



NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Poem dedicated to the Indian residential school survivors



Front Row: Michael Cachagee—Executive Director, Ray Mason - Chair, MB; Agnes Mills honorary member, YK; Ted Quewezance Cultural Support Worker SK

Back Row: Sam Achneepineskum, ON; Joseph O'Brien, YK; Roy Little Chief, AB; Terry Lusty, Métis Rep Métis National Council; Ernie Bernhardt, Nunavut; John Banksland—Secretary/Treasurer, NWT; Eugene Arcand, SK; Missing: Lily Sutherland—QC

This is our primarily newsletter, other issues will follow in the new year.

SEASONS GREETINGS

In keeping with the customs of the Christmas Holidays, the National Residential School Survivor Society Board of Directors wishes all a very joyful and merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. As an organization dedicated to the service of Indian Residential School survivors and their families our prayers and thoughts at this time of year is that you find happiness in being with your loved ones and for those who may be hurting we ask that Creator brings you peace understanding and comfort.





Michael Cachagee-
Executive Director

**Message from
the
Executive Director**

Truth and Reconciliation:

Given the recent activities surrounding the re-installment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the appointment of Justice Sinclair as the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners Wil-

ton Littlechild and Marie Wilson, we have re-started our relationship to assist and work cooperatively with the Commission. Since we met with the TRC in Calgary this past July our office has received numerous requests for information regarding where and when the national TRC events and gatherings will be located as well as for information on how they can get in contact with the Commission.

I have attended a number of regional survivor gatherings and share with them an overview of how they can now begin to do the preparatory ground work in preparation for the start up of the TRC hearings. These requests have come out of Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the North and we (NRSSS) are committed to assisting them as their national voice. As the TRC gathers more up more speed and information we expect to see the number of similar requests to grow substantially as many of the provincial and regional treaty and political organizations have now made their participation in the TRC process one of their priorities.

There are some serious questions being raised as to the composition of the TRC National Survivor Advisory Committee in that there are no survivors on the committee from either Ontario or Quebec. I have drafted letters off to the new National AFN Chief Shawn Atleo as well as to INAC Minister Chuck Strahl raising the issue of the survivor representation imbalance on the committee and as of this date I have not heard back from either one. For those in Ontario and Quebec, I will keep you informed as the issue evolves.

Unmarked Graves and Lost Children:

In my opinion, I believe this is perhaps one of the most misunderstood and least discussed elements of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) for a number of reasons. I feel that while

the issue of missing and lost records of former students became quite evident when many survivors were filing for their Common Experience Payment (CEP) the issue of lost records as they relate to the children who had died and where buried at the schools is more amplified. I did talk to Professor John Molloy who works out of Trent University in Ontario and who has done some preliminary research work in the area of missing graves and the lost children issue and he tells me that the greatest challenge with his research was and is trying to locate the records of these deaths and grave sites.

Considering the issue of lost records it appears that the need for survivor involvement in assisting to locate the grave sites and in some instances the names and identity of those interned takes on greater importance. The other area where survivor engagement would be important is the fact that many would be knowledgeable and familiar with the families and the communities where the missing children came from and in turn would be a valuable resource base when the researchers begin the work on the missing children and unmarked graves issue. This will entail a large area of regional coordination and cooperation from the national office as we see this issue becoming one of the integral components of the Commemoration Initiative in proper and full recognition of those children who never made it back home.

I attended a national conference on Aboriginal Cemeteries in Regina on September 19-20, 2009 and there was a wide range of topics presented the issue of unmarked graves at many of the former Indian Residential Schools was flagged as being of national importance and that plans are underway to create a task force to examine the issue in more detail.

Commemoration:

Judging from the response and number of inquiries we are getting from survivors and related organizations wanting information on the commemoration component of the IRSSA appears to be the one element of the package that is getting and gaining interest across Canada. It would be prudent for both regional and national organizations at this time to begin doing some of the foundation work on how best we can maximize the limited funds set aside for commemoration. Unofficially, it has been suggested that proposals to the commemoration fund that are a cooperative or a joint submission of

a number of organizations and/or communities will be the ones that are looked upon more favorably by the selection committee. So keep this in mind if and when you get involved with proposals to the fund. Again, creativity and the number that will be served will also be part of the screening criteria.

In closing at this time of year many of us (survivors) reflect on Christmases past and we look back at the memories of our Indian Residential School experiences. Some of these memories may be happy while others may be sad, however, in the spirit of sharing and caring my wish is that this holiday season will be the best of all and that the coming year brings to you and your family good health and happiness.

