

WHAT IS ORANGE SHIRT DAY??

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of “Every Child Matters”. The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

WHY SEPTEMBER 30TH??

This date was chosen to commemorate the time of year where children would be taken away by Indian Agents, RCMP and representatives from the school to attend.

WHO CREATED ORANGE SHIRT DAY??

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School (1891-1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events that took place in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in May 2013. The use of an orange shirt as a symbol was inspired by the accounts of Phyllis Jack Webstad, whose personal clothing—including a new orange shirt—was taken from her during her first day of residential schooling, and never returned. The orange shirt is used as a symbol of the forced assimilation of Indigenous children that the residential school system enforced.

WHEN DID THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZE ORANGE SHIRT DAY??

September 30th was elevated to a statutory holiday by the Parliament of Canada in 2021, and named the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, considering the increasing number of thousands of unmarked graves being recovered across the country.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED??

You can:

- Wear an orange shirt on September 30th and read Phyllis Webstad’s story as well as any of the many survivor accounts in articles, books, videos and documentaries.
- Educate yourself on the schools in your area and the Indigenous people of your area.
- Participate or organize walks and Orange Shirt Day events in your community.
- Understand that every Indigenous person you know is either a survivor or an intergenerational survivor of Residential School and the atrocities experienced at these schools.
- Donate to a local Indian Residential School organization in your area.



MORE RESOURCES ON ORANGE SHIRT DAY

- canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html
- youtube.com/watch?v=EuW4WbekhXy
- youtube.com/watch?v=yFbLMNgTXel

