taught in our classrooms, we launched a five-part educational series for students, staff, families, and community members to learn more about Orange Shirt Day, Residential Schools and the children who did not make it home.

Please go to our website to explore this series: www.tvdsb.ca/EveryChildMatters

Wortley Road PS invites community members to lead September 30th Orange Shirt Day ceremony

The day before The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, every student at Wortley Road PS learned about Orange Shirt Day and the significance of the round dance from parent Gordon Sands.

The next day, September 30th, Vydel and Liam Sands, members of the Wortley Road PS community, visited the school yard and led the entire school through a virtual ceremony to honour the survivors of Residential Schools and those who didn't make it home. The ceremony began with a moment of silence to reflect on the pain and trauma that Residential Schools caused. This was followed by an honour song for the survivors.

Students were then able to ask Liam and Vydel questions about Orange Shirt Day and Residential Schools and engaged in rich discussion about the importance of



September 30th.

The ceremony ended with a round dance led by Vydel and Liam with powerful drumming and singing. Across the entire school, desks were moved aside in each classroom so that students could participate in the round dance in the spirit of healing and friendship.

Indigenous Education Team builds staff capacity for Orange Shirt Day

TVDSB staff were invited to attend Professional Development Sessions with Charlene Camillo, Learning Coordinator, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education, and Robyn Michaud, Teacher on Special Assignment, Indigenous Education - Elementary to support schools with leading learning about Orange Shirt Day.

Sessions were geared towards elementary and secondary staff and were held virtually from September 15th to September 23rd with over 200 staff in attendance. Recordings of the sessions were made available on the TVDSB First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Resource website along with lesson plans and options for staff to lead learning in their schools in preparation for Orange Shirt Day.

During the Elementary sessions, educators were guided through slideshows created for each division, highlighting the truths about Residential schooling in age-appropriate language.

Teachers were also introduced to a school-wide shared reading activity around survivor Rita Joe's poem "I lost my talk" - a simple yet powerful text about her experience in Shubenacadie Residential School.

Secondary staff were able to review updated Orange Shirt Day information and resources from 2020 and view a new resource that shared more information to connect Residential Schools to colonialism. The new resource focused on truths and highlighted the resilience of Indigenous Peoples.

Staff were also provided with examples of trauma-sensitive approaches to ensure the content shared in the school was appropriate for each student.

Stoney Creek PS students participate in drum circle

On September 30th, grade five students at Stoney Creek PS participated in a drum circle to commemorate Orange Shirt Day and honour the survivors and victims of Residential Schools in Canada. The classes gathered on the Stoney Creek PS school yard in a large physically-distanced circle to join together in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation.



The drumming was led by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc through an audio recording, who called on people worldwide to drum simultaneously in honour of the victims of Residential Schools. The grade 5 group participated in the drumming circle and then observed a moment of silence to honour the survivors of residential schools and the children who did not make it home. Other students at the school participated in lessons examining resources identified by the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team and created murals throughout the school that depict their commitment to change.



June Rose Callwood gets creative for Orange Shirt Day

When Principal at June Rose Callwood, Dave Fife, purchased his orange shirt through Youth Leadership Camps Canada, he was introduced to Indigenous artist Michelle Stoney and her unique artwork.

Along with the orange shirt designed by Michelle, Mr. Fife was also provided with a feather colouring template for his students. "The eagle is a very sacred animal for us because it represents strength and wisdom," the artist explains. "We use their feathers when we smudge and cleanse ourselves [in a ceremony]".

The feather colouring template created by Michelle features intricate details that are designed to represent Residential School victims and the survivors.

Mr. Fife and Mrs. Morland-Fife, an educator at Mitchell Hepburn PS, created a slide show about artist Michelle Stoney and her artistic style to share with students encouraging questions that lead students to examine the artwork.

Students were then asked to each colour their own feathers to include in displays throughout the school.

Students at Northridge PS reflect and request change

Northridge Public School had a busy last week of September in honour of September 30th and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Students learned about the history of Indigenous people in Canada and discussed Residential Schools and why it was wrong to remove children from their families. The younger students found the lessons impactful and expressed that every child matters and needs to feel safe, loved, and happy.

After learning about the impact that

Residential Schools had on Indigenous identities, languages, and cultures through readings provided by TVDSB's Indigenous Education Team, some Northdale students created their own orange shirts.

Other classes wrote poems to help them reflect on what they learned and what they can do as a step forward towards reconciliation while other Northdale students wrote letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to request change.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS students walk in honour of survivors and victims

Over 1,000 students from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School participated in the schools' Orange Shirt Day ceremony on September 30th.

Leading up to the date, the Laurier daily announcements were full of information about Residential Schools and Indigenous communities from resources provided by the TVDSB's Indigenous Education Team.

Students and staff came together to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and created a large banner that hangs at the front entrance of the school. Each class began

the day by participating in a lesson provided by the board's Indigenous Education Team and received an Orange Shirt Day pin. Students reflected by taking part in an honour walk around the football field to illustrate the school community's commitment to truth and reconciliation, today and every day moving forward.

"This was a starting point for our commitment to truth and reconciliation," says Vice-Principal Amy Pitcher. "We want to continue to grow and learn with the Indigenous leaders in the board and community." The school also has plans to expand the Indigenous student group.