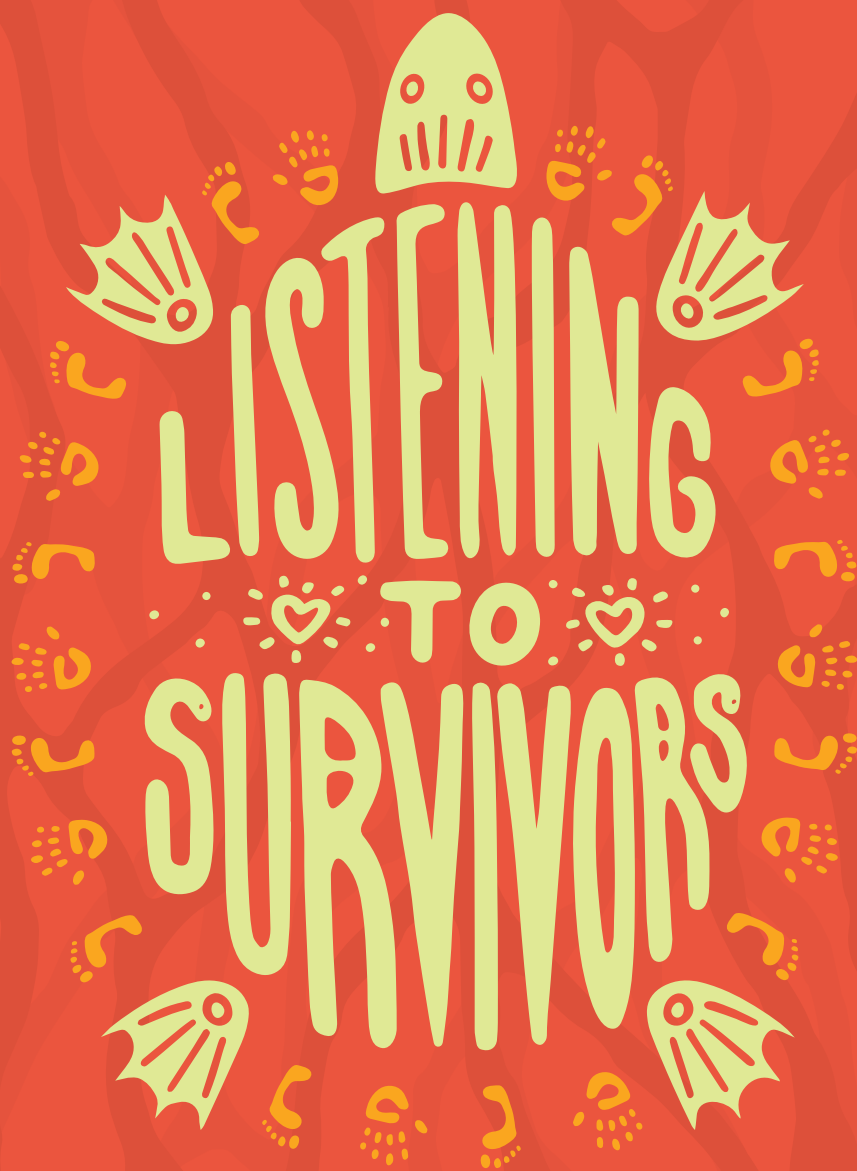


TRUTH BEFORE RECONCILIATION



CANADA'S
HISTORY



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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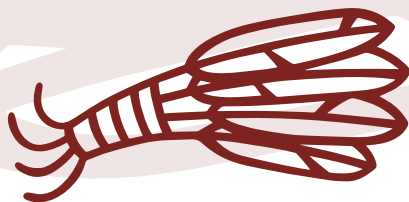
Small Pebbles

Lisa Jane Smith

The inspiration for the cover design came from the teaching of Truth. It is represented by the sacred turtle with hearts at the centre of its back representing Love. With its hands and feet stretched out with all others it shows the unity and strength we need to heal as a community. Throughout the background are roots that hold us all up, which have become much more important due to the Residential School system. Overall, the artwork is meant to convey an earthy feel, creating a closer connection to Mother Earth. —*Jordan Stranger*



Piit Boozhoo
tik Hadeeh · Kue
wa Tuuga Sugitsi
Ta wâw · Qey
m'inu w'lum
Wat kwa: nonhe
Koolamalsi
Sinie segha Niya
Piila'si



FROM THE ELDERS

Awakening the spirit

By Elder Harry Bone and Elder Florence Paynter

Boozhoo Aniin ... We are proud of who we are, so we start in our language, Anishinaabemowin. When we pray in our languages (and sing our songs), we tell Creator, “This is the sound, this is the language you have given us.” Our prayers include the first sounds of the earth. The words are very powerful and have real meaning.

Our languages connect our past to today and into the future.

Our Indigenous languages are so important for our survival. Our languages are the source of who we are, our voice. We, as Anishinaabe people, were given the ability to speak. We have a responsibility to speak for the land, for Mother Earth, the air, the water and all living things. This is why we

acknowledge the land; we provide a voice for the land.

We are both so proud to be Elders-in-Residence with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. The NCTR’s work is critical to preserve the records of what happened at Residential Schools for the future, so we never forget this history. Between 2007 and 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission travelled all over Canada. It gathered over 7,000 statements from Survivors, who shared their stories and experiences at Residential School and life afterward. The NCTR archive holds these histories and maintains these voices for future generations.

In fact, the NCTR recently received global recognition by the Digital Preservation Coalition through the “Most Outstanding



Elder Harry Bone (Hons LLD, Order of Canada) (Treaty 2, Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Nation)



Elder Florence Paynter (M.Ed, 4th Degree Anishinabe Mide Kwe) (Sandy Bay First Nation)

Digital Preservation Initiative” award.

We sometimes forget to celebrate our own achievements. To acknowledge our own people and the good work they are doing.

We also need to honour Survivors of Residential Schools, and remember that they are still here today. We need to listen to their stories and learn from their truths. We must continue to reflect on their contributions. They persevered, and the spirit of our people continues, despite what they experienced. Our spirit is so much alive.

Honouring Survivors includes intergenerational Survivors — the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren — as well. They are also affected by Residential Schools.

Because of our history, many Residential School Survivors intentionally didn’t teach their

languages to their children. But now our grandchildren want to learn and speak the language. They are showing us the pride in our languages.

