



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2021

AMC marks the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is marking the historic first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by assisting in the coordination of two events and participating in several others designed to mark the significance of this day and to honour all the children who died while attending Indian Residential Schools (IRS). On September 30th, the AMC honours the survivors, families and Nations still affected by the legacy of the IRS. The main AMC event will be to welcome the Unity Walkers to Treaty One lands at the legislative building on Broadway at 12:00 P.M. on September 30. AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, AFN Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse, and First Nations' leadership will welcome and celebrate the Unity Walkers from Fox Lake Cree Nation and York Factory Cree Nation who began their journey two weeks ago in Gillam. The Unity Walkers, including those who have joined the original group along the way, are commemorating their residential school survivors, all their relatives and raising awareness about all residential school students who died while attending these institutions, as well as bringing attention to the need for more healing and addictions supports in the north.

The other event will take place in partnership with Deer Meadow Farms and its corn maze designed to commemorate Orange Shirt Day, Turtle Island and all the former IRS students who were forcibly removed from their families and Nations to IRS facilities and who never made it home. AMC staff will be in attendance at the corn maze and at other events to help facilitate and be ambassadors to the public on behalf of First Nations: <https://www.deermeadowfarms.com/>

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "The AMC member First Nations acknowledge the government of Canada for enacting Bill C-5, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This day has been a long-time coming for the First Nations in Manitoba and all our relatives across these lands. First Nations have long called for a national day of commemoration for the IRS survivors, going back over thirty years ago when former AMC Grand Chief Phil Fontaine began courageously speaking about the abuses and trauma he suffered while attending the Fort Alexander Indian Residential School."

"The AMC is honoured to continue this legacy, which resulted in the largest class action lawsuit in the history of the country, the apology to First Nations read in the House of Commons, the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the 94 Calls to Action, and the first Orange Shirt Day in 2013 supported through resolution by the First Nations leadership across this country."

"There has been some progress on truth and reconciliation between Canada and First Nations - Orange Shirt Day is now commemorated through Bill C-5 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, some of the Calls to Action have been implemented, and there is now wide-spread awareness and empathy in civil society for what happened to First Nations in the 151 years of Canadian confederation. I would also take this opportunity to recognize all businesses, private sector establishments and organizations that have chosen to observe the National Day for TRC by closing their operations and giving time to their employees to reflect on the significance of this day and what it means to First Nations peoples."

"However, the work is far from being over; there can be no justice until all the Calls to Action have been implemented, until the full meaning of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is reflected in the laws of this country,

until the true spirit and intent of the Treaties are honoured, and until all the children in the unmarked IRS graves have been identified and repatriated under their Nations' customs. Along with our allies and civil society, the AMC member First Nations are determined to build on the legacy of the previous leadership by continuing the work for a lasting justice for the former IRS students, their families, and for those who died while attending these institutions," continued Grand Chief Dumas

"First Nations in Manitoba will not rest until there is a full accounting by Canada and the Churches for the crimes perpetrated against our children in the former residential schools, and which continue to be perpetuated through the current Child Welfare systems and the disproportionate incarceration and criminalization of our youth, women and men, who in many instances are simply protecting the lands of their ancestors from further exploitation and degradation," added Grand Chief Dumas.

"It has been 30 years since the final report of the AJI; 30 years since Elijah Harper said NO to further assimilation of First Nations; and it will be six years this December since the release of the final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This history is important because it has led to a new consciousness in this country; we can be thankful, because many of these historic moments in our shared history that have led to increased awareness, progress on achieving justice, and a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, had their origins in Manitoba," concluded Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.