

STATEMENT OF MOURNING FOR 215 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

We are heartbroken to learn of the uncovering of the remains of 215 Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. We mourn with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, with Indigenous peoples across Canada, and with Indigenous members of the Osgoode community, including the Osgoode Indigenous Students' Association.

Many members of the Osgoode community are in pain. Some have family who are or were residential school survivors. We have been doing our best to heal ourselves and to support our families through the intergenerational trauma of residential schools. An event like this interrupts that healing. The inability to meet together or grieve together in person at this time adds to the pain. We look forward to a time when we can support each other in person. Until then, Indigenous Osgoode students seeking support are encouraged to reach out to Lori Mishibinijima, Program Manager, Indigenous Initiatives & Reconciliation (lmishibinijima@osgoode.yorku.ca), Signa Daum Shanks, Director, Indigenous Outreach (sdaumshanks@osgoode.yorku.ca), and Karen Drake, Associate Dean (Students) (ads@osgoode.yorku.ca). Residential school survivors can access support, including emotional and crisis referral services, through the 24-hour National Indian Residential School Crisis Line at 1-866 925-4419. All Indigenous peoples can access counselling and crisis intervention support through the 24-hour Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 and at hopeforwellness.ca.

We are grateful to Chief Stacey LaForme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for sharing [his poem in honour of the 215 children](#).

We join the Osgoode Indigenous Students' Association (OISA) in calling for government funding for the use of ground-penetrating radar technology on all other residential school sites. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard reports of deaths and unmarked burials from residential school survivors and from the parents of students who did not survive; these reports are documented in Volume 4 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, [Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials](#), and form the basis for [Calls to Action 71-76](#). And yet, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's request to conduct a fuller inquiry into unmarked burials [was denied](#). We join Murray Sinclair in calling ["for an independent investigation to examine all burial sites near former residential schools."](#)

We continue to be committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #28, which calls on each law school in Canada to teach the history and legacy of residential schools, among other topics, as a required component of our curriculum. We support OISA's stance that truth must precede reconciliation.

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