

*Content warning: this email mentions death, Indigenous residential schools, and the ongoing violence committed against Indigenous peoples. If you or anyone you know is Indigenous and needs support, the Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24/7 at 1-866-925-4419.*

Dear George,

Today, **September 30th 2021, marks the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.** The day is meant to honour the lost children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. [1] **While this is an important moment to grieve and reflect—we cannot stop here.**

Over the past six months, **over 1,300 unmarked children's graves have been discovered on the sites of former Residential Schools.** [2] It's likely there are many more: over 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend Indian Residential Schools. [3] [139 of them](#) were set up across the country, and so far, less than 10 have been searched. [4] We know there are thousands yet to be found, and countless others who we may never find.

**These figures are hard to comprehend, but we cannot become numb to them.** Each of those 1,300 represents a child who was stolen from their family and never returned.

**Residential schools are one feature of the state-designed system to destroy Indigenous culture and to subjugate and eliminate Indigenous peoples.** This is genocide. [5]

**And it is ongoing:** the Canadian state continues to undermine the rights of Indigenous peoples, spending millions to fight Residential School survivors in court, foregoing provision of basic rights and services like clean drinking water to Indigenous communities, and sending militarized police into unceded Indigenous territory to violently remove air, water, and land defenders in the name of resource extraction. [6-8]

Today is a day to remind ourselves that **the land we live on was never given up freely**, but stolen through violence. **Non-Indigenous people who live here still benefit from this—and we have the responsibility today, and every day, to work towards reconciliation** and dismantle the genocidal legacy of the country we call Canada.

**Here are three ways you can take action today:**

- 1. Learn about the history and ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada:** take the time to learn about the Indigenous Nations whose land you live on, and ways that you can support their calls to action for sovereignty. If you don't know what territories you are on, you can [enter your postal code here](#) to find out. There's also a list below of resources to get you started.
- 2. Take action:** the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission has 94 calls to action](#), including 6 which directly relate to the Residential School systems. **We ask that you take the time to read these calls to actions, acknowledge the privilege we all have living on stolen land, and act.**
- 3. Donate:** today is a federal statutory holiday. There is a call to action to **donate [One Day's Pay](#) of your holiday's earnings, or whatever you can manage, to an Indigenous-led organization or project.** The Leadnow team have curated a list of national organizations as well as frontline communities to donate to below.

**Here is a list of resources to learn more, and communities/organizations you can donate to and support.** This is not a comprehensive list and we encourage you to use it as a starting point to delve deeper about how you can act in solidarity with Indigenous Nations in your community as well.

### **Articles and Reports**

- [The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [Overview of the Indian Residential School System](#)
- [Indigenous Children and the Child Welfare System in Canada](#)

- [Calls to Action Accountability: A 2020 Status Update on Reconciliation](#)
- [The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Reports](#)
- [The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#)
- [What is Land Back? A settler's FAQ](#)

### **Stories from Survivors:**

- [Residential School Survivors' Stories](#)
- [Survivors Speak - A Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

### **Indigenous-led organizations to donate to and support:**

National:

- [IRSS](#)
- [National Center for Truth + Reconciliation](#)
- [Orange Shirt Society](#)

BC Based:

- [Urban Native Youth Alliance Vancouver](#)
- [Wet'suwet'en](#)
- [Tiny House Warriors](#)

Ontario Based:

- [Assembly of 7 Generations](#)
- [Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction](#)
- [1492 Land Back Lane](#)

Atlantic Based:

- [Mi'kmaw](#)

Prairies Based:

- [Alberta Native Friendship Circle Association](#)

The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is just one day, but our **solidarity with Indigenous communities must be year-round**. For that reason, **it is imperative for us to amplify the calls for justice and sovereignty from Indigenous peoples — not just in moments like these, but always**.

In solidarity,  
Adriana, Claire, and Maggie, for Leadnow

Sources

[1] <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

[2] <https://globalnews.ca/news/8074453/indigenous-residential-schools-canada-graves-map/>

[3] <http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/An-Overview-of-the-IRS-System-Booklet.pdf>

[4] See [2]

[5] <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/genocide-and-indigenous-peoples-in-canada>

[6] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/ottawa-st-anne-residential-school-court-costs-1.5809846>

[7] <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sterilization-of-indigenous-women-in-canada>

[8] <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7kvak9/video-shows-cops-pinning-down-indigenous-man-during-fairy-creek-arrest>