Nowadays, there are so many excellent language programs. You can search any language online and find people giving their heart and soul to revive the languages we almost lost as nations. They are working to leave an impact for the future generations.

We want to awaken the spirit within the youth. For Indigenous youth, the languages are within you. What you are looking for is within you. For those who don’t speak our languages, learn a phrase in a local Indigenous language. Share it with one another. Join us on this reconciliation journey of awakening our languages.

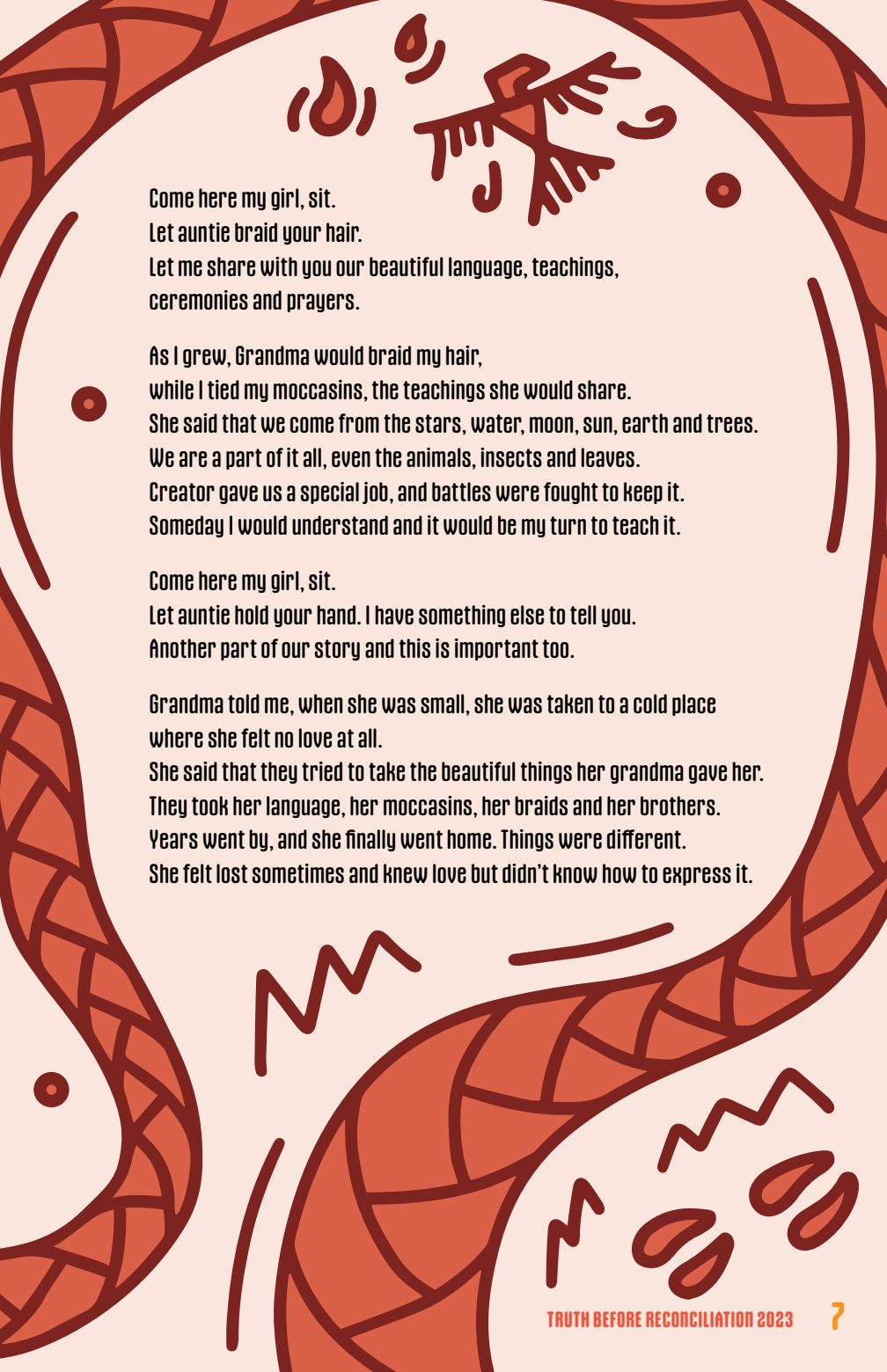


FOR MY NIECES

By Makayla Webkamigad

Come here my girl, sit.
Let auntie tell you a story.
The story of our people,
the ones who came before me.

When I was little, Grandma would tell me
of what it was like to grow up on the farm.
She shared adventures of wild horses, climbing apple trees
and spoke in the language to my heart,
bedtime stories, stitched together with lessons like a star quilt,
wrapped with a warm hug.
This was the way she quietly shared her love.
She told me of some of her favourite things,
feeling the earth beneath her feet and hearing
the birds sing.

