



Shaped by courage Strengthened by hope

10 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
(NCTR)'S SPIRIT NAME
IS *BEZHIG MIIGWAN*
("ONE FEATHER").

BEZHIG MIIGWAN CALLS
UPON US TO SEE EACH
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
SURVIVOR COMING TO THE
NCTR AS A SINGLE EAGLE
FEATHER AND TO SHOW
THOSE SURVIVORS THE SAME
RESPECT AND ATTENTION AN
EAGLE FEATHER DESERVES.

IT ALSO TEACHES WE ARE
ALL IN THIS TOGETHER—WE
ARE ALL ONE, CONNECTED,
AND IT IS VITAL TO WORK
TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE
RECONCILIATION.



CONTENTS

1	<i>A decade of strength and determination</i>
3	<i>From then to now</i>
5	SURVIVORS' FLAG <i>An expression of remembrance</i>
6	BENTWOOD MEDICINE BOX <i>A symbol of hope</i>
7	<i>About us</i>
9	<i>The NCTR Archives</i>
14	<i>Partnerships</i>
16	HONOURING MURRAY SINCLAIR, MAZINA GIIZHIK-IBAN <i>The One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky</i>
17	<i>Advocacy</i>
19	<i>Academic and Research</i>
22	<i>Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Initiative</i>
25	<i>Community</i>
28	<i>September 30: A day of remembrance</i>
30	<i>Education and Outreach</i>
33	10 YEARS OF PROGRESS <i>Snapshot of our work over the past decade</i>
41	<i>A long-awaited apology</i>
43	<i>NCTR and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate sign supplemental agreement</i>
45	<i>Our new home</i>
47	<i>We envision our new home to be...</i>
48	<i>Funding</i>
49	<i>Publications</i>
50	<i>Looking ahead</i>



“One of the great responsibilities for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is to ensure Canada never forgets about what it once did to its most vulnerable.”

-THE HONOURABLE SENATOR MURRAY SINCLAIR (MAZINA GIIZHIK-IBAN), WHILE SPEAKING AT THE NCTR'S OPENING CEREMONY



On December 15, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s closing ceremony marked the beginning of Canada's collective healing journey. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) was born of the TRC, and we continue the crucial work of leading Canada into acceptance of the truth and in walking the long path to reconciliation with us.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast to coast have been engaged in a long-overdue national conversation about the true history of the lands and first peoples of this country. And, for the past decade, people have been grappling with a painful truth, listening and learning—and unlearning what they have been taught in schools and by media about Indigenous Peoples.

For generations, the truth and legacy about residential schools was not taught to most Canadians, leading many to downplay what Survivors experienced and the intergenerational trauma it caused. This is precisely why the NCTR is here: to continue to shift and build the national narrative and preserve the record of Canada's human rights abuses, while honouring Survivors, their families and their communities every step of the way.





The work we do is with and will always be because of Survivors. Through their strength and determination, they have continuously shown us a compassionate pathway forward. To continue to amplify and protect their voices, experiences and histories, we remain committed to educating Canadians and championing these truths so Canada will not falter or turn its back on reconciliation.

The work is not easy, but it is essential. While the path ahead remains long and complex, each day represents another step toward a brighter future.

Our work is driven by an extraordinary team of leaders, staff, partners and supporters. We are strengthened by the dedication and wisdom of the Survivors, Elders, leaders and Knowledge Keepers who make up our Governing Circle and Survivors Circle.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in our journey so far. As we step into the next decade, we know we will face challenges along with continued progress—but we stand as matriarchs and warriors ready, resolute and committed to the road ahead.

*Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Chair,
Truth and Reconciliation, Lakehead University*

Stephanie Scott, Executive Director, NCTR

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement settled the largest class action lawsuit in the country's history. This complex agreement created multiple national processes, including the Independent Assessment Process and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

Learning from the lessons of post-TRC implementation challenges in other parts of the world, the Canadian independent TRC was mandated to establish a national research centre: a permanent, safe home for all statements, documents and other materials to ensure no one can ever deny what occurred within residential schools across Canada.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) was created through a Trust and Administrative agreement between the TRC and the University of Manitoba shortly before the conclusion of the TRC's mandate.

BUILDING A NATIONAL CENTRE

Establishing the NCTR required commitment, vision and a lot of hard work. The Government of Canada had never developed an institution whose top priority was to bring to light the harms Canada had inflicted upon First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. This work was happening while pursuing relationships to one day reach reconciliation.

New legislation was needed, governance structures implemented, documents transferred, staff hired, technical systems built, partnerships realized and a new home created. In February 2014, Ry Moran was appointed as the first Director of the NCTR. After starting its life in a temporary shared office, extensive renovations were undertaken to create a dedicated space suited to our work. In November 2015, the NCTR moved into Chancellor's Hall on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus in Treaty One Territory. The Director and Archives staff were the first to join the team.

Our team played an active role in the TRC's closing ceremonies. We also helped to distribute its *Final Report*, performed the final disposition of its records, accommodated staff and continued in its footsteps in the fight for the protection of residential school history through the courts.

THE NCTR ACT

Before any documents were transferred between the TRC and the NCTR, new legislation was required to align Manitoba's privacy legislation with our complex national mandate. Following a lengthy period of negotiations and discussions between the NCTR, the TRC and the Province of Manitoba, the Manitoba legislature enacted *The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act* on July 13, 2015.



A NEW ERA BEGINS

The NCTR officially opened its doors in November 2015, beginning with a sacred fire at Chancellor's Hall. Our opening ceremonies acknowledged the 25-year anniversary of former National Chief Phil Fontaine's historic disclosure of residential school abuse. A special ceremony took place to honour his courage and determination to reveal the truth.

Since then, the NCTR has continued the work started by the TRC, with its *Final Report* and 94 *Calls to Action* acting as a roadmap for Canada to address the ongoing legacy of residential schools in the hopes of reconciliation, first under the direction of Ry Moran and now, Stephanie Scott.

The Survivors' statements, documents and other sacred items and materials collected through the TRC now form the heart of the NCTR. Five of the Calls to Action (65, 71, 72, 77 and 78) refer to the NCTR and its role as steward of these truths. We also work with our network of partners and supporters to continue to expand this collection and promote ongoing research and learning.

It is our responsibility to share these truths in a respectful way and work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, researchers, communities, decision-makers and the public to support the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation and healing across Canada and beyond.

By keeping to our mandate and including Survivors, ceremonies, Knowledge Keepers and Elders in every step of our process, the NCTR became what it is today: an internationally recognized organization honouring the lived realities of residential school Survivors and dedicating each day to reconciliation in Canada and around the world.



An expression of remembrance

SURVIVORS' FLAG

In summer 2021, discoveries of unmarked burials in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and on other grounds of former residential schools sparked heartfelt responses of mourning throughout Canada and across the globe. As members of the public inquired about how they could show respect, many Survivors discussed remembrance and the creation of a commemorative flag as a symbol to honour the lives impacted by the residential school system.

Inuit, Mi'kmaq, Atikamekw, Nehiyawak, Anishinaabe, Dakota, Kanien'kehá:ka, Dene, Nuu-chah-nulth, Secwépemc, and Métis Survivors came together over six weeks in a series of discussions to develop the flag design. With this input, Shaun Vincent from Vincent Design made their vision a reality.

"As children, Survivors were told they couldn't be who they were because they were Indigenous. We were made to believe we were not good enough. As a veteran, to be honoured with a flag has special significance. I will bring this flag with me to gatherings and ceremonies. I hope Canadians will also incorporate the flag into their own gatherings in the future to mark remembrance."

-WANBDI WAKITA, DAKOTA SURVIVOR AND CONTRIBUTOR TO THE SURVIVORS' FLAG

The NCTR unveiled the new Survivors' Flag to mark the first official National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021. The Survivors' Flag was first raised on Parliament Hill in August 2022. In June 2023 and October 2024, Survivors participated in its re-raising.



A symbol of hope

BENTWOOD MEDICINE BOX

The Bentwood Medicine Box is a lasting tribute to all residential school Survivors. The sacred box and the items in this collection are deeply personal symbols of their experience.

Commissioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2009, the Bentwood Medicine Box travelled with the TRC to its eight national events throughout Canada, where people placed personal items into the box to symbolize their journey toward healing and expressions of reconciliation. Thousands of items from across the country were donated.

