

2024



National Centre for  
Truth and Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

# *Annual Report*





*“We are all in this together, and it is critical that we unite in our shared vision so our collective efforts can amplify our impact.”*

-DR. CYNTHIA WESLEY-ESQUIMAUX, CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING CIRCLE, NCTR

Building on previous momentum, 2024 saw the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) continue to advance its mission. The Governing Circle remains committed to honouring Survivors of the residential school system in Canada, as well as supporting and guiding the work of the NCTR in partnership with the Survivors Circle.

While we achieved much to be proud of, the journey has not been without obstacles. These challenges, sometimes formidable, only strengthen our commitment to this vital work. Each step forward—and even those moments that feel like a step back—deepens our resolve and reminds us of the power of persistence, determination and, above all, collaboration. Our work is guided by the cultures, values and protocols of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Survivors, their families and communities. We are all in this together, and it is critical that we unite in our shared vision so our collective efforts can amplify our impact.

In November, we lost a dear Elder, teacher, friend and warrior whose passing leaves a gaping hole in our hearts. It is difficult to put into words the profound loss of Mazina Giizhik-iban, His Honour Murray Sinclair, who led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We honour his many contributions to the NCTR and lifelong advocacy for Indigenous Peoples—a true champion of truth and justice—on page 9 of this report.

His Honour famously stated education is the key to reconciliation. It is essential not only as a pathway to truth but also as a catalyst for meaningful action. That’s why it’s especially exciting to announce initiatives specifically designed to raise awareness and drive progress.





In May, the NCTR, along with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, announced an investment of approximately \$6 million over five years. It will support six partnership grants through the Reconciliation Network Hub in Response to Call to Action 65 to advance our collective understanding of reconciliation.

In September, the NCTR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with APTN and CBC/Radio-Canada to work collaboratively on *Remembering the Children: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*. This annual commemoration on Parliament Hill will help build awareness and honour the children who died and the Survivors still with us today.

In October, we welcomed the release of the *Final Report of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools*. This report provides a powerful framework to uphold the right to reparations for the harms that were inflicted upon families, communities and nations.

Our advocacy efforts reinforced our commitment to engaging in meaningful dialogue with government, policy-makers and partners. While we welcomed the federal government's decision to return to a flexible funding model to support residential school search activities, we still have many, many unanswered questions. We seek concrete assurance that the resources available for searches will be brought into line with the real-world needs of communities.

The Governing Circle is committed to advancing Indigenous governance and thereby the framework of truth and reconciliation in Canada. I look forward to building on our progress and furthering the work of the NCTR for all Indigenous Peoples over the next year and beyond.

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux  
*Chair on Truth and Reconciliation*  
Lakehead University

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*“There are hard truths about our country’s colonial history that some people are still not prepared to hear and do not want to be told—but we all must learn the true history of residential schools, listen to Survivors and take a stand against deniers.”*

-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR

Every day, I am honoured to work alongside residential school Survivors. They remind me that there can be no reconciliation without truth.

The work we do at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is and will always be because of the Survivors. They fought a very long and very hard struggle for the truth of the residential schools to be acknowledged.

In these institutions, the children were taught to feel shame for being First Nations, Inuit or Métis, and to feel ashamed for the abuse and neglect they experienced.

Sadly, at the NCTR, we see increased ugliness from those who deny our truths, experiences and oral histories as reality. It is disheartening, to say the least, to read hateful comments challenging the documented experiences of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Survivors. People perpetuating myths like “It didn’t happen” or “Some good came out of the schools” is bad enough, but reading statements like “Children never died in those institutions” is truly repugnant.

At the NCTR, we see these baseless claims and attempts to erase history firsthand—and they must be countered with education and truth.

But the responsibility of truth-telling should not be placed solely on Survivors’ shoulders. Each and every Canadian must reflect on the role they can play in reconciliation. It requires institutions, governments and individuals to live up to their responsibilities and complete and fulfill the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action. We, at the NCTR, will not give up and will continue to look for opportunities to continue educating all Canadians in the pursuit of reconciliation.