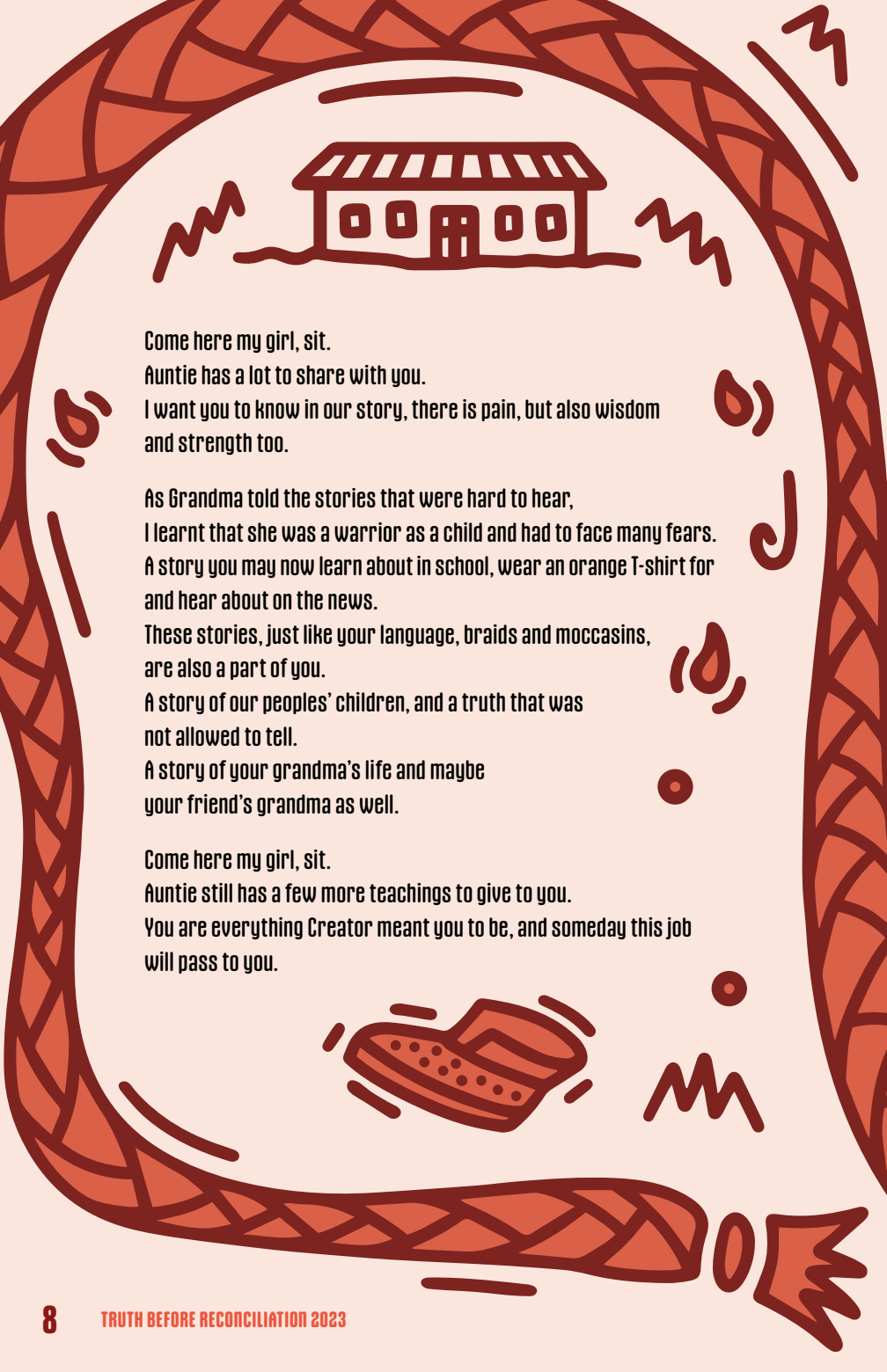


Come here my girl, sit.
Let auntie braid your hair.
Let me share with you our beautiful language, teachings,
ceremonies and prayers.

As I grew, Grandma would braid my hair,
while I tied my moccasins, the teachings she would share.
She said that we come from the stars, water, moon, sun, earth and trees.
We are a part of it all, even the animals, insects and leaves.
Creator gave us a special job, and battles were fought to keep it.
Someday I would understand and it would be my turn to teach it.

Come here my girl, sit.
Let auntie hold your hand. I have something else to tell you.
Another part of our story and this is important too.

Grandma told me, when she was small, she was taken to a cold place
where she felt no love at all.
She said that they tried to take the beautiful things her grandma gave her.
They took her language, her moccasins, her braids and her brothers.
Years went by, and she finally went home. Things were different.
She felt lost sometimes and knew love but didn't know how to express it.



Come here my girl, sit.

Auntie has a lot to share with you.

I want you to know in our story, there is pain, but also wisdom
and strength too.

As Grandma told the stories that were hard to hear,
I learnt that she was a warrior as a child and had to face many fears.
A story you may now learn about in school, wear an orange T-shirt for
and hear about on the news.

These stories, just like your language, braids and moccasins,
are also a part of you.

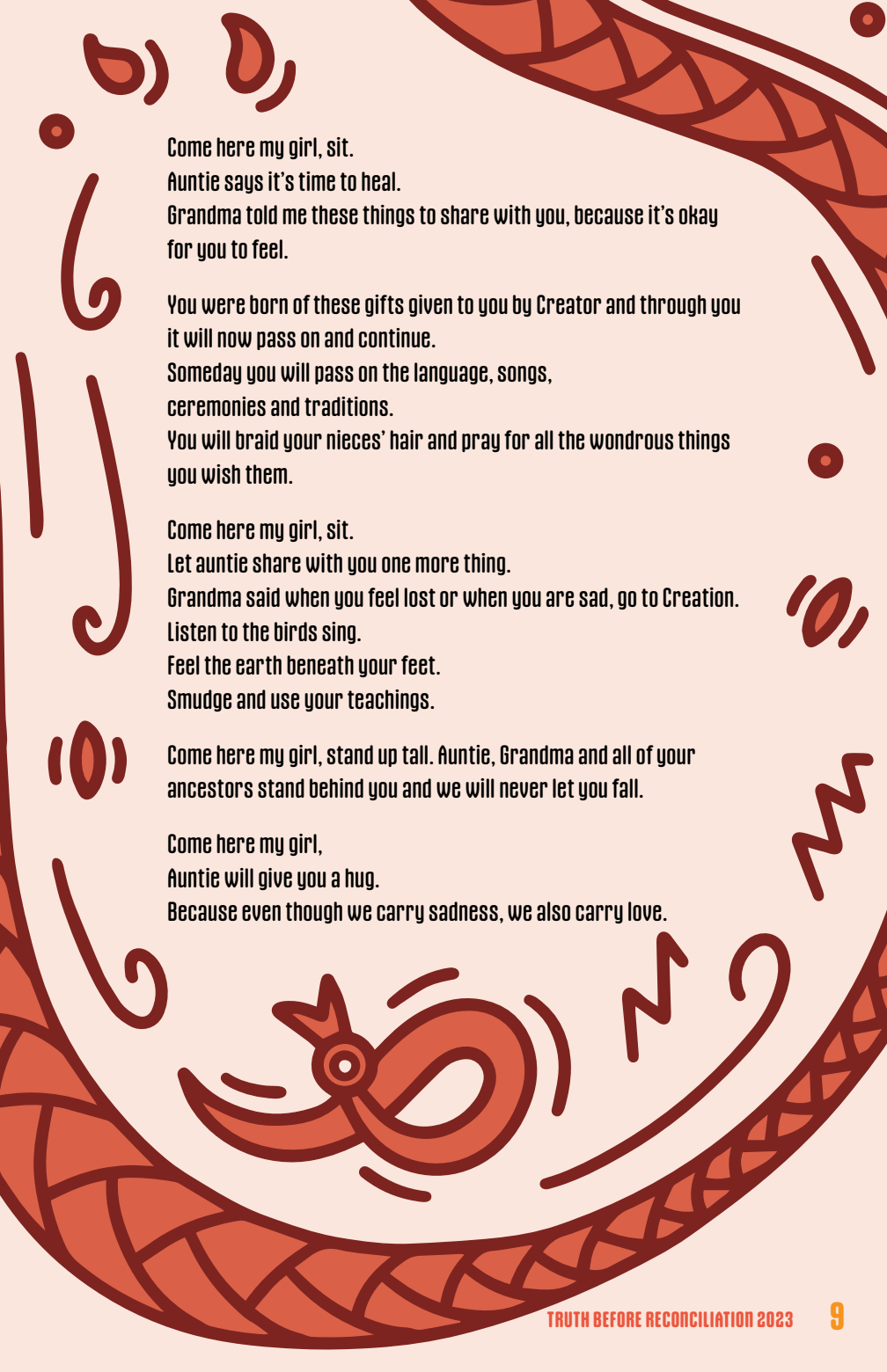
A story of our peoples' children, and a truth that was
not allowed to tell.