Coast Salish artist Luke Marston steamed, bent and carved the box in the traditional style from a single piece of sacred, old-growth red cedar. The artistic styles and imagery in its carved panels represent the distinct cultures of former First Nations, Inuit and Métis residential school students.

After its travels with the TRC, the Bentwood Medicine Box was featured at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in an exhibit on truth and reconciliation. It is now in its permanent residence at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, where it remains a symbol of hope.

ABOUT US

Mandate

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) derives its mandate from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action and from the agreements under which the Centre was established and the records of residential school Survivors first entrusted to its care.

THE CORE PILLARS OF THE NCTR'S MANDATE ARE:

- To be a responsible and accountable steward for the experiences, photos, letters, statements and memories entrusted to the Centre by the Survivors of residential schools, to honour their truths and to ensure they can never again be forgotten or ignored.
- To continue the research work begun by the TRC and in this way contribute to the continuing healing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and the country as a whole.
- To build a foundation for reconciliation by promoting public education and understanding of the residential schools and how they are part of a larger history of violent assaults on the distinct cultures and identities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

Governance

The NCTR is overseen by a Governing Circle, which includes Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and representatives of the University of Manitoba (UM) and other partners. The majority of members are First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The Governing Circle is guided by the Survivors Circle, as well as by Elders, legacy members of the Survivors Circle and Knowledge Keepers.

These governance structures are essential to ensuring Survivors are always at the very heart of the NCTR, and the Centre relies on their advice and guidance to uphold Indigenous laws and protocols.

GOVERNING CIRCLE

In 2014, a nominating committee selected the NCTR's first Governing Circle members. Three members represent Survivors, their families or ancestors (one First Nation, one Inuit and one Métis) and, always, at least four members of the Governing Circle must self-identify as Indigenous. The remaining four members represent UM and other NCTR partner organizations.

Governing Circle members serve a three-year term, meet quarterly and serve as a decision-making and advisory circle on the NCTR's policies, priorities, activities, ceremonies, protocols and methods.



SURVIVORS CIRCLE

Following a national selection process, the NCTR welcomed its first Survivors Circle in 2017. One of their first ceremonial acts was to welcome the TRC's Bentwood Box back to the NCTR after being on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights since the TRC's close.

"For us, as Survivors, it is important that we see the NCTR as our home, where our truths, experiences and lives are validated, honoured and never forgotten. The staff carry the responsibility—both today and tomorrow—to ensure our voices are carried forward in a good way."

-EUGENE ARCAD, NO. 781, SURVIVORS CIRCLE MEMBER,
MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION

The NCTR exists to support Survivors, so their truths and oral histories are recorded and safeguarded for all time. The first Survivors Circle worked closely with staff at the NCTR, providing invaluable expertise and guidance on an array of NCTR actions, their perspectives instrumental in the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) records case and development of the enhanced notice program for IAP records. Their direct advocacy efforts resulted in the NCTR's *Lessons Learned* report and the National Student Memorial Register to honour and respect the children who died or disappeared during their time in residential school, and their voices and perspectives remain central to our programming and policies.

ELDERS-IN-RESIDENCE

Elders and Knowledge Keepers play a significant role at the NCTR. From visioning the turtle that sits in front of our building, to guiding the sensitive work and protecting the spirit of all who enter our space in doing this sacred task, our work would not be possible without them.

The NCTR team

The NCTR's team is a diverse mix of Survivors, Intergenerational Survivors, 60s Scoop Survivors, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and non-Indigenous Peoples and newcomers. Our staff brings with them a rich diversity of experiences, perspectives and knowledge from their nations and communities across Canada.

The NCTR is hosted by the University of Manitoba and draws on the knowledge, expertise and ambition of individuals across the country through secondment initiatives with various partner organizations, student internships and contractual relationships.

THE NCTR STRIVES TO MAINTAIN

70% First Nations, Inuit and Métis staff

many of whom are Survivors, Intergenerational Survivors or the living legacy of the residential school system like the 60s Scoop.



70% of the NCTR senior leadership team are women.

As our work has expanded through special projects, so has the need for resources. Important human resources are continually added to the team, complementing the existing staff and enhancing the areas of Education, Outreach and Public Programming; Operations and Administration; Communications; and Archives.

Operations

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininew, Anisininew, Dakota and Dene Peoples, the National Homeland of the Red River Métis and home to many Inuit. We are open Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT and can be found on the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus, in Chancellor's Hall at 177 Dysart Road.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) Archives are intended to be a powerful agent of change in the country, allowing visitors to understand the history and the human rights violations of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

From the transfer of records from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s offices, to the security reviews, to new technical infrastructure and backup systems, the work to establish the NCTR Archives has required significant teamwork between the University of Manitoba (UM) and NCTR staff.

Prior to launching our public archive, we travelled to meet with Survivors in both remote and urban environments. These community engagement sessions focused on what Survivors and their families wanted to see happen with the records and how they would like to be included as the NCTR developed.

A central theme in these conversations was how we would present information out of the archive and how the NCTR's truth-telling mandate would respond to the real need to protect personal information.

Inside the Archives

Today, the NCTR Archives team cares for over four million archival records made up of over 15 million digital files. At the heart of the NCTR Archives are 7,000+ Survivor and witness statements and close to 3,000 hours of audiovisual content. The NCTR continues the work of statement gathering and fully understands the value of preserving oral history for generations to come.

The Archives team also cares for thousands of physical and sacred objects that were gifted to the TRC during multiple public ceremonies and events. The team has completed an inventory of these objects, ranging from art, poetry, songs and spiritual items, representing experiences and commitments to truth and reconciliation from not only in Canada but also around the globe.

They have carefully documented each object with photographs, storage needs, donation information and descriptive information. Now centralized, this information has been incorporated into the NCTR's archival database, where we can preserve it for generations.

The team actively collects new acquisitions of records and items from a variety of repositories and on a number of issues and subject areas important to Indigenous communities.

The NCTR Archives received a collection comprised of records relating to His Honour Murray Sinclair prior to his passing, including items related to his education, professional career and personal life.



The records reflect his career as a lawyer, associate chief judge, Senator and Chief Commissioner of the TRC. They also represent his time on the Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquest, his affiliation with the Court of Queen's Bench, and his time as general counsel and as a law consultant and mediator. The collection is arranged into nine series, which include textual records, graphic material, objects, textiles (academic robes), binders and notebooks.

Behind the scenes

Preserving the records and providing access to the materials housed in our archives is our top priority. Since receiving documents and materials from the TRC, the Archives team has initiated multiple projects to further enhance the digital preservation of the collection to ensure these records are here not just now, but for all time.

In 2022, the NCTR worked with residential school Survivor Dawn Hill and intergenerational Survivor Crystal Gail Fraser to provide tutorial videos to help with the navigation of the archival collections accessible via the NCTR website.

The archives support multiple ways of knowing, and the NCTR is also working to restructure and decolonize its data. In 2021, Raymond Frogner, Senior Director of Research and Head of Archives, received funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation toward rebuilding the Centre's digital architecture. By incorporating Indigenous perspectives on memory, archival practice and ownership, we are creating something new—a decolonizing archive built on the Seven Grandfather Teachings of respect, honesty, wisdom, courage, humility, love and truth.

Read more about our new data system, which provides Survivors and the public with access to the archives, on page 36.



Thanks to \$6 million in grant funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation beginning in 2021, the NCTR advanced four major archive focused projects, including:

AN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

for the digital preservation of records at the NCTR

THE DIGITAL PRESERVATION of more than 7,000 statements and testimonies of Survivors in collaboration with the National Film Board, for which the NCTR received international recognition

DEVELOPMENT OF FREE WORKSHOPS

for communities to learn about researching in a digital environment

A SURVEY that will study the mental and physical effects and trauma of intergenerational Survivors

Access requests

The NCTR has prioritized getting records, statements and other materials back into the hands of communities, Survivors and their families. Each request is completed with the utmost care and sensitivity. Individuals can request access to residential school records or records collected by the TRC, including Survivor statements.

Request completion time can vary depending on the complexity of the inquiry, the volume of the request and rate of inquiries we receive.

Survivor requests are deemed priority requests. As Survivors will not be with us forever, we recognize the urgency and importance of access to their records. Records required for compensation are also assigned rush status to ensure we are providing families with the documents they require as soon as possible.