While the NCTR has made significant progress, there remains a great deal of work ahead to address the ongoing denialism and injustices that persist. True progress requires action—and meaningful reparations. And we must never forget that each and every one of us has a role in truth and reconciliation.

Miigwetch.

Stephanie Scott  
Executive Director  
NCTR



*The NCTR is our home. It's where our voices and oral histories are preserved and protected.*



Without truth, there can be no reconciliation. That's why establishing the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)'s new permanent home is integral to sharing the history of residential schools and safeguarding the truths of Survivors now and for generations to come.

In March, the NCTR and University of Manitoba (UM) announced a \$5-million gift from The Winnipeg Foundation to support its construction in the heart of Treaty One Territory. Soon, we will have more gifts to announce and celebrate as we move closer to our \$100 million goal for this crucial capital project. *Read more on page 11.*

Our members, and many others, were involved in consultations about our vision for the new building and sacred site with ceremonial lands: a beacon for reconciliation in Canada.

A safe space for Survivors and their families to come together to share their truths, knowledge and experiences.

A place where family members can visit for healing and to reconnect with lost histories and loved ones.

A place of learning and dialogue where people can embark on their own journey of reconciliation.

This past year provided opportunities for Survivors' voices to be amplified across Turtle Island, once again representing our determination to tell the truth of Canada's history, along with the continued strength and power of Indigenous Peoples.

*"In the future, there will be fewer Survivors. This is why it is important to have a home where we can preserve our truths, our stories, our hopes, for future generations."*

**-EUGENE ARCAND, SURVIVOR, NCTR SURVIVORS CIRCLE**

On September 30, Survivors came together to acknowledge and commemorate Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We heard our voices amplified on Parliament Hill and through the *Remembering the Children* national broadcast that reached 8.9 million Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

On October 1, a number of Survivors gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg People to re-raise the Survivors' Flag on Parliament Hill. We came together to share

our truths about the residential school system and honour the memory of the children who never returned home. Seeing the flag raised continues to serve as a powerful reminder of the unjust and shameful treatment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and symbolize the country's ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

*“As a Survivor of the Ermineskin Residential School, I am filled with emotion when I see the Survivors’ Flag being re-raised. Sharing my story—my truths—is a part of my journey and my healing as a Survivor. I do this so that people will understand what we went through as First Nations people in the hopes that the past will never be repeated.”*

