



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Orange Shirt Day honours residential school survivors – September 30

HEU recognizes *Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters* to show solidarity with Canada's Indigenous peoples and our commitment to reconciliation.

Marked on September 30, Orange Shirt Day reflects on the atrocious treatment of more than 150,000 Indigenous children, taken from their families and communities and sent away to residential schools where they were forced to assimilate into settler culture.

For the past several years, HEU's Indigenous Peoples Standing Committee has sponsored a school to recognize Orange Shirt Day by providing Indigenous students and staff with *Every Child Matters* T-shirts, and donating \$500 for books and teaching resources.

This year, the committee is sponsoring the Skeetchestn Community School (on reserve) in Savona, located between Kamloops and Cache Creek, which has about 55 students.

Residential schools existed in Canada for more than 100 years, run by churches and funded by the federal government. By the time the last residential school closed in 1996, thousands of survivors had revealed horrific stories of abuse, eventually leading to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2008.

“As Canadians, we have a responsibility to learn about this tragic part of our country's history so we can understand its devastating and lasting impact on Indigenous peoples and communities, and take positive steps toward healing and reconciliation,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside.

The Orange Shirt Day movement, which started in 2013, encourages Canadians to wear orange in the spirit of healing and reconciliation.

Why orange? In 1973, a young girl named Phyllis Webstad proudly wore a new orange shirt on her first day at St. Joseph Mission Residential School in Williams Lake, but it was stripped away from her and replaced by an institutional uniform.

For more information on Orange Shirt Day, visit <http://www.orangeshirtday.org/>.

September 30, 2019