Requests are logged as one request regardless of how many family members' records are included in that request (i.e., John Smith made a request for himself and eight family members. This would be recorded as one request to ensure all records are kept together and provided to the requester at the same time.).

1,890 **TOTAL ACCESS REQUESTS COMPLETED (2015-2025)**

INDIVIDUAL NAMES REQUESTED (2015-2025): **2,539**

NUMBER OF PAGES OF RECORDS PROVIDED TO SURVIVORS AND INTERGENERATIONAL SURVIVORS (2015-2025)

218,537

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE REQUESTS

The proactive disclosure of records means records from the NCTR Archives are being authorized for release by the NCTR's Executive Director and the University of Manitoba Access and Privacy Officer in accordance with Section 7 of *The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act*.

Typically requested by researchers, external agencies, academics, the media and communities, records requested through this process are more focused on a specific purpose rather than a specific individual. The NCTR began taking requests through this process in 2018.

TOTAL PROACTIVE RELEASE REQUESTS RECEIVED (2018-2025):

307 REQUESTS

Total files released through proactive disclosure (2018-2025):

80,000+

HOURS OF VIDEO AND AUDIO FOOTAGE RELEASED THROUGH PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE:

162 hours

Through the years, the Archives team has also supported museums with content for their public displays, sent materials overseas for international exhibitions raising awareness of Canada's human rights record, fueled media stories, and contributed materials to documentary films in Canada and around the world. Content from our archives has also been used in academic research papers, presentations, online textbooks, educational resources and training modules.



The NCTR Archives currently has 70 Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) in place for communities and partners to have access to the NCTR database and to guide partnerships. As of May 2025, 38 MOAs are complete, while 32 remain in progress.

Notable agreements include:

- Indigenous Services Canada
- National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition
- Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency
- Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (Service Ontario)
- Manitoba Museum
- UBC History and Dialogue Centre
- Library and Archives Canada
- Oblates of the Mary Immaculate
- Royal BC Museum
- Crown Indigenous Relations (CIRNAC)
- Algoma University
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- Council of Yukon First Nations
- Institut Tshakapesh (Nation Innue)
- Manitoba Inuit Association
- Office of the Treaty Commissioner
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak

PARTNERSHIPS

Founded on the importance of partnerships, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) works in partnership with universities, colleges, museums, governments and organizations across the country, creating a strong network from coast to coast to coast.

From arts-based initiatives to ongoing work directly with Survivor-based organizations, these partnerships have been the key to our long-term sustainability, through which we have created a foundation for truth and reconciliation initiatives across the country and beyond. Partners may also sit at one of two seats available for partners on the NCTR Governing Circle.

We gratefully acknowledge our partners, past and present, for their contributions and support. We look forward to seeing where our collaborations take us in the future.

SURVIVOR-FOCUSED PARTNERSHIPS

The NCTR is committed to working in partnership with Survivors, their families and their communities across Canada. We continue to receive guidance and advice from Survivor groups and communities about issues such as Indigenous rights, culture and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s Calls to Action.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Our institutional partnerships encompass long-term alliances with a diverse range of organizations. Since launching with a set of original proposal partners, like the University of British Columbia and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, we have expanded our list of partners to include other major post-secondary institutions, forming the basis of a network of aligned actions from across the country.

Other partnerships focus on signing Memorandums of Understanding for work with organizations like Manitoba Vital Statistics

and the Ontario Attorney General to produce the records of children who passed away at residential schools.

PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

The NCTR has partnered with countless groups and organizations on projects that have educated and engaged audiences across Canada. Our project-based partnerships, including those with



the Canada School of Public Service, National Film Board, APTN and Canadian Museum for Human Rights, have been monumental in ensuring we continue to share the history of residential schools and colonization with as many people, organizations and leaders in Canada as possible.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We are now recognized as a trusted expert organization at an international level, welcoming delegations from TRCs from across the world. These dialogues focus on statement-gathering approaches and the challenges and opportunities

associated with establishing post-TRC social memory institutions like the NCTR.

Our own outreach has included engagement with Indigenous Peoples and organizations in Taiwan, Malaysia, Australia and beyond. Partnerships with UN Agencies, Global Affairs Canada and Advocates Sans Frontiers have been instrumental in our ability to support truth and reconciliation initiatives globally.

If your organization is interested in working with the NCTR as a partner, please contact us at 1-855-415-4534 or nctr@umanitoba.ca.

Our partnership with the University of Manitoba

Before completing its work, the TRC issued a call for proposals from institutions wishing to host a permanent centre and archive for its records. The University of Manitoba (UM), which had submitted a proposal along with a range of partner organizations, was chosen as host.

SINCE IT WAS ESTABLISHED, THE NCTR HAS PARTNERED WITH UM ON A VARIETY OF INITIATIVES AND OPERATED OUT OF ITS FORT GARRY CAMPUS IN WINNIPEG. OUR NEW HOME WILL BE BUILT ON LAND OFFERED BY THE UNIVERSITY AS AN ACT OF RECONCILIATION, NEAR THE BANKS OF THE RED RIVER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR FUTURE HOME, SEE PAGE 45.

The TRC subsequently stated UM was selected because it had "demonstrated a strong commitment to human rights research and promotion, and to Aboriginal peoples and governance. Its proposal stressed the highest standard of digital preservation, meaningful Survivor and community engagement, world-class archival experience and facilities, expertise in privacy and access, and financial stability."



The One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky

HONOURING
MURRAY SINCLAIR,
MAZINA GIIZHIK-IBAN

His Honour Murray Sinclair's (1951-2024) unwavering commitment to truth and reconciliation in Canada is unparalleled.

He fought tirelessly for the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples as a lawyer and Manitoba's first Indigenous Justice, with a 40-year career devoted to the justice system. In April 2016, he was appointed to the Senate, where he served for five years before retiring to return to practicing law and providing mentorship.

As Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, he helped amplify the truths of Survivors, his work laying the foundation for our very existence. We are grateful for his wisdom and counsel over the years, most recently as a special advisor and Elder-in-Residence.

His Honour will forever hold a special place in our hearts, and we will eternally honour his memory. His invaluable contributions have left an enduring legacy that will continue to guide and inspire future generations toward a more just and equitable society.



ADVOCACY

Our advocacy efforts reinforce our commitment to engaging in meaningful dialogue with government, policymakers and partners. While we have advocated on numerous issues over the past decade, the following highlights a small sampling of our efforts.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

One of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s Calls to Action (80) called for the establishment of a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The NCTR was a major supporter of this day, appearing in front of parliamentary committees and media to advance understanding and support for its establishment. The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was recognized on September 30, 2021. *Read more on page 28.*

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING SCHOOL SITES AND UNMARKED BURIAL LOCATIONS

A major public advocacy initiative of the NCTR addresses the multiple Calls to Action around protecting and preserving remaining residential school sites and unmarked burial locations. Our team has presented to parliamentary committees and worked extensively with the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Indigenous communities and the media, to advance understanding and action on these important initiatives. *Read more on page 22.*

PAPAL APOLOGY

During countless TRC hearings, Survivors expressed their disappointment in the lack of an apology from the Pope. The NCTR continued to advocate for a papal apology in a manner consistent with the Calls to Action. *Read more on page 41.*





The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) fosters and supports research on residential schools and their legacy and aims to promote new directions in research on Indigenous law and rights, Treaties and government policy. The Centre also promotes best practices in research based on Indigenous and Western research ethics and standards.

Academic and community-based researchers can access and engage with material held in the NCTR Archives, as well as contribute to the NCTR's living legacy that promotes understanding and reconciliation through dialogue, education and research.

NATIONAL STUDENT MEMORIAL REGISTER

The creation of a National Student Memorial Register builds upon the extensive work conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The registry ensures everyone remembers, honours and acknowledges the children who died or went missing while attending a residential school in Canada.

This registry represents the first time the names of children who never returned are identified, commemorated and made available on a national basis in Canada. It includes more than 4,000 named and unnamed children identified through records in the NCTR's care and from families' and students' statements. The NCTR continues to gather names, honouring the children and making their names known to help ceremonies and memorials take place in a child's community of origin.

