

## **NUNATUKAVUT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MOURNS THE LIVES OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN FOUND AT FORMER RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN BC**

**HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, June 1, 2021** – NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) President Todd Russell issued the following statement in response to the tragic news about the remains of 215 Indigenous children found buried at a former residential school in British Columbia:

“The NunatuKavut Community Council joins with those who mourn for the loss of the children found buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. We, too, are shaken by the heart wrenching and shocking discovery of the many children who never returned to their homes and their families. This further highlights the horrific realities of the residential school system in Canada. These realities continue to perpetuate a legacy of trauma and suffering passed from generation to generation. Many NunatuKavut Inuit are still grappling with the lasting and painful impacts of residential schools in Labrador and in Newfoundland. Our people carry their stories out on the ice when they hunt, on the land as they harvest and in their homes as they sit with their families. These truths are a part of who we are and how we will live into the future.

Today, we honour and remember the lives of the 215 children found. We hope that each child finds their respectful resting place and that their families can finally find some measure of peace and closure. We also honour every child who attended residential schools in Canada. We remember those who have passed on, carrying their stories to the very end. And we support those still with us and do what we can to walk with them on their journey of healing.

The bravery and courage that former residential school students display in their daily lives is an inspiration to all of us. We learn from the wisdom of our Elders, whose lives have been impacted by colonization. They teach us the ways of our ancestors, helping our communities be healthy and well.

Keeping these stories alive is an important part of healing and reconciliation. NCC is committed to creating space for these truths to be told and is working with the provincial government to ensure the history and culture of NunatuKavut Inuit is reflected in our education system. We are also working to develop our own resources through Ikupiatsik, our NunatuKavut Inuit education action plan. To echo the words of Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, ‘education holds the key to reconciliation. It is where our country will heal itself.’ We challenge Canada and all levels of government to do better. To implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s calls to action. To truly put reconciliation into action.”

*The contents of this statement may be triggering for some. If you need support, please call the Hope for Wellness line at 1-844-413-6649. It is a national, toll-free support line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also call the 24-hour Mental Health Crisis Line in Newfoundland and Labrador at 1-888-737-4668. For more resource information, please contact NCC’s Community Social Worker Kristy Dyson at [kdyson@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:kdyson@nunatukavut.ca) or 709-896-0592.*

For regular updates, please visit our website at [www.nunatukavut.ca](http://www.nunatukavut.ca). Please also join in the conversation at [facebook.com/nunatukavut](https://facebook.com/nunatukavut) and Twitter [@nunatuKavut](https://twitter.com/nunatuKavut).

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