



This painting was done by Simone McLeod. The painting is titled “Healing” and describes the interconnectivity between people and nature. According to Indigenous worldviews, health and happiness is achieved by living a life in balance with nature. Grandfather Sun sustains all life, and the orange sun represents Orange Shirt Day. The Sun symbolizes Creator and shows that faith and prayer is needed to find healing. The rays of the sun reach out to all mankind. Grandmothers and Grandfathers in ceremonial garb, adorned with colourful ribbons, support each other in humble prayer, giving thanks to creator for the blessings of life.

SASKATOON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS CIRCLE (SSC)

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ESTABLISHING THE SASKATOON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS CIRCLE (SSC)

The Saskatoon Indian Residential School Survivors Circle was organized informally in 2017-2018.

The SSC was created for Survivors by Survivors of the Indian Residential Schools in the Saskatoon and area to have a safe space to connect with other Survivors, share stories, create a sense of community, while promoting wellness and inclusion that involves cultural protocols, ceremonies and teachings. This Circle has been called upon by the business community, community groups and other agencies to provide presentations on the true history and understandings leading to reconciliation. This contributes to systems change in a decolonizing way. The SSC have established ourselves as a network of Survivors, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders and engage approaches to assist in the following areas:

- Culture Connectedness
- Holistic Wellness
- Indigenous /Métis/Non-Indigenous relations building
- Systemic Change

SSC creates a safe space to encourage those who have begun their healing journey and to support those who have already engaged. This will increase and strengthen the education and awareness of the impacts and legacy left by the Indian Residential School era.

The SSC supports and encourages the revitalization of our languages, protocols, ceremonies and embrace “our ways of knowing” when conducting activities in an ethno-cultural manner.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN SASKATCHEWAN:

Indian Residential Schools in Saskatchewan operated as early as 1874 by churches, federal and provincial Governments. There were well over 20 Indian Residential Schools (IRS) in operation in Saskatchewan; the last federally run school closed in the late 1990s. In Canada, approximately 150,000 students accepted the IRS Settlement Agreement Common Experience Payment. Estimates indicate that over 30% of those students are from Saskatchewan.

“These schools were largely operated by certain churches and religious organizations and administered and funded by the federal government as a key aspect of colonialism. The system was imposed on Indigenous peoples as part of a broad set of assimilation efforts to destroy their rich cultures and identities and to suppress their histories.”

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2020/09/the-residential-school-system.html>

Research and Indigenous history, both oral and written, confirms that the government introduced and operated

residential schools among the purposes, was including clearing of the land, to make way for settlers. The Saskatoon Survivors Circle encourages people to learn about the history which led to the creation of residential schools and the subsequent impact.



MEMBERSHIP IN SASKATOON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS CIRCLE (SSC):

SSC is comprised of Indian Residential School Survivors who are Survivors, Knowledge Keepers and Elders, some of whom have ceremonial gifts.



RESOURCES FOR SASKATOON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS CIRCLE:

- NIB Education Trust Fund
- SSC are thankful to all the donors, partnerships, allies, friends and families who make possible the many extra activities and workshops that we experience. Many of these activities we did not get to participate in as children.

Contact us:
saskatoonsurvivorscircle@outlook.com



ENGAGING SASKATOON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS:

SSC utilizes a variety of engagement approaches: ceremonial activities; monthly meetings; education forums; arts and crafts activities; conferences; and the capacity to provide the true history of the Indian Residential School era. This is done by sharing our lived experiences, in a traditional and contemporary manner.

As a contemporary example, during the COVID pandemic, iPads were obtained to provide a mechanism for Survivors to continue contact for protocols, ceremony, ongoing meetings, training sessions and other activities.

“Our appreciation goes to all those who have supported Indian Residential School Survivors. Nothing about Us without Us”.

*Eugene Arcand,
Chair, Saskatoon School Survivors Circle 2018*

SASKATOON SURVIVORS CIRCLE ACTIVITIES:



The key objectives are to plan, organize and develop events for ourselves and by ourselves. Over the last 4 years the Saskatoon Survivors Circle has developed, delivered and participated in numerous events. Some examples of Activities are:

- Creating arts, crafts and ceremonial tools e.g. Hand drums, Rattles, Dream catchers, Indigenous Dolls, etc.
- Orange Shirt Days prior to 2021
- Celebration of official recognition of Indian Residential School Survivors through Orange Shirt Day September 30, 2021
- Canada West, U of S Huskies Cross Country 2019-2021
- Published "When The Time Comes, A Guide to End-of-Life Planning for Indigenous People" 2021
- Workshops: Dealing with Trauma, Homelessness, Financial Planning, Wills and Estates
- National Day of Prayer (215)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day (Rock Your Roots June 21 Annually)
- Staycation, June 2021
- Partnerships with Organizations, e.g. City of Saskatoon, United Way Saskatoon and many others too numerous to mention, we sincerely thank you all!
- Precedent setting "ācimo Gathering, December 2021"
- Participation in National Gathering of Elders Winnipeg, 2019
- Development and consultation on scholarships and bursaries
- Aquacise, walking programs and other healthy lifestyle alternatives

OUTCOMES FOR SURVIVORS:

- Increased knowledge, education and retention of protocols and ceremonies
- Contribution to the understanding of Reconciliation and encourage the implementation of the 94 Calls for Action in Saskatoon in a non-paternalistic and non-token way
- Increased self-awareness/self-confidence using Indigenous ways of knowing and learning
- Skill development e.g. crafting, public speaking, & training to use iPads and other technology
- Sense of belonging, healing, wellness and promotion of the safe space we all seek and enjoy
- Memorial for members who have passed on to the Spirit World



CONTACT US:

Lorna Arcand, Project Coordinator

Elsie Ballantyne, Administration

Eugene Arcand, Chair

SCC Email: saskatoonsurvivorscircle@outlook.com