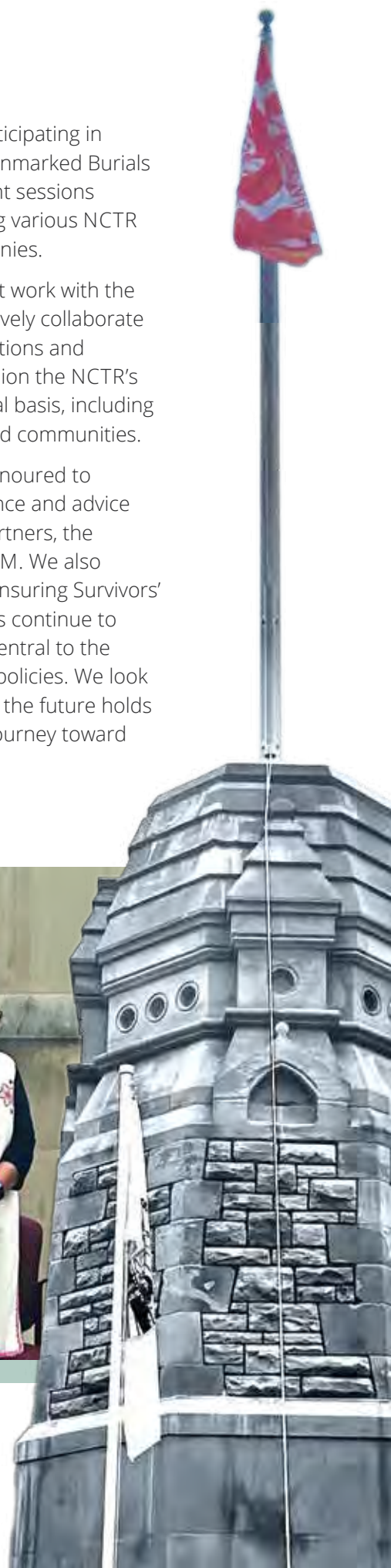
**-LAURIE MCDONALD, SURVIVOR, NCTR SURVIVORS CIRCLE**

Throughout the rest of the year, we provided guidance and assisted with several of the NCTR's key initiatives, such as Truth and Reconciliation Week (page 13), the Reconciliation Network (page 27) and the Oblates agreement (page 22).

We have also been participating in Missing Children and Unmarked Burials community engagement sessions (page 30) and attending various NCTR gatherings and ceremonies.

In addition to our direct work with the Survivors Circle, we actively collaborate with partners, organizations and governments to champion the NCTR's mission on an individual basis, including with other Survivors and communities.

As Survivors, we are honoured to provide ongoing guidance and advice to the NCTR and its partners, the Governing Circle and UM. We also remain committed to ensuring Survivors' voices and perspectives continue to be heard and remain central to the NCTR's programs and policies. We look forward to seeing what the future holds in Canada's collective journey toward reconciliation.



## Mandate

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) derives its mandate from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action and from the agreements under which the Centre was established and the records of residential school Survivors first entrusted to its care.

*The core pillars of the NCTR's mandate are:*

- To be a responsible and accountable steward for the experiences, photos, and memories entrusted to the Centre by the Survivors of residential schools, to honour their truths, and ensure that they can never again be forgotten or ignored.
- To continue the research work begun by the TRC and in this way contribute to the continuing healing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and the country as a whole.
- To build a foundation for reconciliation by promoting public education and understanding of the residential schools and how they are part of a larger history of violent assaults on the distinct cultures and identities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

## Governing Circle

The NCTR is overseen by a Governing Circle, which includes Survivors and representatives of the University of Manitoba (UM) and other partners. The majority of members are First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The Governing Circle is guided by the Survivors Circle, as well as by Elders, legacy members of the Survivors Circle and Knowledge Keepers.

These governance structures are essential to ensuring Survivors are always at the very heart of the NCTR, and we rely on their advice and guidance to uphold Indigenous laws and protocols.

### MEMBERS IN 2024:

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***Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux (Chair)***

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux served as Vice-Provost for Aboriginal Initiatives at Lakehead University for three years, and effective September 2016, was appointed as the first Indigenous Chair for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.



***Andrew Carrier (Vice-Chair)***

Andrew Carrier has served the Manitoba Métis Federation for more than 20 years as a Regional Director and, in 2018, became the elected Vice-President for the Winnipeg Region.



***Dr. Crystal Gail Fraser***

Dr. Crystal Gail Fraser is Gwichyà Gwich'in and originally from Inuvik and Dachan Choo Gèhñjik in the Northwest Territories. Her PhD research focused on the history of student experiences at Indian Residential Schools in the Inuvik Region between 1959 and 1996.





**Dr. Levinia Nuqaqlaak Brown, LLD (honoris causa)**

Dr. Levinia Brown is an Inuk Survivor from Rankin Inlet. She served as the first female mayor of Rankin Inlet from 1989-1991 and was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut in 2004, at one point serving as Deputy Premier.



**Dr. B. Mario Pinto**

Dr. B. Mario Pinto is the Vice-President (Research and International) at UM. Before joining the university in 2022, he served as Griffith University's Deputy Vice Chancellor and Director of the Gold Coast Health & Knowledge Precinct in Queensland, Australia.