To support ongoing memorialization, a 2021 print version of the Memorial Register provides

families, communities and others with an important memorial to honour and remember the children. An online register maintains an active list of children's names. The development of this memorial register, and its print form, is the result of work by countless people and the advice, guidance and blessings from Survivors, Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

In a moving ceremony on September 30, 2019, the NCTR, in partnership with APTN, released the known names of all children who never returned home. At that time, there were over 2,800 children's names honoured on a 50-metre-long memorial cloth.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL DOCUMENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Composed of Survivors and First Nations, Inuit and Métis community members, the Residential School Documents Advisory Committee was created to ensure Indigenous voices are reflected in all discussions and decisions regarding the identification, review and sharing of residential school-related documents.

Six committee members were identified through consultations with the NCTR, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council:



Eugene Arcand

Survivor,
Muskeg Lake First Nation

Tagaag Evaluardjuk-Palmer

Survivor,
Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)

Shirley Horn

Survivor,
Missanabie Cree First Nation

Brenda Macdougall

Chair of Métis Research,
University of Ottawa

Dr. Gwen Point

Intergenerational Survivor,
Skowkale First Nation

Committee membership also included representation from the NCTR, as well as:

- Agriculture Canada
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
- Department of Justice
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Health Canada
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Library and Archives Canada
- National Film Board
- Parks Canada
- Privy Council Office
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- RCMP

- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
- Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools

Through an initial scoping review, as many as 23 million additional documents related to residential schools and the implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) were identified for the committee to consider. This collection goes beyond the type of documents that were required to be disclosed to the TRC under the IRSSA and are in addition to the more than 1.5 million documents and higher-quality images provided to the NCTR through the Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2022.

This is a monumental task, and as of June 2025, the Committee has suspended its work until the federal government provides adequate and necessary funding to continue with the next steps.

RECONCILIATION NETWORK

In 2022, the NCTR and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) formed a partnership on a national research program as a response to Call to Action 65: “To establish a national research program in partnership with SSHRC with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.”

In 2024, SSHRC and the NCTR announced an investment of approximately \$6 million over five years to support six partnership grants through the Reconciliation Network, selected by a Survivor-led committee. The names of the awarded projects are:

BISKAABIIYAANG: Creating a path towards Healing and Reconciliation through an Indigenous metaverse

BRINGING THE CHILDREN HOME:

Advancing Technology and Capacity for Locating and Commemorating Residential School Burial Landscapes

"WE'RE STILL HERE": Amplifying Urban Indigenous Stories in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and St. John's through Indigenous-led Partnerships

GI-INWEWIN GI-NAAZIKAANAG / THE RETURNING TO OUR LANGUAGES PROJECT

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING INDIGENIZED WILDFIRE RECOVERY PROCESSES FOR ECOLOGICAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS RECONCILIATION ON ST'AT'IMC TERRITORY

RE-NEIGHBOURING AS RECONCILIATION: Indigenous Stories of Resistance

CANADIAN RECONCILIATION BAROMETER PROJECT

Inspired by similar research projects in South Africa and Australia, the Canadian Reconciliation Barometer measures progress of our shared journey toward reconciliation.

Developed by a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and led by Dr. Katherine Starzyk at the University of Manitoba (UM), the study uses 13 indicators of reconciliation to measure good understanding of the past and present, acknowledgement of ongoing harm, respectful relationships, personal equality and systemic equality.

Two reports have since been released: *The Canadian Reconciliation Barometer Project 2021 Report* and *2022 Report*.



Malcolm & Catherine Dewar Truth and Reconciliation Fellowship

Malcolm and Catherine Dewar established a fund at UM to reward the academic achievements of graduate students pursuing research in the area of truth and reconciliation in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Beginning in 2020-2021 and continuing until funds are depleted, one annual scholarship of \$8,000 has been offered to a self-declared Indigenous graduate student with a direct family connection (intergenerational or otherwise) to a residential school and who is undertaking or plans to undertake research focused on the Calls to Action.

Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Initiative

A decade since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) ended its mandate, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) continues to carry forward the critical mission of the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials research.

This initiative fulfils the TRC's Calls to Action 71 through 76, which urge us to identify and commemorate the children who died or disappeared from residential schools and the burial locations of these children.

As of June 30, 2025, through ongoing research, community engagement and verification with families, the NCTR has recently identified more than a thousand additional children lost in the institutions. Many children are still missing, and the search for them continues.

In the last 10 years, the work has progressed through three phases:

INITIAL PHASE (2018-2019)

The NCTR began to address Call to Action 72 in the first phase of the work. At the time, it was understood that the Centre would work closely with communities to try to identify, as accurately as possible, the identity of missing children who were sent to residential schools.

During this early start-up phase, the federal government, through Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, provided a one-time \$10-million contribution grant in response to Call to Action 78.

Research: The team began its work by reviewing the student death research completed by the TRC Missing Children and Burials Project team in preparation for the creation of a dedicated

database to hold the National Residential School Student Death Register.

A pilot study was undertaken to review the remaining 2.2 million TRC records that had not been researched by the wind-up of the Commission's mandate.

Community engagement: The team conducted community engagement sessions with Survivors and a total of 170 communities across Canada to build a shared vision for the new National Residential School Student Death Register to memorialize the children who never came home.

Development: 2018 saw the establishment of the National Residential School Student Death Register, a secure NCTR database containing personal information and specific data elements related to student deaths.

2019 saw the establishment of the National Student Memorial Register, a public NCTR website (memorial.nctr.ca) to commemorate the children, with a limited set of information about each student death.

The NCTR honours this research initiative through ongoing consultation with the NCTR's Survivors Circle as well as through quarterly ceremonies with the Elders-in-Residence to guide the work through ceremony.

The NCTR also meets regularly with nationally recognized Elders at the Turtle Lodge Centre of Excellence in Indigenous Education and Wellness in Sagkeeng, Manitoba, a place for sharing Indigenous ancestral knowledge, founded on the Seven Sacred Laws.

In March 2025, the Turtle Lodge Council of Elders, in partnership with the NCTR, issued a call for a National Day of Prayer and Ceremony in the Four Directions to honour the children lost at residential schools. Ceremonies were held at the Lodge by respected Indigenous Elders from across the nation, who lifted sacred pipes and lit sacred fires for the children whose lives were lost and for the children of today.



SECOND PHASE (2021-2023)

The federal government, through Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, pledged additional funding to support the implementation of Call to Action 72 over five years.

Research completed: The team analyzed the remaining 2.2 million TRC records for evidence of student loss and burial locations.

As a result of this research, the team identified over 17,000 references to student loss in the NCTR's previously unreviewed records.

These references to student loss will be linked to other documentary evidence as research progresses. All NCTR records in the internal database are now fully searchable through descriptive fields. This opens great possibilities for data analytics, and greater usability and understanding for community researchers.

THIRD PHASE (2023-2025)

Research goals:

- Verified 4,141 deaths in the National Student Death Register
- Cross-referenced over 17,000 indications of loss identified in the previous phase against the previously recorded deaths in the National Student Death Register

Deliver research plan:

- New records acquired by the NCTR since opening in 2015
- New records to be acquired by the NCTR in the future

Community engagement goals:

- Build trusted relationships with communities to confirm and commemorate children who died or went missing
- Engage with Survivors and communities across Canada to build a shared vision for a new National Student Burial Register



Phase 3 of the project is now underway, focusing on building relationships with communities to confirm and remember the children, using a trauma-informed and community-led approach. To support this crucial work, we have been reaching out to communities to begin building relationships and working together.

The community engagement team consists of three liaisons (hired in March, April and July 2024, respectively) and one coordinator. The team is sensitive to the traditional protocols, language and ceremony each community represents and respects their needs.

In summer 2024, we engaged communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, both virtually and in person, with attendees including Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and both rural and community members. The NCTR also engaged with Survivor communities in Quebec and the Yukon through the National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials.

At the same time, researchers continued to work with communities to verify potential losses identified in the second phase. Progress also continued on the definitive list of all children sent to residential schools.

Our work is deeply rooted in the community. Whether through partnerships, public engagement or direct support, we remain committed to creating space for Survivors' truths to be heard and healing journeys honoured.

STATEMENT GATHERING FROM COAST TO COAST TO COAST



Over the past decade, the NCTR has gathered statements of the residential school experience from Survivors, intergenerational Survivors and their families at gatherings in communities across Canada. The NCTR continues to hear from Survivors who wish to share their oral histories, some in private sessions and some choosing to sit with others in sharing circles to share the impacts of residential schools, day schools and other colonial systems. Statements are gathered by audio or video recording and will continue to be preserved, protected and honoured by the NCTR.