A story of your grandma's life and maybe
your friend's grandma as well.

Come here my girl, sit.

Auntie still has a few more teachings to give to you.

You are everything Creator meant you to be, and someday this job
will pass to you.



Come here my girl, sit.
Auntie says it's time to heal.
Grandma told me these things to share with you, because it's okay
for you to feel.

You were born of these gifts given to you by Creator and through you
it will now pass on and continue.
Someday you will pass on the language, songs,
ceremonies and traditions.
You will braid your nieces' hair and pray for all the wondrous things
you wish them.

Come here my girl, sit.
Let auntie share with you one more thing.
Grandma said when you feel lost or when you are sad, go to Creation.
Listen to the birds sing.
Feel the earth beneath your feet.
Smudge and use your teachings.

Come here my girl, stand up tall. Auntie, Grandma and all of your
ancestors stand behind you and we will never let you fall.

Come here my girl,
Auntie will give you a hug.
Because even though we carry sadness, we also carry love.



WHY OUR LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONS MATTER MORE THAN EVER

By Richard Van Camp

E danat'e? (Greetings! How are you?)

Nizi di, I hope. (Very good, I hope.)

Komodo Hoinzi! (Good morning, if it's morning wherever you are.)

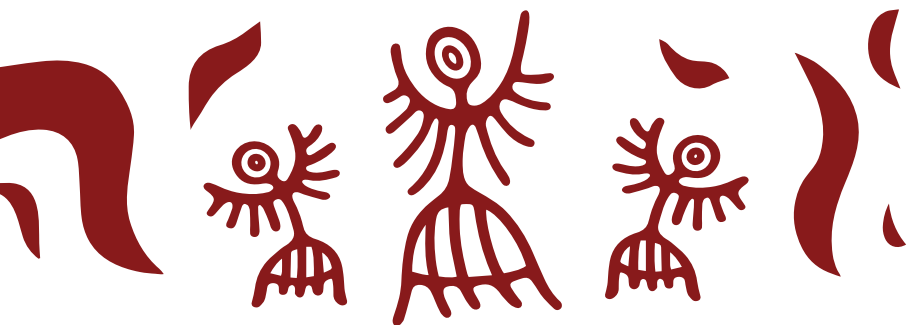
Richard Van Camp siyah.
Si Hobatsa gotso ahte haniho
Edmonton nahde.

I say this to you and my heart

is smiling because what my heart is saying to yours in my mother's language of Tlicho in the Northwest Territories or Denendeh is, "My name is Richard Van Camp. I was born in Fort Smith and I live in Edmonton."

Did you know that I am 51 years old and I'm still in kindergarten?

That's right. I'm 51 and finally learning my mother's language: Tlicho.



Pretty cool, hey? I just learned how to sound out my mother's language and share all of this with you. I could not say this a few months ago but now when I say it, I sing it! And, on this past Valentine's Day, I had the biggest smile on my face when I coloured a heart on my wife's Valentine's Day card and wrote "Nawoo Ney To, my seh ho ho."

What that means is "I love you, my sweetheart."

At 51, I am reclaiming my mother's language in a class called Tlicho 101. It's online through Collège nordique. I'm learning Tlicho with other Tlicho Dene and Northerners and Canadians, and I feel so encouraged and supported in my lifelong dream of being able to speak my mother's language to the best of my ability. This is so

important to me because our child, Edzazii, (which means "marrow" in Tlicho because our children are the hearts of our families. This means, my friends, that you are the heart of your family) gets to hear and share in the reclaiming of our family language together every day now.

This is so important because when we speak Tlicho in our home, we honour my mother, our family and our ancestors and everyone who ever had their language denied or taken away from them through Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, Mission Schools, Boarding Schools, Day Schools and the foster care system and other government policies and laws that tried to assimilate us.

If you want to read an important book honouring Residential School





Survivors, please check out *When We Were Alone* by my friends and heroes David Alexander Robertson and Julie Flett. I cherish this book because it is one of the many books that honours Residential School Survivors like my mom and my uncles finding their way again as adults after they were forced to leave their parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents and communities when they were children. My mother was five when she was flown out of her community to Fort Smith where she attended two Residential Schools for 12 years: Breynat Hall and Grandin College. Her number was 12.

