

Advocate for Children and Youth Acknowledges the 215 Children Found near Kamloops Former Residential School

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Lisa Broda and staff are deeply saddened to learn of the 215 children found at the former residential school in BC, in unmarked graves. “Let the discovery of these children remind us of the devastating impact of residential school on Indigenous children, families, and communities and focus wholeheartedly on reconciliation as the path forward,” said Broda.

Reflecting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and its purpose to reveal the stories of the impacts of colonization, particularly the legacy of the Residential School System, this discovery is a somber reminder of why it is that Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to be impacted by this trauma. “We must come together as citizens to recognize these past evils and advocate for the fulfillment of the TRC calls to action,” Broda reflected.

Calls to action 71 through to 76 of the TRC focus on missing children and information about their burials. These calls to action implore governments and other authorities to work collectively to:

- make all documents available regarding records of deaths of children in care of residential school authorities,
- provide resources to develop and maintain a National Residential School Student Death Register,
- establish and maintain a detailed online registry of residential school cemeteries,
- inform families of children who died at residential school of burial locations and support them to commemorate or provide alternative reburial, and
- in accordance with Indigenous protocols and guidance: develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.

It is critical that government supports and works with Indigenous communities and leaders who are endeavoring to find those children still missing and to embrace the calls to action as part of meaningful and tangible reconciliation.

“Once again, our history has shaken us back to the reality of actions that haunt all of us, and that continue to be a barrier to the redress, healing and progress fully deserved by Indigenous children, youth, families and communities,” states Broda.

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Media Contact:

Karen Topolinski, Manager, Communications and Public Education
ktopolinski@saskadvocate.ca

500 - 350 3rd Avenue N • Saskatoon, SK S7K 6G7 • PH: 306.933.6700 • FX: 306.933.8406 •

EMAIL: contact@saskadvocate.ca • saskadvocate.ca