We also support capacity-building around statement gathering. Our team has provided virtual and in-person training to communities and groups interested in gathering statements for their needs, whether for missing children and unmarked burials, residential or day school history, or other. The *NCTR Statement Gathering Guide* serves as a reference and provides essential information for statement gatherers, including principles and procedures for trauma-informed services.

Learn about preserving your story:

nctr.ca/records/preserve-your-records

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS MISSING CHILDREN AND UNMARKED BURIALS

The National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials (NAC) was established to ensure Indigenous communities have access to independent, trusted



and expert information in their efforts to identify, locate and commemorate their missing children. As co-administrator, the NCTR was proud to support the NAC on this critical work. The NAC and Circle of Survivors met regularly, both in person and virtually.



Over 1,000 people attended NAC's in-person knowledge exchange gatherings, joined by more than 600 online participants across eight gatherings:

- Yellowknife – June 2023
- Truro – October 2023
- Regina – March 2024
- Ottawa – June 2024
- Quebec City – September 2024
- North Vancouver – November 2024
- Whitehorse – February 2025
- Calgary – March 2025

Representatives from the NAC also attended 14 community engagements across the country.

Eight informative webinars were also hosted:

May 2024 – Researching Residential Schools (with Sean Carlton, Raymond Frogner and Krista McCracken)

October 2024 – Best Practices and Red Flags (with Kisha Supernant, Emily Holland and Kona Williams)

December 2024 – Health and Wellness in the Search Process (with Melanie Morris, Brenda Reynolds and Wayne Clark)

February 2025 – What We Now Know (with Kisha Supernant, Crystal Fraser and Kona Williams)

May 2025 – Working with French Records (with Jerome Melancon, Veronique Mireault and Anne Marie Wheeler)

June 2025 – Forensic Examination (with Kona Williams, Emily Holland and Jeanette Jules)

June 2025 – Repatriation from a community perspective: Bringing my brother home (with Joyce Hunter)

June 2025 – Dispelling the Myth of Denialism (with Sean Carlton and Niigaan Sinclair)

To support promotion, the NAC developed a range of print materials and resources, including brochures, infographic posters, FAQs, a summary guide outlining the role of forensics and more. It generated strong interest, with the NAC website receiving over 9,000 individual visits and 13 media articles highlighting the group's work.

*** While funding for the NAC was not renewed as of March 31, 2025, the NCTR continues its research to locate missing and disappeared children.**

NA-MI-QUAI-NI-MAK

The Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Fund (I Remember Them) at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) offered two separate grants to support commemorative and community-based healing initiatives.

Funding for the Commemorative Support Fund was provided by the federal department, Parks Canada. This partnership was initiated in 2020, and through this funding stream, the NCTR provided grants to 126 communities for commemorative initiatives.

While funding is no longer available under the Commemorative Support Fund, the Community Healing Fund continues to offer a one-time grant of up to \$10,000 to Indigenous communities toward community healing gatherings or workshops connected to the Indian Residential School System. To date, 89 communities have received grants from the Community Healing Fund. These funds are generously donated to the NCTR by individuals, corporations and community organizations.

September 30: A day of remembrance

September is a difficult time of year for Survivors. It is a painful reminder of the time of year when thousands of Indigenous children were taken from their homes as they were forced to attend residential schools, separated from their families and communities, and stripped of their belongings.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Orange Shirt Day is a movement started by Survivor Phyllis Webstad to commemorate when her clothes, including her new orange shirt—a gift from her grandmother—were taken away on her first day at St. Joseph's Mission residential school

in British Columbia. At six years old, this action imprinted on her a feeling of worthlessness.

A member of the NCTR Survivors Circle, Webstad is the Executive Director of the Orange Shirt Society and tours the country telling her story





and raising awareness about the impacts of the residential school system.

Webstad is Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band). She comes from mixed Secwepemc and Irish/French heritage, was born in Dog Creek, and lives in Williams Lake, B.C.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Every September 30, the NCTR joins with First Nations, Métis Nation and Inuit communities and other partners to honour Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

In 2021, the NCTR Survivors Circle called on all political parties to support a National Day of Commemoration in keeping with Call to Action 80. Within a month of Tk'emlups te Secwépemc

announcing it had located unmarked graves in Kamloops, federal legislation was passed proclaiming the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is one single step on a long path ahead—a journey that requires all of us to travel together.

The NCTR has since developed educational programming for the week leading up to September 30 and on the day of. Each year, the NCTR also gathers on Parliament Hill, in partnership with APTN, CBC Radio-Canada, the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation and many others, to continue the call for justice, healing and meaningful action.

Each year, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) interacts with thousands of learners. Our education unit offers presentations, workshops and activities to students in kindergarten to grade 12, post-secondary institutions, and to the public and private sectors. Visitors to our main office often include elected officials, faith-based groups, public servants, educators, administrators and university students, all seeking to deepen their understanding of residential schools and our Archives.

In 2024 alone, the NCTR's education unit engaged with nearly 12,000 people through in-person and virtual tours, workshops, visits, conferences and presentations, while millions more engaged with the NCTR's vital work across the country.

Presentations and activities are tailored to the audience's knowledge and interest in topics related to residential schools and the Archives. Whether introducing new learners to the history or equipping participants with the tools to engage with the Calls to Action, our programming is for all. In addition to presentations and learning sessions, the NCTR provides educational materials and supports information tables and booths at conferences and events.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WEEK

Launched in 2021, Truth and Reconciliation Week is a transformative five-day journey for students (grades 1-12), educators and the broader community to engage with the poignant history and enduring spirit of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It offers an opportunity for all to listen and learn from residential school Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists and leaders from nations and cultures across the country, helping them unlearn the myths of colonial history in Canada and contributing to our collective path toward reconciliation.

STUDENT AND EDUCATOR PROGRAMMING

The week-long program features both live and pre-recorded content accessible through a virtual platform, allowing students from every province and territory to learn directly from residential school Survivors, Indigenous artists and athletes, and other subject matter experts. Hybrid sessions combining virtual and in-person elements are also held in various regions across Canada.

Designed to spark dialogue among young people, an annual Youth Empowerment Gathering features moving truths and lived experiences from residential school Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and change-makers.

GENERAL PROGRAMMING

The public can also engage in meaningful dialogues and contribute to our collective path toward reconciliation. Truth and Reconciliation Week typically features daily lunch-and-learn webinars designed for adults seeking to challenge colonial narratives and deepen their understanding of Indigenous history, along with the annual *Remembering the Children* commemorative gathering on Parliament Hill and broadcast on APTN channels and partnering Canadian broadcasters.

“Remembering the Children is a significant commemoration honouring residential school Survivors and their families, and pays tribute to the children who never made it home from those institutions. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to take an active part in reconciliation by listening to the voices of Survivors and amplifying their truths. We are forever grateful to the Survivors who continue to bravely share their oral histories with us so we never forget.”

—STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR

Since its inception, the national broadcast has expanded from a single broadcaster to a network of 28 at its peak, reaching 8.9 million Canadians from coast to coast to coast. And each year, that reach continues to grow.



RECONCILI-ACTION PLANS

In 2015, the NCTR released the *6 Actions of ReconciliACTION* developed to assist the public in supporting their work toward reconciliation. These actions are:

1. Learn the history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples
2. Understand the history and legacy of residential schools
3. Explore the unique intersections between treaty, constitutional, Indigenous and human rights we have in Canada
4. Recognize the rich contributions Indigenous Peoples have made to Canada
5. Take action to address historical injustices and present-day wrongs
6. Teach others

Canadians were encouraged to create their own ReconciliACTION Plans. Further, in August 2022, a community event in Winnipeg, MB, launched the second #94in94 Campaign to raise awareness of the 94 Calls to Action, highlighting each of them in as many days and encouraging people across Turtle Island to take action in a variety of ways.

IMAGINE A CANADA

“Imagine a Canada” is the annual challenge we pose to youth across Canada, who respond by showing us their vision of the future of the country through a lens of reconciliation.

Since our inaugural ceremony on March 1, 2016, the NCTR’s Imagine a Canada program has welcomed 1,567 submissions from youth from kindergarten to grade 12 and CÉGEP across the country. Each year, art and essay submissions and projects are chosen for their vision, creativity and contribution to the reconciliation journey in Canada.

Imagine a Canada has been presented with generous support from IG Wealth Management and Power Corporation of Canada.