**NEW MEMBERS IN 2024:**



**Angie Bruce**

Angie Bruce is a proud Red River Métis woman and the Vice-President (Indigenous) at UM. Prior to joining the university, she was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada's Nòkwewashk sector.



**Keith Chiefmoon**

Keith Chiefmoon is a Ga'na (kainai) Sundance teacher and the Indian Residential School Program and Community Engagement worker for the Kainai Wellness Center, Blood Tribe Department of Health.

## Elders-in-Residence



**Elder Florence Paynter, Ozhoshko Binesi Kwe**

Elders and Knowledge Keepers play a significant role at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). From visioning the turtle that sits in front of our building, to the sensitive work of honouring children that never returned home from residential schools, our work would not be possible without them.



**Elder Harry Bone, Giizih-Inini**

## Survivors Circle

The NCTR exists to support Survivors so their truths and oral histories are recorded and safeguarded for all time. This crucial work is guided by the Survivors Circle, and their voices and perspectives remain central to our programming and policies.

*We were pleased to introduce two new members to the Survivors Circle in 2024:*

**John Jones (Tseqalmit)** - John is a member of the Nanoose First Nation and a Survivor of the Alberni Residential School. He was a plaintiff in one of the first criminal trials in Canada against a dorm supervisor, one of 18 men who bravely stood together and pioneered great change.

**Dennis Saddleman** - Dennis is Nlaka'pamux nation from his mother's side and Syilx nation from his father's side. He attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School for 11 years and now shares his residential school stories and poetry at elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities.

# 2024 Members of the Survivors Circle



**Eugene Arcand**  
Muskeg Lake  
Cree Nation  
(Saskatchewan)



**Tagaaq  
Evaluardjuk-Palmer**  
Inuk  
Mittimatailik/Pond Inlet (Nunavut)



**Phyllis Webstad**  
Stswecem'c  
Xgat'tem First Nation  
Canoe Creek Indian Band  
(British Columbia)



**Edna Agnes  
Ekhivalak Elias**  
Inuk  
Kugluktuk (Nunavut)



**Yvonne Rigsby Jones**  
Snuneymuxw  
First Nation  
Coast Salish (British Columbia)



**John Jones (Tseqalmit)**  
Nanoose First Nation  
(British Columbia)



**Laurie McDonald**  
Two-Spirit Cree  
Enoch Cree Nation  
(Alberta)



**Brian Normand**  
Métis/Michif  
Red River Settlement  
(Manitoba)



**Richard  
'Ejinagosi' Kistabish**  
Anicinabe (Algonquin)  
First Nation community of Abitibi-  
iwinni (Québec)



**Dennis Saddleman  
E'Welsh (Great Uncle)**  
Nlaka'pamux and  
Sylx Nations  
(British Columbia)



**Dorene Bernard**  
Mi'kmaki  
Grassroots  
Grandmother  
(Nova Scotia)



**Abraham Bearskin  
Miiyubinoskum (One  
who gives New Life)**  
Cree Elder, Cree  
Nation of Chisasibi  
(Québec)



**Francis "Dickie"  
Yuzicapi WaHa Chunka  
Hoksheda (Great Shield)**  
Traditional  
Knowledge Keeper  
Okanese First Nation  
(Saskatchewan)



**Barbara Cameron Neegaunibessikwe  
Begonegeezhig (Female Leader of the  
Thunderbirds Hole in the Sky)**  
Wolf Clan  
Midewiwin Shkabehekwe to Minweyweyigaan  
Midewiwin Lodge, Roseau River (Manitoba)

*A call for nominations for Governing Circle and Survivors Circle members went out in December 2024, and the new members will be announced in 2025.*

# Remembering Mazina Giizhik-iban, His Honour, Murray Sinclair

Originally published in *The Globe and Mail* on November 23, 2024.



Mazina Giizhik-iban, Murray Sinclair, was an inspiration to many people across this land. To me, he was a mentor, an adviser and a dear friend. I am grateful for the time we shared and the privilege to have learned from his powerful teachings and lessons.