I share this with you so you know that your generation and future generations have the opportunity to

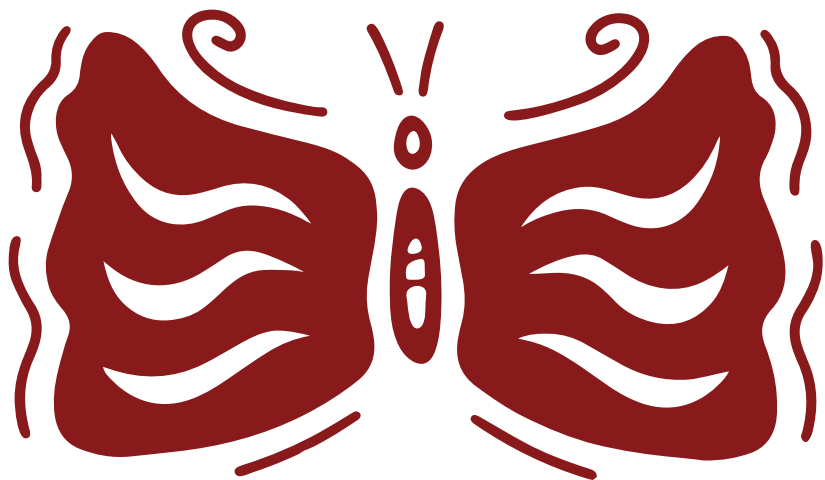
witness our journey as Indigenous people reclaiming ourselves and all that we are entitled to and deserve in our homes and territories. One of the best ways to be our friends and allies is to learn as much as you can of our languages with us and join us at our public ceremonies like round dances, drum dances and tea dances, for example. I would love to see you and your family at a round dance. I would be proud for my family to dance with yours in friendship and with respect.

I would love to have you come up to me and say, “Edanat’e, Richard?” (How are you, Richard?)

I would stop in awe and say, “Nizi dii. Nitah?” (Very good. And you?)

“Heh eh,” you could say, “Nizi. Mahsi.” (Yes, good. Thank you.)





I would say, “Saigya, mahsi.”
(Thank you, my dear friend.)

Wouldn't that be wonderful for both of us?

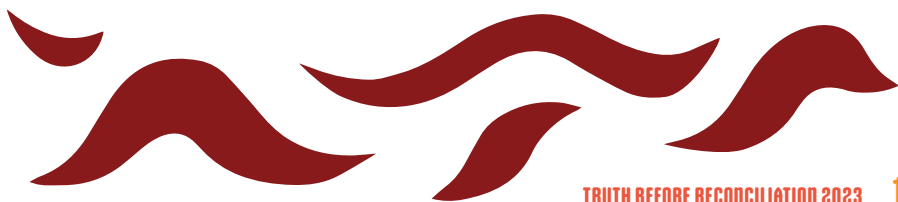
How could we not smile and burst into butterflies the next time we see each other as friends?

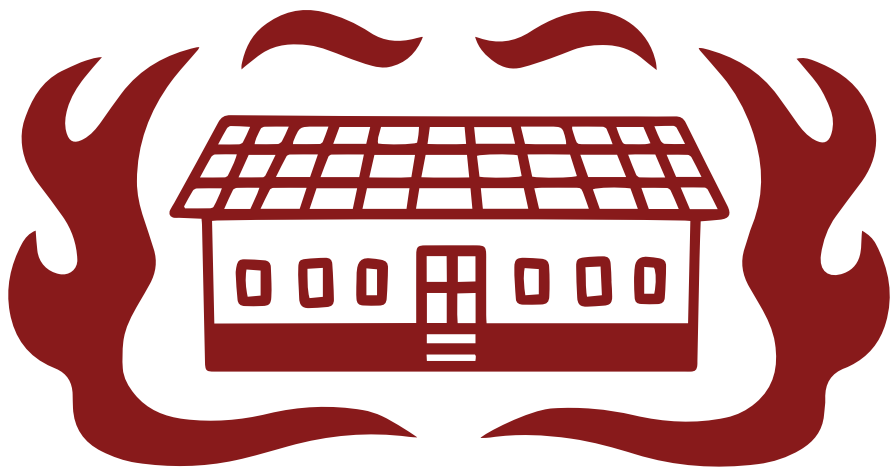
I have always felt that reading is a gentle welcome into difficult and overwhelming topics. Other books that helped me understand what happened nationally to over 160,000 Indigenous, Inuit and Métis children like my mother and uncles is the graphic novel *Seven Generations* by David Alexander Robertson and Scott Henderson with HighWater Press. My friend Monique Gray Smith wrote the most incredible classroom textbook titled *Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation* with Orca Book Publishers.

Monique Gray Smith and I

wrote two books together to help students Grade 5 and up understand Residential Schools from our characters' perspectives. This book — Volume 1 in The Journey Forward series — is beautifully presented, with Monique's novella *Lucy & Lola* on one side of the book and my novella, *When We Play Our Drums, They Sing!*, on the other with McKellar & Martin Publishing. I am so proud of my novella because I was able to bring back a Tlicho story about when Bear had a long tail. It's a funny teaching story and I went to my uncle Alexi Washie to reclaim it with his permission.

When We Play Our Drums, They Sing! is about a young Tlicho student named Dene Cho who is trying to understand the legacy of Residential Schools in the Northwest Territories or Denendeh as we call it:

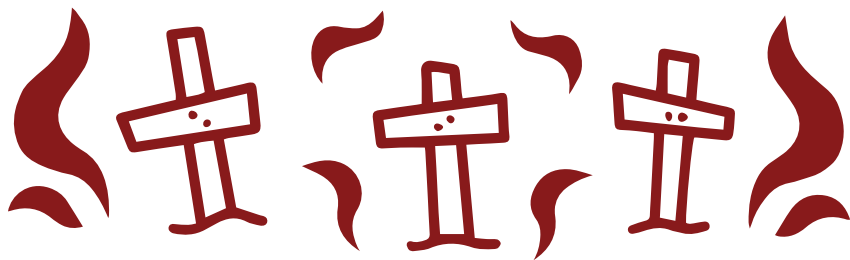


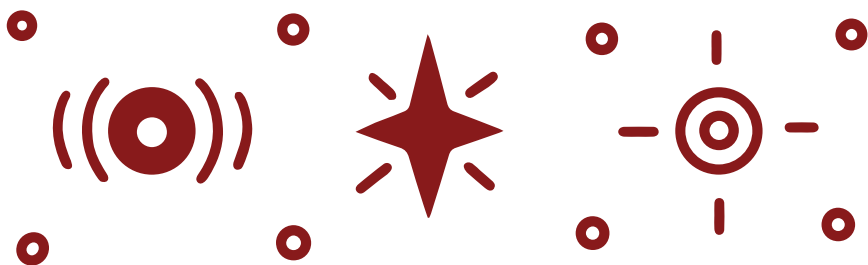


“The Land of the People.” To do research for the novella, I worked up the courage to interview my mom, Rosa Wah-Shee, about her Residential School experience. I recorded and transcribed her Residential School story with her permission for my family and for the world to know what it was like to be five years old and stolen from your home, family and community. You can read my mother’s words in my book *Gather: Richard Van Camp on the Joy of Storytelling*. I’m so proud of my mother and every Residential School Survivor and their families and communities because we are still in the shadows of these institutions

that were designed to make us ashamed of ourselves. You can see the effects of Residential Schools as every Indigenous family today has been touched by these schools and other policies and practices that were meant to extinguish Indigenous cultures.