NCTR DIALOGUES

The popular NCTR Dialogues series presents lectures and discussions that explore diverse perspectives on reconciliation. Since June 2020, 26 discussions with Elders, Survivors, Indigenous leaders and subject matter experts have tackled a variety of topics that encourage continued dialogue. They are streamed live on the NCTR YouTube channel, and an archive of presentations can be found there.

DECOLONIZING LENS

Sparked by *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* in 2016, the *Decolonizing Lens* is a film and discussion series that features the work and words of Indigenous artists from Winnipeg and beyond. It provides a space to celebrate the work of Indigenous filmmakers in Canada and the incorporation of Indigenous actors, directors, producers and narratives in film.

Over the past nine years, *Decolonizing Lens* has grown substantially. We have screened over 100 films, hosted over 100 guests (including Survivors, filmmakers and artists) and reached thousands of audience members.

TEACHING RESOURCES

The NCTR offers a variety of teaching resources designed to support learning about the history and legacy of residential schools in Canada. These materials, available on our website, help educators engage students in meaningful conversations about reconciliation and Indigenous histories.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Helen Betty Osborne was from Norway House Cree Nation and was only 19 years old when she was abducted, brutally assaulted and murdered. The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Fund Award honours her tragic legacy by providing financial support to Indigenous students who are enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies and residing in Manitoba.

In 2021, the NCTR was invited to the table by the Winnipeg Foundation to host the online application form on our website, participate in the selection process and assist in selecting and amplifying award winners.

Read more about the NCTR's other scholarship, the Malcolm & Catherine Dewar Truth and Reconciliation Fellowship, on page 21.

10 YEARS OF PROGRESS

The following pages provide a snapshot of our work over the past decade, showcasing key updates and milestones. However, these highlights only represent a portion of the full scope of our ongoing efforts and impact.



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Another chapter begins



The official launch of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) took place in early November, beginning with a sacred fire

at Chancellor's Hall on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus.

In December, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) closing ceremony marked the beginning of Canada's collective healing journey.



To stimulate educational efforts across the country, the NCTR hosted two national education roundtable meetings in 2015 and 2016. These gatherings brought together educators from across the country to share best practices, current efforts and activities.

We released the six actions of ReconciliACTION to support the public's work toward reconciliation.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

Launch of Imagine a Canada youth program

Every year since, youth across Canada show us their vision of the future of the country through a lens of reconciliation.

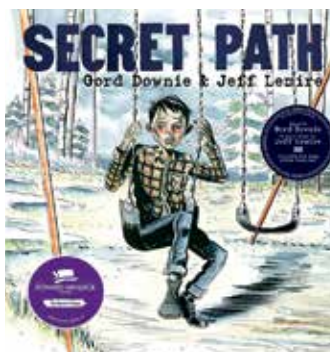
Founding of *Decolonizing Lens* film and discussion series

The popular series features the work and words of Indigenous artists from Winnipeg and beyond.

Pathways to Reconciliation Conference

The event brought 400+ people together to explore understandings of reconciliation and ways to implement and monitor related initiatives.

Secret Path



On September 9, 2016, the late Canadian rock legend Gord Downie pledged all proceeds from the *Secret Path* to support the Gord Downie

Secret Path Fund for Truth and Reconciliation at the NCTR.

The NCTR was honoured to help launch the Secret Path Project, which acknowledges a dark part of Canada's history, with the hope of starting our country on a road to reconciliation. Project proceeds, including donations from Jeff Lemire and Arts and Crafts, funded community memorials for missing children and supported educational initiatives.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS



Bentwood Box returns to the NCTR

Survivors, Elders and the Box's carver, Coast Salish artist Luke Marston, came together to welcome the box to its new permanent residence at the NCTR at the University of Manitoba, where it continues to be a symbol of hope. *Read more about the Bentwood Medicine Box on page 6.*



First Survivors Circle welcomed

Four of the inaugural Survivors Circle members were part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Survivors Committee, and their extensive knowledge and experience were instrumental to the NCTR. *Read more about the Survivors Circle on page 8.*

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

Release of *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*



The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, in direct partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, Indspire and the NCTR, developed and launched the first

national *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*. We were honoured to be a major contributor.

With thousands of copies distributed to date, it provides students, teachers and learners with culturally appropriate curricula that includes information about Indigenous lands,

languages, communities, treaties, cultures and topics such as the residential school system, racism and cultural appropriation. Much of the history and geography available in the atlas had never been written or shared with educators in this scope prior to its publication.

Announcement of National Residential School Student Death Register

As a direct response to Call to Action 72, the NCTR began research and development on the National Residential School Student Death Register, which compiles information about the children who died while under the responsibility of residential school authorities. Access is available to Survivors and their families by special permission.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

National Student Memorial Register

The NCTR established the National Student Memorial Register, which builds upon the extensive work conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to remember, honour and acknowledge the children who died or went missing while attending a residential school in Canada. *Read more about the Memorial Register on page 19.*

Dalhousie and NCTR partnership

In February, Dalhousie University officially launched a partnership with the NCTR, becoming the centre's first east coast hub and its first location in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. This partnership means the Dalhousie libraries will ensure the NCTR's archives are more accessible and better used in the Atlantic region.

UNESCO Memory of the World Register

In July, the Canadian Advisory Committee for the UNESCO Memory of the World Register accepted the NCTR's application for inclusion in the Canada Memory of the World Register. Support for inclusion of the NCTR's Archives was unanimous. *Read a related update in our 2023 highlights on page 42.*

Non-claims records and statistical data appeal

In the fall, the Chief Adjudicator for NCTR sought approval from the supervising courts under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to donate to the NCTR the vast majority of the operational records of the Indian Residential Schools Adjudication Secretariat upon its final closure on March 31, 2021.

Access to Memory archives database

In December, the Archives team presented its 10-year Digital Preservation Strategy, highlighting the implementation of a new content management system for NCTR's archival records. As part of this project, we successfully migrated, installed and tested the archives on our new software: the Access to Memory database.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Release of *Lessons Learned Survivor Perspectives Report*

In 2018, we conducted a five-month review of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and drafted a report outlining the lessons learned. Informed by Survivors from across the country, the *Lessons Learned Survivor Perspectives Report* was released on February 20, 2020, with speakers and a live Q&A at the NCTR.

Fifth anniversary of TRC closing ceremonies

We held a special event on December 15, 2020, to mark the fifth anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) closing ceremonies. In partnership with APTN, the TRC Commissioners came together to discuss Canada's progress. The late Senator Murray Sinclair, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild expressed their concerns about the slow and uneven pace of implementation of the Calls to Action, the adoption of UNDRIP and the execution of the National Council on Reconciliation.

APTN broadcasted the event and streamed it live on Facebook and YouTube. The livestreams were also on our Facebook page and posted on our YouTube channel following the broadcast.

Designation as an event of national historic significance

On September 1, 2020, the NCTR, Parks Canada and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change formally announced the designation of the residential school system as an "event of national historic significance." The NCTR nominated the residential school system for consideration by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and its nomination reflects the input of Survivors from across the country.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

2021 at a glance

- Funding received from Canada Foundation for Innovation to rebuild digital architecture
- New Executive Director Stephanie Scott appointed
- New, easier-to-navigate NCTR website launched
- Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Fund launched
- 2020's *Every Child Matters: Reconciliation through Education* won the intermedia-globe Gold Award and special "Hand in the Hand" Award from World Media Festival
- Land blessing of future NCTR home (*page 45*)
- Development of Survivors' Flag (*page 5*)
- Federal legislation proclaimed the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, with Truth and Reconciliation Week announced soon after (*page 28*)

The lost lives of innocents

In early spring 2021, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation revealed it had located a large, unmarked burial site at the former Kamloops Residential School. This announcement confirmed what Survivors have known all along, and what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada had reported: thousands of children never returned home from residential schools and their resting places have been shamefully neglected.

New archive system

Access to Memory, the data system that provides Survivors and the public with access to the archives, makes it easier to look up schools, dates, statements and other related items such as attendance records, photos, objects and acts of reconciliation. The NCTR chose this system because it is open source, which allows us to build and develop our own systems for projects and programs that fit our mandate and better serve our communities.