Have a safe and happy holiday season

Meegwetch

For more information on Truth and Reconciliation Canada gathering events please visit

WWW.TRC-CVR.CA



Ray Mason
Chair

**Message from
the
Chair**

As an organization we have to begin to prepare our different regions for the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Process to ensure as many of the survivors who wish to be heard are in fact not only

considered but most importantly heard. We also have to encourage the inter-generations to make sure that they also participate in the TRC as it is so important that the rest of Canada know just how deep the Indian Residential School experience has impacted our families and communities.

I would like extend a very happy & Merry Christmas & new year to all our constituents & all Survivors across Canada.

SEASON GREETINGS FROM NRSSS & CSAA STAFF



Gale Foster

Communications Administrative
Coordinator

*Joy, Serenity, Friendship, Delight
Elation, Contentment, Peace,
Love, Hope. May all of these be
yours this holiday season.
Happy New Year!*



Mary Sutherland

Receptionist

*Wishing all the Survivors of
Indian Residential School a
Very Merry Christmas and
Prayers for those who never
made it home.*



Ted Quewezance
Cultural Support Worker

*May the Spirit of Christmas bring you
peace, the gladness of Christmas give
you hope and the warmth of Christ-
mas grant you love.*

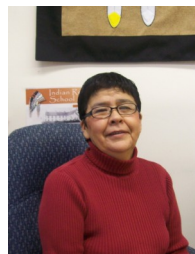
*In honour of the Residential
School Survivors
Merry Christmas and a happy
new year*



Harvey Trudeau

Resolution Health Support Worker

*Ahnee Hello! I am know as Wasageshik
(Harvey Trudeau) from the Sagamok
Anishnaabek Territory and have been
with the NRSSS since September of
2006 as a Resolution Health Support
Worker. Wishing all the survivors of
residential school a very merry Christmas
and a very happy new year.*



Barb Nolan

CSAA Resolution Health

Support Worker

*A Christmas Greeting To My
Brothers and Sisters. I send my
heartfelt wishes of peace and Love
to you and yours during this
Christmas Season and the New
Year. Your journeys has enriched
my understanding of the true
meaning of the Anishinabek Hu-
man Spirit. You are all Remark-
able! It is an honor and privilege to
work for and with you, The Sur-
vivors of The Residential School
Era.*



Claudette Chevrier-Cachagee

CSAA Resolution Health

Support Worker

*Wouldn't life be worth the living;
Wouldn't dreams be coming true; If
we kept the Christmas Spirit all the
whole year through? Now its all up to
you. May the Joy of Christmas last for
you and yours all 365 days thorough.*

On behalf of June Black; Lois Palmer; Saul Day; Linda Little Chief, Resolution Health Support Workers; May your world be filled with warmth and good cheer this holiday season and thorough out the year. Wish your Christmas to be filled with peace and love. Merry Christmas

Visit us at our website

www.nrsss.ca

**NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL SURVIVORS' SOCIETY**

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Office Closure

Dec. 21, 2009–Jan. 4, 2010

During office closure our Health Support Staff will be available:

Harvey Trudeau: (705) 257-8751

June Black: (705) 257-8784

Claudette Chevrier-Cachagee: (705) 257-0111

Barb Nolan: (705) 257-0813

Lois Palmer: (204) 781-3367

Saul Day; (807) 620-7424

NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL GENERAL

INQUIRES AND CRISIS LINE

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL CANADA

COMMON EXPERIENCE PAYMENT 1-866-699-1742

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT PAYMENT 1-866-879-4913

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMISSION 1-613-995-0921

RECONSIDERATION FOR CEP 1-866-565-4526

HEALTH SUPPORT IRSSS CRISIS LINE 1-866-925-4419

Poem from

Darla Fisher-Odjig's Book

My Healing Journey : A walk in Two Worlds:
A collection of First Nations Art & Poetry as
seen through the eyes of a trauma survivor.

BROKEN CHILD WITHIN

How broken are you old man
That I cradle you as a babe in arms
How broken are your eyes and heart
That I hold you so dear
Like a mother tree nestled safe on limb
How broken are you
I nurture and soothe you
And you drink the milk that shields your soul
How broken are you
Old man
Young man
How broken
Tell me old man
What were you feeling
When all alone, no voice you had
No soul you weep
And as you embrace that warrior within
So you hold tight the armour
You've so learned to wear
You've so learned to love
Your castle with its high and mighty walls
Are almost impenetrable
But that's what you need old man
A haven of safety and solace
Where you are the controller
And you are the victim
Yet deep in that castle far below
The depths of its stones
There sits a little boy naked and torn
Frightened of all or any that enter the room
There where he sits all curled and confused
Yes, Old man