I have always said that Residential Schools will always be the sorrow in Canada’s bones because of what they did to so many children and families and communities, but what I see now is an incredible reclaiming by Indigenous people within their homes and their communities. I see families reclaiming their culture through language, ceremony, traditions, cooking, recipes, names,



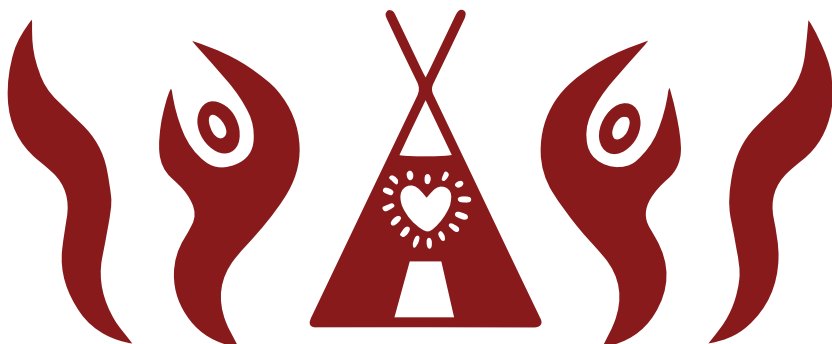


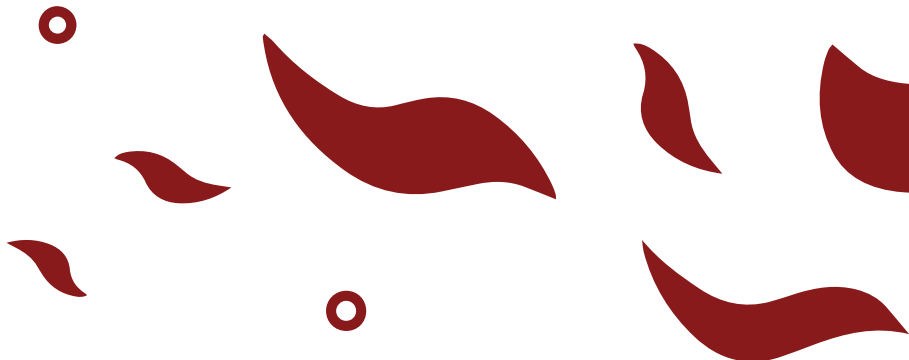
songs, lullabies, stories, practices and teachings, and they are sharing and celebrating what is most precious about us as a people: our own ways of being and celebrating our world experience.

And this is where you come in. If I, at 51, can take responsibility and start learning my language, I invite you to do so as well. It feels good to learn as much of a language as you can that belongs to the territory you live in: How do you greet someone in a respectful way? How do you offer them food and tea? Can you name the moon, a few planets and stars? (Where I'm from in the N.W.T. or Denendeh, the Chipewyan say "Sah" for Moon, the Bush Cree say "Ogeenanz" for Venus and the Tlicho say "Naka" for the northern lights. How do you

name the local animals? I love how the Cree call rabbits "Wapoose" and to say "owl" you say "Ooh hoo." How do you say "Thank you" in the territory that you live on? Often when we are out visiting our Cree friends, we say, "Hai Hai" for thank you.

I invite you to do this because you are witnessing a great reclaiming that's happening where you live and it's happening all across Canada. My hope for you, as a friend and ally to Indigenous people, is to feel the respect of the Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and leaders and teachers and families of where you live because you're doing your best to be there in a gentle way as a helper. And what could be better than to be known as a friend and ally to Indigenous people?





Let's share the journey of honouring Truth and Reconciliation together in a good way, a gentle way with respect and with permission: in the name of friendship, by honouring those who were stolen from their families and their descendants so this can never happen again.

Saigya, mahsi cho. My good friends, thank you very much.

With great respect,
Richard Van Camp

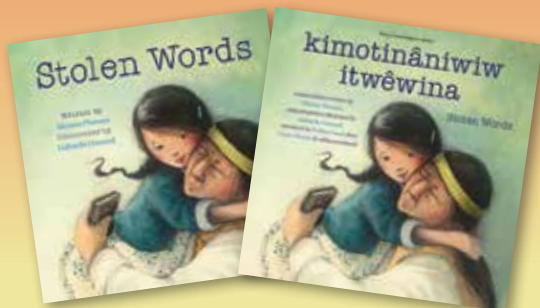
PS: Because I am still in Tlicho 101, I have not figured out how to write our Tlicho words in our Tlicho font. I spell these out so I can speak them and I spell these out so readers can sound each word out with me. A year from now, when I take Tlicho 101 again, I will do my best to learn our Tlicho font. Mahsi cho for your patience with me.