New NCTR Governance Policy

The University of Manitoba Board of Governors adopted a new NCTR Governance Policy brought forward by our Governing Circle. The policy affirms and supports the NCTR's unique governance model as an institution that is not strictly a research or academic centre. **This ensures Survivors and Intergenerational Survivors are always at the heart of our work and the NCTR honours and upholds Indigenous laws and protocols.**

Agreement on historical documents

In December, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and the NCTR signed an agreement outlining how and when Canada will share historical documents related to residential schools. The approach was co-developed and ensures an efficient, secure transmission of documents while protecting and respecting Survivors' privacy.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and NCTR partnership

On February 1, we announced our partnership with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council on a national research program to advance understanding of reconciliation. Later that year, we launched the Reconciliation Network in Response to Call to Action 65. *Read more on page 20.*

Release of first Canadian Reconciliation Barometer report

The first report from the Canadian Reconciliation Barometer, which measures progress toward reconciliation, was released. *Read more on page 21.*

NCTR partnership with National Film Board

A new partnership between the NCTR and the National Film Board of Canada allowed for the long-term preservation of Survivor statements and other audio-visual content from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) entrusted to the NCTR, thanks to the support of the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Innovation Fund grant.

Small Research Grants Fund

As part of our Small Research Grants Fund, the NCTR granted \$49,000 in research funds to recipients representing seven institutions. The purpose of the fund is to support the current focus areas of the NCTR's research.

Introduction of Bill C-29

In late fall, the Government of Canada enacted Bill C-29 to create the National Council for Reconciliation, with multi-year funding (Calls to Action 53 and 54). It will be an independent, non-political, permanent and Indigenous-led organization working to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and to hold the Government of Canada accountable in its responsibility.



Launch of #94in94 Campaign

To address the fact that many Canadians had not read the TRC's 94 Calls to Action seven years after their release, we launched the second annual #94in94 Campaign, along with Circles for Reconciliation and Reconciliation Thunder. We challenged individuals and organizations to choose at least one Call to Action to act on using a ReconciliACTION Plan.

Launch of Truth and Reconciliation Keepsake



The NCTR and the Royal Canadian Mint unveiled a symbolic keepsake acknowledging the truths behind the residential school experience. Honouring the Survivors and children who never came home, the

Truth and Reconciliation Keepsake helps educate on the intergenerational impacts of residential, day and boarding schools. All proceeds support the work of the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund.

NCTR receives international recognition

We were awarded the Research Data Alliance Award for the Most Outstanding Digital Preservation Initiative in Commerce, Industry and the Third Sector, presented by the Digital Preservation Coalition in Scotland. This award recognized our work in developing a digital infrastructure and workplan for the preservation of millions of digital documents and thousands of recordings held in the NCTR Archives.

NCTR visit to Rome

The NCTR and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate completed a visit to the Oblate General House archive in Italy in summer 2022. Our Head of Archives, Raymond Frogner, was granted full access to records that may relate to the residential school legacy.

Building the foundation of our future

The Government of Canada announced a \$60-million investment toward the overall cost of NCTR's permanent home. *Read more on page 45.*

National Gathering on Unmarked Burials

In November, the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor, in partnership with the NCTR, hosted the second *National Gathering on Unmarked Burials: Addressing Trauma in the Search and Recovery of Missing Children associated with Indian Residential Schools*. It was the second of many planned gatherings to discuss issues of concern around the identification, preservation and protection of unmarked graves and burial sites, including the potential repatriation of remains.

A long-awaited apology

"This apology signals the Catholic Church's first meaningful steps to acknowledge accountability for the profound effects of the residential school system still being felt. These effects will continue to resound across Indigenous communities and generations for years to come."

**-DR. CYNTHIA WESLEY-ESQUIMAUX,
CHAIR, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION,
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**

In 2022, we witnessed progress on Call to Action 58, which calls upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

Pope Francis' visit to Canada was preceded by significant preparations. Delegations of Survivors had previously travelled to Rome to meet with him and share their oral histories and experiences. On April 1, he issued a formal apology for the Catholic Church's role.

Work will continue between the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), the Government of Canada and the Catholic Church to further reconciliation and ensure Survivors, their families and communities will lead the way in our pursuit of justice and healing from the harms caused by colonization.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Navigator document published

The National Advisory Committee on Residential School Missing Children and Unmarked Burials' navigator document guides the various pathways communities may choose to follow in finding their missing children. It addresses common questions and misunderstandings about issues like archival research, ground search technology and forensics.

UNESCO Memory of the World International Register

2023 saw the NCTR archives inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register. This international inscription recognizes the global significance of the NCTR Archives as a body of evidence and knowledge documenting the colonial attempt to assimilate and erase Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, a human rights violation with parallels around the world.

Residential Schools National Monument

In keeping with the spirit and intent of Call to Action 81, a Survivor-led Steering Committee announced the Residential Schools National Monument will be installed on traditional unceded Algonquin territory on Parliament Hill. It will be a meeting place where Indigenous people and all Canadians can gather to honour Survivors and the children who were lost to their families and communities. The Steering Committee was established to oversee the project through to its completion and ensure it remains grounded in Indigenous values. It marks the first time a monument was developed with permission from the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation.

NCTR hosts National Survivors Gathering

'Breaking the Colonial Mindset' was the theme of August 2023's National Survivors Gathering in Treaty One Territory in Winnipeg. As one of the largest gatherings of Survivors focused on healing and intergenerational trauma, it featured renowned expert Dr. Gabor Maté as a special guest. It offered an opportunity to acknowledge, honour and support Survivors and those who walk beside them on their journey: the regional health support workers and cultural workers from across the country.

Partnership with Canada Post



In September, Canada Post unveiled new stamps honouring the truth and tragic legacy of residential schools. The stamps were developed in close collaboration with the NCTR Survivors Circle, as

well as researchers and experts Dr. Crystal Gail Fraser and Dr. Tricia Logan. Featuring stark archival images of residential schools in different parts of Canada, they serve as a reminder of the fear, loneliness, pain and shame experienced by generations of Indigenous children in these federally and church-created institutions.

Canada Post's ongoing partnership with the Survivors Circle ensures the perspectives and experiences of Survivors remain central throughout the stamp creation process.

NCTR and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate sign supplemental agreement

“We know additional residential school records will provide more information to help further reveal the truth. This agreement will support transparency and access to critical historical documents, including previously restricted files—the significance of this cannot be overstated.”

-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR



In December 2024, the NCTR signed a supplemental agreement with the Oblates of OMI Lacombe Canada (the Oblates) to accelerate access to personnel files of Oblate members who worked in residential schools in Canada. This agreement will enhance the transparency and availability of critical historical Oblate documents by facilitating access to previously restricted files. Through this agreement, the Oblates and the NCTR will ensure personnel records, documents and information are fully available to the extent federal and provincial privacy laws allow.

This agreement is part of ongoing efforts between the two organizations to strengthen collaboration and expedite access to critical residential school records for those who seek them. This includes working closely with the archives that own or hold Oblate collections related to residential schools, while also providing direct support to Survivors, their families and Indigenous communities in their search for truth.

Through research, agreements and dialogue with the Oblates, the NCTR has since created a list of Oblate priests and brothers who participated in the administration and/or operations of these schools. Many of the Oblate priests or brothers listed worked in residential schools, such as the Muscowequan Indian Residential School in Lestock, Saskatchewan.

This research will be available online through the NCTR Archives with personnel profiles and links to the schools where the Oblate members served. This crucial work continues, and the list of identified priests and brothers will be updated on an ongoing basis.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Launch of Reconciliation through Education series

We partnered with the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba to promote the *Reconciliation Through Education* learning series, allowing Manitobans the opportunity to learn about the truth of our history. Presenters shared experience and insights into how we can all play a role in the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation and healing to build a more respectful and just society for all. More than 500 people attended the seven sessions.

Gift from The Winnipeg Foundation

In March, we announced a \$5-million gift from The Winnipeg Foundation toward the NCTR's new home. *See next page for updates on our new home.*

Partnership grants through the Truth and Reconciliation Network Hub

In May, the NCTR, along with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, announced an investment of approximately \$6 million over five years. *Read more on page 20.*

New report released

In October, we welcomed the release of the *Final Report of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools*. This report provides a powerful framework to uphold the right to reparations for the harms that were inflicted upon families, communities and nations.



Our new home



Since it was established in 2015, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) has operated out of a temporary facility on the University of Manitoba (UM) campus—a 5,800-square-foot brick house, which we have long outgrown.