I have so many fond memories of Murray, but one of my favourites is from many years ago when I joined him and his beloved wife, Katherine, and their family during the Lake Winnipeg Water Walk. Katherine and others led this journey to raise awareness about the health of Lake Winnipeg and the need to protect the water as a sacred, living being.

The Water Walk began in Norway House and ended in Manigotagan, Man. Along the way, Katherine and the others would end each day by placing a collection of five grandfather rocks on the path to signal where they would pick up the next morning. They laid the rocks in the formation of a turtle, a symbol of our connection to the land.

As the walk neared completion, Murray decided that it would be fitting to have an actual turtle present to mark the end of the journey. He mentioned this to his long-time friend and helper, Laver Simard. Laver then spoke to his brothers, Charles and Reg, and asked them to help him find a turtle for Murray. The brothers had no idea how or where to find a live turtle, but they didn't want to disappoint their friend, "Justice Sinclair."

Later that day, Laver's brother Charles was driving down the road and lo and behold what did he see walking up to the road from the creek? A huge snapping turtle. He called Laver and told him to come and meet him, and the two brothers gently lifted the animal into the back of the truck and brought it home, where it was kept in a bathtub until it was time to take it to Murray. And so, it was. When Murray asked, the Creator provided the man who did so much for so many with a mikinak (turtle).

As I stood on the shore during the ceremony to honour the end of the Water Walk, I wasn't aware that any of this had occurred. I had tears in my eyes - surrounded by community members, water walkers and family - as Murray raised the turtle, a symbol of truth. I was in awe and moved that

Murray, so grand and spiritually connected to the land, was able to call on the animals to join him in power. After all, he had summoned that big turtle directly from the cool waters of the lake.

It wasn't long after that I learned the truth about how the turtle came to be part of the ceremony. Murray and I were talking about the experience and I said, "Wow! I couldn't believe the turtle swam to you at the end of the walk." He looked at me puzzled, not realizing I didn't know the turtle was plucked from the road by Laver and Charles. Bemused and with a little smile, he said, "I'm pretty good most days, Steph, but not that good," and we laughed hard.

*Stephanie Scott,  
Executive Director, NCTR*



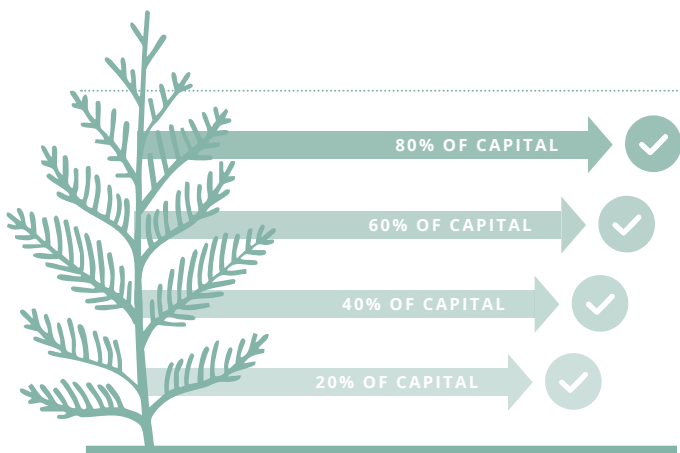
## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

### Progress on our future home

Since it was established in 2015, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) has operated out of a temporary facility on the University of Manitoba (UM) campus—a 5,800-square-foot brick house, which we have since outgrown.

With seed funding from the federal government, and land offered by the university as an act of reconciliation, the realization of our vision for a new home is closer to becoming a reality.

Building a new home for the NCTR is a once-in-a-lifetime national legacy project. With a founding contribution of \$60 million from the federal government, the NCTR and UM have embarked on a \$40 million fundraising campaign to build the new permanent home. So far, we have secured over \$18 million toward our goal, including a lead gift of \$5 million from The Winnipeg Foundation (*see next page*). We aim to reach our \$40 million goal by the time construction begins in 2027.