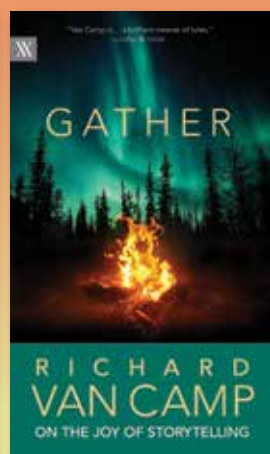
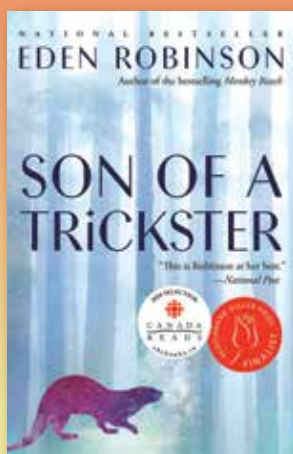
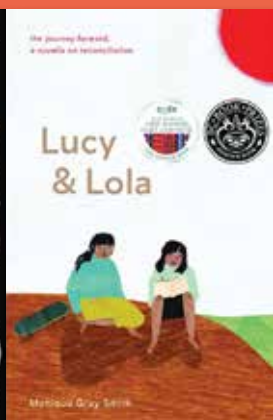
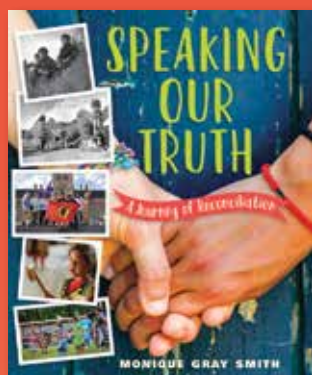


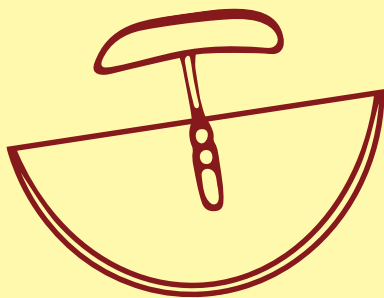


LEARNING THE STORIES

In his article, Richard Van Camp suggested several books you can read to learn more about the truth we need to understand before we can begin to move toward reconciliation. Here are several of them you can look for in your school or community library, along with a few other suggestions. Some of these books are factual, and some are fiction based on fact. They are great ways to learn about the true history of Canada, but also how that history continues to affect First Nations, Métis and Inuit. When we hold these truths in our minds, hearts and spirits we can look to the future together in a good way.







KEEPING LANGUAGE ALIVE

Realizing its Importance

By Edna Ekhivalak Elias

Im Edna Ekhivalak Elias, a Residential School Survivor. A third-generation Survivor. I'm an Inuinnaq from Kugluktuk, Nunavut, the most westerly community in Nunavut. I love my Inuinnaqtun language, a dialect of the family of Inuit language. It became very important to me based on these two experiences which I'm about to share with you.

Before I went to Residential School, I lived a lot with my grandparents out on their traditional homeland. Inuinnaqtun was our language. I was seven years old when they took me from

my grandparents to Residential School by airplane.

At Residential School, we had to speak English. I was lucky though; I was able to understand a bit of English. My father worked on the American military base, so I had heard lots of English by then.

Since I understood a bit of English, they tried to use me as an interpreter. Can you imagine, a seven-year-old interpreter! But just because I was Inuk didn't mean I understood the other Inuit children. I didn't understand many of the dialects, just my own.

In my third year at Residential School, I wrote letters to my



Edna, on the right, and
a friend, in the 1969-70
school year.



Edna and other students in the residence at Stringer Hall in Inuvik.

father. But he would never answer. Occasionally I would get a piece of mail and pick it up at the office, and there was only a five-dollar bill. Nothing written.

I really wanted to hear from mom and dad. So, I decided I would write to my mom. But my mom didn't speak or write or

understand English. She hadn't attended Residential School like my father had. I had to write in Inuinnaqtun. I hadn't been taught to write Inuinnaqtun but I spoke it fluently. It took three days to write the letter in Inuinnaqtun using the English alphabet. Writing in Inuinnaqtun using the English

alphabet was really hard. I'd never needed to use written Inuinnaqtun. In the end, I was able to read it. And I thought, if I could read it, maybe mom could.

Maybe two or three months later, I was super excited when a letter arrived from my mom. I recognized how she signed her name. I was so happy. The letter was in her own version of Inuinnaqtun. So, then there was a challenge to read her letter. It took me almost three days

I never forgot her tone and her expression. I think I left as soon as dishes were done. I was hurt and heartbroken. I went home and told my mother. My mom said to keep speaking Inuinnaqtun. "It will come back to you." I realized that I would never give up speaking my language. My mom's encouragement was stronger than the insult.

I kept telling myself that if it's that easy to lose our language, then I have to do whatever I can to ensure

The letter was in her own version of Inuinnaqtun. So, then there was a challenge to read her letter. It took me almost three days to decipher, but I got through it. And I understood it.

to decipher, but I got through it. And I understood it.

That's what got me started reading and writing Inuinnaqtun. That's how I maintained my Inuinnaqtun language at Residential School. I never heard it or spoke it, but I wrote to my mom.

One summer after getting home from Residential School, we went to my auntie's house for lunch. I stayed to help clean up after lunch. I was so excited to speak Inuinnaqtun with my auntie. My auntie said in Inuinnaqtun, "Hey, stop trying to speak Inuinnaqtun. You are hard to understand. You are becoming a white person. Just speak in English."

that it doesn't happen to other children. When I became a teacher, I had a chance to teach children Inuinnaqtun. But you can't teach language in isolation of culture. You have to teach the two together. Inuinnaqtun instruction in a school should be an extension of the home, not the only place where a child learns his mother tongue.

Despite those experiences at Residential School, I was able to see that my language was valuable. I needed to keep it and not lose it. And so today, I am fluent. I can read and write Inuinnaqtun as well as I can communicate in English.

Small PEBBLES

Learning the stories of Residential Schools and
Survivors is the first step to reconciliation.
Kindness is what keeps us walking.

By Lisa Jane Smith

Being kind is like tossing a small pebble in the ocean. It does not take a lot of effort, but it makes impressive ripples. Kindness happens naturally when you try and understand someone instead of judging them.

To **reconcile** means to rebuild and repair a relationship. It requires action. What are we reconciling? The truth is that the

harm done by Residential Schools still affects Indigenous peoples. That truth must be understood before the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada can be reconciled.

Students throughout the country are imagining a reconciled Canada, and young Indigenous people are using technology to reclaim their space and to share their cultures with the world.

Reconciliation through art

When asked what reconciliation means to her, Grace McLeod from Teslin, Yukon, said, "I just want everyone to get along." When people get along, we feel connected.

When people act kind to you it can make you feel better. Can you imagine a Canada where people are always kind to each other?