With seed funding from the federal government, and land offered by the university as an act of reconciliation, the realization of our vision for a new home is closer to becoming a reality.

Building a new home for the NCTR is a once-in-a-lifetime national legacy project. It will play an integral role in sharing the history of residential schools and safeguarding the truths of Survivors now and for generations to come. With a founding contribution of \$60 million from the federal government, the NCTR and UM embarked on a fundraising campaign to build our new permanent home.

The NCTR holds the largest collection of materials on the history and impacts of the residential school system in the world, and one of the largest collections of oral history records in the country. Our limited space makes it difficult for the collection to be viewed or accessed.

Our new home will provide the NCTR with the space it needs to fulfill its mandate and act as an international learning centre for people across Canada and around the world to learn the truth about residential schools, housing sacred items and records, thousands of oral histories and Survivor statements.

A timeline for our new permanent home

2021:

Land blessing

A land blessing ceremony honoured the site of the new building and ceremonial grounds, set to span two acres along the historic Red River.

2022:

Ground-breaking

We broke ground on our new permanent home as the federal government announced a \$60-million investment toward its cost.

2023:

Consultations

Survivors Circle members, and many others, were involved in consultations about our vision for our new home. Community consultations with Survivors, as well as members of Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada, concluded in 2024.

2024:

\$5-million gift

We announced a \$5-million gift from The Winnipeg Foundation—a historic and lead gift to our \$40-million capital campaign.

We also developed the Functional Space Program, a detailed list of indoor and outdoor spaces required for the new building that support key activities, including Gathering & Commemoration, Teaching & Learning, Archival Collection & Access, and Administration & Support.

2025:

Design competition

We launched a design competition to select an Indigenous architect to lead the project. A carefully considered strategy will position the building project to advance economic reconciliation throughout the design and construction process.

We also announced significant gifts from the Province of Manitoba, Power Corporation of Canada and Canada Life. This with other gifts brought our fundraising to 90% of the total needed for our permanent home.

2027:

Construction set to begin

Construction is set to begin in 2027, marking one of the final chapters in our journey to our new home.

2029:

Planned opening

Set to open in 2029, our new home will stand as an international destination, celebrated for its groundbreaking work in bringing history and Indigenous cultures to life. It will serve as a global beacon of learning and understanding—a place where the fire of truth and reconciliation will burn forever.



We envision our new home to be...

A safe space for Survivors and their families to come together to share their truths, knowledge and experiences.

A place where family members can visit for healing and to reconnect with lost histories and loved ones.

A place of learning and dialogue where people can embark on their own journey of reconciliation.



FUNDING

Ensuring long-term, stable core funding is our highest priority. Early financial support for the NCTR came from several sources and included funding from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), University of Manitoba (UM) and Government of Canada. Initial funding and expenditures focused on establishing the technical backbone necessary to operationalize our mandate, build our systems and close out many of the important responsibilities given to the NCTR at the conclusion of the TRC's mandate.

In 2018, the Government of Canada provided \$10 million in funding over seven years, with UM also making a five-year commitment to support the NCTR.

By our fifth year of operation, our financial footing stabilized after facing challenges stemming from significant growth, increased demand for our services and inconsistent funding. During the early years, we sought and obtained project- and initiative-based funding from several funding agencies.



**Scan this QR to donate
to the NCTR's efforts or
visit nctr.ca/donate.**

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of individuals, both near and far, and organizations that have supported us with donations since our inception. Many donors choose to support the NCTR Fund, which provides important support for our highest-priority projects and initiatives as determined by the NCTR leadership, including ongoing statement gathering from Survivors and intergenerational Survivors, educational programming and gatherings like the National Survivors Gathering.

Other gifts provide support for specific priorities, like the TD Internships for Truth and Reconciliation, the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Healing Fund, Truth and Reconciliation Week and Imagine a Canada.

PUBLICATIONS

A collaboration between the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and University of Manitoba Press, the Perceptions on Truth and Reconciliation publication series helps bridge the knowledge gap between Western and Indigenous approaches to addressing historical and ongoing injustices in settler-colonial states, repairing harms and mitigating conflict within all parts of society.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

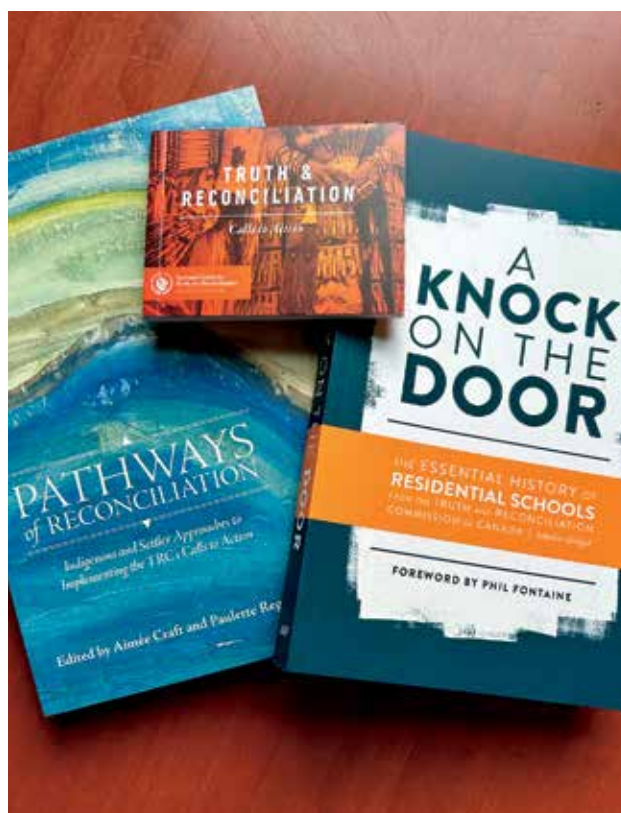
A Knock on the Door, abridged from the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada's (TRC) summary report, presents the essential history and legacy of residential schools and informs the journey to reconciliation that Canadians are now on.

PATHWAYS TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The second release in our series, *Pathways of Reconciliation: Indigenous and Settler Approaches to Implementing the TRC's Calls to Action* addresses the themes of healing, truth and justice before reconciliation, Indigenous knowledge and practices of reconciliation, field-based research, the TRC framework, international dimensions, and measurement and evaluation.

TRC MINI-BOOKLETS

With over 300,000 mini booklets supplied to government organizations, not-for-profits and a wide range of other groups across the country, these booklets have proven to be an invaluable tool to advance understanding on the 10 principles of reconciliation, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and 94 Calls to Action.



Visit nctr.ca/research/publications for more information or nctr.ca/records/reports to view our annual reports. You can also browse the archives for reports, research and publications with our partners.

LOOKING AHEAD

Honouring residential school truths for all time

All Survivors and their families deserve truth, justice and healing.

Unfortunately, many Survivors are no longer with us. They, and thousands of others who have now passed, contributed so much to our national understanding. They deserved to see real and meaningful progress in their lifetimes.

All of Canada, as a country, needs to see this progress, too.

The path to truth and reconciliation is complex. We value and appreciate the initiatives and actions already in progress in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, but the progress we see across the country does not come without challenges. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation inherited many complex matters that have required significant attention, time and resources. Litigation and court proceedings have remained constant throughout our existence. This is also a time when we see increased resistance from those who actively deny our truths, experiences and oral histories as reality.

However, our deep commitment to the crucial work of truth-telling is unwavering. We recognize more difficult days lie ahead, yet we remain steadfast in our mission to bring the truth to light and advance the journey toward healing and reconciliation.

Truth and reconciliation starts with recognizing the past, but it is also about forging a path forward together. We call on federal, provincial and territorial governments, and all Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, to renew their commitments and efforts toward reconciliation. It requires every single Canadian to come together with resolution and common purpose.

While we have made strides, there is still much to be done in the next 10 years. Thank you for joining us on this journey over the past decade, and for continuing to support our work and help amplify the voices of Survivors and the children who never made it home.



THANK YOU
EKOSANI
MIIGWETCH
MARSI
MUSI-CHO
PIDAMAYA
MARSEE
NAKURMIK
KLECO KLECO
NYA:WEH
WELA'LIN
KWUKWTSETSEMC
HAI HAI



The NCTR is a place of learning and dialogue, where the truths of the residential school experience will be honoured and kept safe for future generations.

NCTR.CA



**National Centre for
Truth *and* Reconciliation**

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA