September 29, 2023 |

Statements

Reconciliation requires solidarity, and solidarity requires reconciliation: Statement by the BCFED on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The BC Federation of Labour today released the following statement on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30:

> Today, the third annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, is also the tenth Orange Shirt Day — originating from a story shared by Phyllis Webstad of the Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation, whose clothing, including a beloved orange shirt, was confiscated when she arrived at residential school.
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> Today we honour the memories of the Indigenous children whose lives were lost to the residential school system, and the grief of the survivors, their families and their communities. We lift up as well the important, painful work being done by First Nations to confirm the truths they've known in their communities for so long, and to honour the children who didn't make it home.
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> This is an important occasion for all of us to reflect on how that legacy endures in today's structures, the role we play in them and how we can transform them on the path to

reconciliation. The BC labour movement has taken this work on through our Reconciliation Plan Framework, thanks in large part to the efforts of the Indigenous workers representatives and caucus, and we look forward to progressing through the plan's next phases over the coming years.

With this year's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation being for the first time a provincial statutory holiday, thousands of families will now have a new opportunity to reflect, learn and take action toward reconciliation. And action is needed. There are still those who deny, downplay and disparage. We will not let them roll back the progress we've made together. Reconciliation requires solidarity, and solidarity requires reconciliation.

One simple action we all can take is to attend one of the many events happening in communities across our province as well as online. In addition, we can donate to the Orange Shirt Society directly by sending an e-transfer to donations@orangeshirtday.org or to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society at www.irsss.ca.

BC unions and our members are honoured to join people throughout this province and our country on this day of reflection and learning. And we are committed to working year-round in pursuit of meaningful, lasting reconciliation.

If you are a residential school survivor or family member and require emotional support, there is a 24-hour Residential School Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.