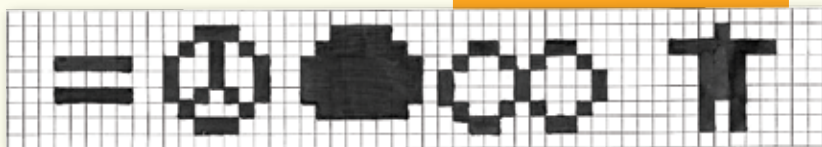


How many things can you find in Grace's art that represent kindness?

The word **wampum** comes from the Algonquian family of languages. Indigenous peoples living from what is now Ontario through the Maritimes made these tube-shaped purple or white beads. They used wampum on clothing and jewelry, and wove the beads into sashes and belts. They gave wampum belts to Crown officials to represent

agreements and Treaties to live together with respect. The wampum belt is a powerful reminder of the need to uphold agreements between Indigenous peoples and colonial governments. A reconciled Canada is about honouring all agreements. Brett Greshner from Manning, Alta., created this design for a wampum belt.

What do you think the symbols Brett used might mean?



Reconciliation through writing

As we reflect on Residential Schools, writing a journal as if we are former students can help us feel compassionate. Compassion is when you recognize the suffering of others and take action to help. Raelin Fudge of Rothesay, N.B., put herself in the shoes of a Survivor to try and understand the Residential School experience. She detailed her journey in diary entries dated from September 1914 through February 1915. Her writing uses imagery to capture the voice of a Survivor about what she endured and her ultimate escape.



Raelin Fudge

Reconciliation through math

Beading has a long history and great importance in many Indigenous cultures. Willow Road Public School in Guelph, Ont., combined beading and math. A bead loom is a Métis tool used to weave beads together. Over three days students

at Willow Road learned about the math involved along with the art: pattern cores, multiplication and measurement. Bringing Indigenous ways into the classroom brings cultures together in another small step toward truth and reconciliation.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAE LIN FUDGE, BONNIE SEARS



Some of the beads used by the Willow Road students, and examples of finished bracelets.

Reconciliation through technology

Since time immemorial Indigenous peoples have been here, strong and proud in their languages and customs. Colonialism — the arrival of European settlers who took over traditional lands and rejected Indigenous ways — deeply disrupted these practices but could

not destroy them. Indigenous peoples are resilient. We are modern peoples.

Here are just a few of the many Indigenous influencers using technology to connect and inspire people to learn the beauty and truth of their culture.



Michelle Chubb (also known as Indigenous Baddie) is a member of Bunibonibee Cree Nation. She creates content to educate non-Indigenous people and inspire Indigenous youth to be themselves. She lives in Winnipeg and sometimes blends urban culture with her traditional Cree culture, most of which she learned from her beloved grandfather. She says school was not always easy for her but that she knows that when you put your mind to it, anything is possible.

Mikey Harris, or DizzyFeet, is a dancer, choreographer and educator from Winnipeg. He has danced with his family his whole life and now mixes hip-hop dance with old-school Métis jigging. He has performed across North America at events such as the 2010 Winter Olympics.



Isabelle Chapadeau creates digital art, painting and jewelry and uses social media to share her work and ideas. She grew up surrounded by artists in Iqaluit, Nunavut, and now lives in Gatineau, Quebec. Chapadeau posts videos in French and English to teach people about Inuit culture and create connections between those communities and Inuit.



James Jones, also known as Notorious Cree, is a Nêhiyaw activist, performer and speaker from Tall Cree First Nation in Treaty 8 Territory (northern Alberta). He is one of the world's top five hoop dancers. He has performed at the Junos, Olympics and Coachella Music Festival. He is passionate about educating people about Indigenous issues and culture.

Shina Novalinga is an Inuk social media personality, singer and activist. She gained fame for posting videos of her throat singing with her mother and also performs on her own. Throat singing is a form of musical performance in which two women see who can outlast the other. Throat singers can be solo artists as well.



Like pebbles,
reconciliation can take
many shapes and forms.
What are you doing for
reconciliation?

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EDNA EKHIVALAK ELIAS - Elder

A third-generation Residential School Survivor, Edna is an Inuinnaq from Kugluktuk, Nunavut. She is a member of the NCTR's Survivors Circle and an ardent advocate for Inuit language and culture.



LISA JANE SMITH - Writer

Lisa is of settler and Inuit heritage. Her Inuit community is NunatuKavut in southern Labrador. Lisa journeyed across unceded territory from coast to coast. She attended law school at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and returned to the East Coast to practice criminal law. Lisa is currently dedicating her career to truth and reconciliation as an advocate.

She is also a registered lobbyist, but her family refers to her as a professional charmer.



JORDAN STRANGER - Art Director

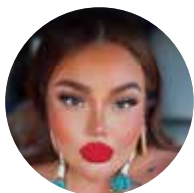
Through pencil, paint or digital mediums, Jordan Stranger communicates the importance of life, culture and acceptance. His works are deeply rooted in the traditions within contemporary Indigenous culture. As an Anishinaabe individual originally from Peguis First Nation, Jordan uses his life experiences to drive his artistic passions.



RICHARD VAN CAMP - Writer

A proud Tlicho Dene from Fort Smith, N.W.T., Richard is the bestselling author of 27 books these past 27 years. His novel *The Lesser Blessed* is now a feature film with First Generation Films. You can watch it online. Richard is an internationally renowned storyteller whose passion is helping others reclaim their family

medicines. You can visit with Richard at his official site richardvancamp.com



MAKAYLA WEBKAMIGAD - Poet

A 28-year-old Ojibwe-Odawa-Potawatomi woman from Wikwemikong, Ont., Makayla grew up in Sault Ste. Marie and was born in Calgary, Alta., into a family of Anishinaabe educators and activists. She is the granddaughter of four Residential School and Day School Survivors. Through her storytelling poems, she strives to

continue the work of her family: shedding light on the Residential School era, and the trauma and other effects being passed to future generations, in hopes of helping make change.



Download the National Truth and Reconciliation Week
Teacher's Guide CanadasHistory.ca/ListeningtoSurvivors

For more lesson plans and resources,
visit nctr.ca

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**“This is the dream of Survivors,
including those who have passed on
to the Spirit world: to share their
truths. Read them. Believe them.
Give them life.”**

— Elder Brian Normand

**For more information on the Survivors' Flag, visit
nctr.ca/exhibits/survivors-flag/**