



Reconciliation Saskatoon is inviting
your classroom to join us on Tues, June 21 for the
Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation.



BACKGROUND

The Walk for Reconciliation gathers Indigenous, non-Indigenous and newcomer peoples at Victoria Park in Saskatoon to demonstrate their commitment to truth and reconciliation. Participants are invited to “Rock Your Roots” by wearing cultural regalia or carrying signs that celebrate their heritage. The walk is preceded by Indigenous ceremony and led by Residential School Survivors who are honoured through this experience. An international cast of singers, dancers and musicians celebrate the diverse cultures of Saskatoon along the route of the walk.

The Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation took place from 2016 to 2019, when we gathered **5,000 people on the South Saskatchewan River**. It was cancelled in 2020 due to covid. In 2021, participants walked on their own or in small groups according to covid regulations to continue the legacy of honouring survivors and committing to truth and reconciliation.



FUN FACT: At the end of 2017, part of Victoria Park was renamed “Reconciliation Circle” to recognize this site as an important location for Truth and Reconciliation in our city. Not only is this the site of National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and the Walk for Reconciliation. In 2015, this is where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hosted one of seven national events that marked the release of the TRC’s Final Report, which listed 94 Calls to Action that Canadians need to support to bring about Truth and Reconciliation.

OPTIONS FOR WALKING WITH US

While some of you may be eager to join the Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation, we know that others may prefer to not engage in field trips at this time. Either way, there are many ways to participate in National Indigenous Peoples Day on Tuesday, June 21!

1. Join us in person on Tues, June 21. The **Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation begins at 10am in Victoria Park** (right across the street from Royal Canadian Legion 63 at 606 Spadina Cres W). See the attached Bus Route map for drop off and pick up areas.
2. Organize a “Walk for Reconciliation” at your school on Tues, June 21—National Indigenous Peoples Day. Invite students to “Rock Your Roots” that day by wearing cultural regalia or draw flags that showcase their ancestry.



Whether you join us in person or stay at your school, below are suggestions and activities to get your students engaged!

EVENT DETAILS

The Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation starts in Victoria Park. School buses can drop off students at the top of Victoria Park at 10am. We’ve attached a map for school bus drivers!

From 10am – 10:30am people arrive and join the procession. We will begin walking at 10:30am and the route will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The route circles back and ends in Victoria Park, in the heart of the park close to the river.

The walk is led by Residential School Survivors and this event is a way to honour them and their families. At the completion of the walk, there will be a stage and celebrations for National Indigenous Peoples Day—hosted by the Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre. Students are invited to stay and enjoy a grand entry, followed by speeches and cultural performances. Free lunch is available. Programming will continue on this stage from noon – 4pm.

If you plan to attend, please contact Carrie to let us know to expect your class:

Carrie Catherine
Director, Reconciliation Saskatoon

beaconnectr@gmail.com
Cell (306) 241-6297

SCHOOL BUS Drop Off & Pick Up

School buses can approach from Avenue H South and turn east onto 16th Street W. The road will be blocked to regular traffic at 16th St W, so we will have volunteers removing blockades for school buses to enter.

School buses can stop along Spadina Cres W across from the Legion to let students off. We will have marshals and crossing guards to ensure the safety of the students and smooth traffic flow.



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GETTING STUDENTS ENGAGED

Here are some activities designed to get your students thinking about National Indigenous Peoples Day and the Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation.

Lesson Focus

What is the Rock Your Roots Walk for Reconciliation and how was it created in response to the Canadian Residential School system? How can students contribute to the process of Truth and Reconciliation?

Outcomes

Students will listen to a Residential School Survivor share his story and the history of the Walk for Reconciliation. They will become more familiar with the Residential School System, and consider how they can honour Survivors who are still alive in our community. They will consider how their actions can build towards a larger movement for Truth and Reconciliation.

Objectives

Students will participate in art projects that recognize Residential School Survivors and invite more students to get involved in reconciliation.

Procedures

1. DISCUSSION

What are Residential Schools?

The enrollment process that Indigenous students went through when entering Residential School settings meant that they became cut off from their cultural roots, families, and identities as individuals. Attendance was mandatory, and they were often taken by officials from their homes forcibly.

Food such as vegetables, fruits, and meat were not available to the children attending residential school. Often, the children were not fed enough food which interrupted their growth process. Children who went to residential school faced unsafe living conditions and did not receive the support that is needed when a child is growing.

What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had a mandate to inform all Canadians about what happened in residential schools.

The TRC documented the truth of Survivors, their families, communities and anyone personally affected by the residential school experience. This included First Nations, Inuit and Métis former residential school students, their families, communities, the churches, former school employees, government officials and other Canadians. Why was this important? Because before we can reconcile, we must all listen to and acknowledge the truth.

During the TRC, three commissioners travelled the country and listened to countless testimonies from Residential School Survivors. They developed 94 Calls to Action that needed to be addressed to right the wrongs of the past and involve everyone in knowing the truth and moving forward in reconciliation.

For more information and resources from the TRC, visit <https://nctr.ca>

2. VIDEO (7 minutes)

Hear one survivor talk about his experience and share the origins of Walking for Reconciliation. <https://youtu.be/Qd6h0Aqo8KY>

Eugene Arcand (Cree from Muskeg Lake) shares about his experience at Residential School and how Sunday walks were the only opportunity to see relatives and friends of the opposite gender. When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission took place, the survivors held walks as part of the process of remembering, healing and building a new future.

3. FINDING YOUR CALL TO ACTION

The Rock Your Roots Walk for Reconciliation began in 2016 to honour Residential School Survivors. For three years, thousands of people gathered on the riverbank and “rocked their roots” by wearing their own cultural regalia or holding symbols of their culture. It is an important part of reconciliation to know your own ancestry.

This year, we are inviting people to walk on June 21 National Indigenous Peoples Day at the Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation to show their support for Survivors and commit to working towards equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



4. ACTIVITY

Be a changemaker! How can you make change or be part of a change happening in your community? Have your students choose one of the following options to be a changemaker within their school!

Option A: **Join us at the Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation.** Wear orange that day. Before the walk, create a poster or card with a message to a Residential School Survivor. At the end of the walk, Survivors will line up in golf carts and watch participants complete the route of the walk. Students can give their cards to Survivors at this point. Or create posters that hang in your classroom or school. These posters can follow the theme: how can I bring about equality in my school, home or community?

Option B: **Organize a Walk for Reconciliation at your school.** Choose a time and route for students to walk. Create posters about June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day. Wear orange that day or invite students to “rock their roots” by wearing their cultural regalia.

5. CONCLUSION

Today, residential schools do not exist anymore. The last residential school in Saskatchewan was closed in 1996. However, the children who attended those schools are now grown-up, and many are still dealing with the problems they faced as a child. We call them survivors. We’ve provided some resources so you can get engaged in healing and change in your community.

MORE RESOURCES

- > We show our support for Residential School Survivors by walking on June 21, which is National Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Check out this video from the Walk for Reconciliation in 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YbzuEi-XqM>
- > In June, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner is hosting an online training: “Teaching Treaties in the Classroom” The sessions are June 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 10 am to 3 pm. Find more information at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/teaching-treaties-in-the-classroom-tickets-338439179697> or visit their website at otc.ca for more great teaching resources.
- > Many people in our community work hard to heal the damage done by Residential schools and ensure that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are equal. Check out ConnectR, an online project to help people find and respond to Calls to Action and move forward on a path of truth and reconciliation: www.BeAConnectR.com