*80% of capital raised toward the NCTR's new building —an international learning lodge and sacred space for Survivors, their families and all Canadians*

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS AND LOOKING AHEAD

Community consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis residential school Survivors, and members of Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada, concluded in 2024. Thirty-four engagement sessions were held with more than 250 participants to establish a shared vision of our future home. Recurring themes we heard included:

- The new Centre must be **welcoming** / should not reflect **institution** / should **educate** about the harms of residential schools and also project a **celebration of resilience**.
- **Natural building materials** and **sustainability** should be considered in the design.
- **Accessibility**, in particular for Elders.
- Respect for the uniqueness and **diversity of culture and traditions** of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.
- Ensure teachings, programming and activities are **land-based** and encourage **cultural awareness and revitalization**.

Also in 2024, the NCTR developed the Functional Space Program, a detailed list of indoor and outdoor spaces required for the new building that support key NCTR activities, including Gathering & Commemoration, Teaching & Learning, Archival Collection & Access, and Administration & Support.

We will launch a design competition in spring 2025 to select an Indigenous architect to lead the project. A carefully considered strategy will position the building project to advance economic reconciliation throughout the design and construction process.

Set to open in 2029, our new home will stand as an international destination, celebrated for its groundbreaking work in bringing history and Indigenous cultures to life.

## **A GIFT FROM THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION**

In March, we announced a \$5-million gift from The Winnipeg Foundation.

With this commitment to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), the impact of The Foundation's generosity will be felt in Winnipeg and across the country now and for generations to come as a beautiful expression of their motto: for good, forever.

*"This gift will help create a place where the history is never forgotten nor denied, and where the strength and courage of residential school Survivors can guide us to a better future. While we cannot change our past, we can change our future."*

**-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR**

*The NCTR holds the largest collection of materials on the history and impacts of the residential school system in the world, and one of the largest collections of oral history records in the country. Our limited space makes it difficult for the collection to be viewed or accessed.*

*The new building and ceremonial grounds will be located on two acres on the banks of the historic Red River, where a ground-breaking ceremony was held in 2022. It will provide the NCTR with the space it needs to fulfil its mandate and act as an international learning centre for people across Canada and the world to learn the truth about residential schools, housing sacred items and records, thousands of oral histories and Survivor statements.*



## National Truth and Reconciliation Week

Leading up to Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, Truth and Reconciliation Week offered a transformative five-day journey for students, educators and the broader community to engage with the poignant history and enduring spirit of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

### **MINO-PIMATISIWIN THE GOOD LIFE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GATHERING**

To kick off Truth and Reconciliation Week 2024, 5,500 youth and students from grades 8 to 12 attended *Mino-pimwatisin – The Good Life Youth Empowerment Gathering* on Treaty One Territory on September 18.

Designed to spark dialogue among young people, the event featured moving testimonies from residential school Survivors, Elders, change-makers, knowledge holders and authors. Students immersed themselves in Indigenous culture through powerful performances from dancers and singer-songwriters.

The gathering was rebroadcast on September 26 for students and educators who were not able to attend in person.

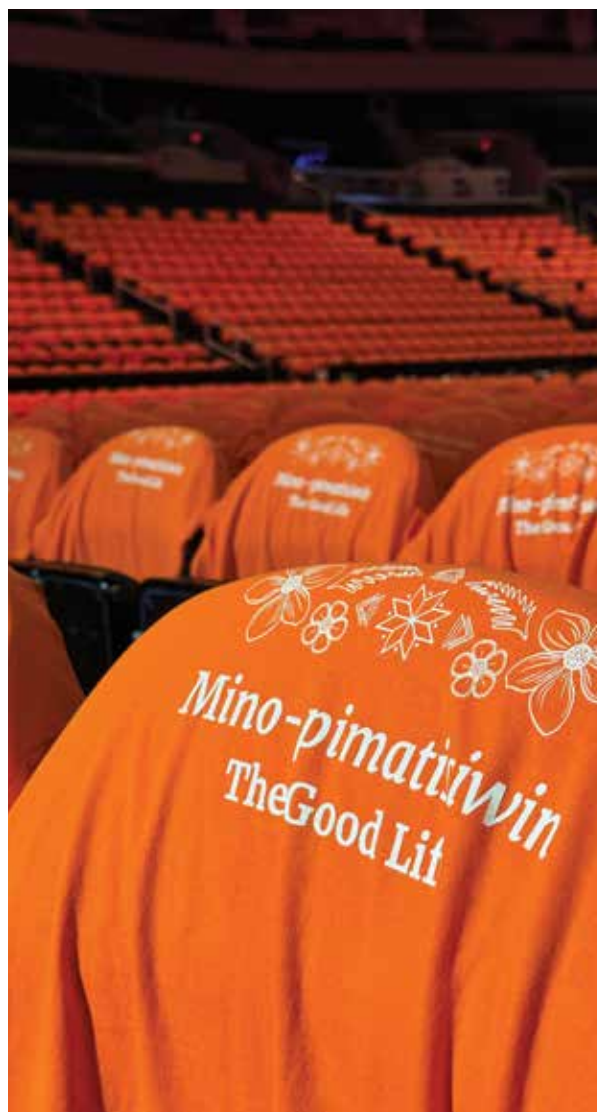
### **PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS**

From September 23 to 27, the *Taking Truth to Action* virtual educational program offered free, age-appropriate materials for students in grades 1 through 12.

The week-long program featured both live and pre-recorded content accessible through a virtual platform, allowing students from every province and territory to learn directly from residential

school Survivors, Indigenous artists and athletes, and other subject matter experts. Topics included the history, truths and lasting impacts of the residential school system, along with actionable steps learners and educators can take toward reconciliation.

In addition to the online content, hybrid sessions combining virtual and in-person elements were held in various regions across Canada. These sessions enabled classrooms to participate virtually, engage with presentations and ask questions in live Q&A discussions.



## Remembering the Children

APTN, CBC/Radio-Canada and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) collaborated on the annual production of a national commemorative gathering on Parliament Hill in unceded Algonquin Anishinabeg territory.

Supported by Canadian Heritage, *Remembering the Children: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* honoured residential school Survivors, paid tribute to the children who never made it home, and delivered a safe and nurturing environment for reconciliation and healing. Hosted by Earl Wood and Danielle Rochette, the multilingual event encompassed

powerful reflections from Survivors and moving performances by Indigenous artists.

More than 2,000 people attended the gathering in person, while the broadcast reached an audience of 8.9 million from coast to coast to coast in Indigenous, French and English languages.

*“Remembering the Children is a significant commemoration that honours residential school Survivors, their families and pays tribute to the children who never made it home from those institutions. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to take an*





*active part in reconciliation by listening to the voices of Survivors and amplifying their truths. We are forever grateful to the Survivors who continue to bravely share their oral histories with us so we never forget."*

**-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR**

Truth and Reconciliation Week was hosted by the NCTR with the generous support of our funders and partners: Arc'teryx; Canadian Museum for Human Rights; Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); Donna Cona; Enbridge; Canadian Tire Jumpstart; Future Generations Foundation; Government of Canada; Meta; North West Company; Royal Bank of Canada (RBC); The Winnipeg Foundation; and provincial and territorial governments of New Brunswick; Alberta; Manitoba; Nunavut; Ontario; Newfoundland and Labrador; and Prince Edward Island.



## Public programming

The public at large had several opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogues and contribute to our collective path toward reconciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation Week featured daily lunch-and-learn webinars designed for adults seeking to challenge colonial narratives and deepen their understanding of Indigenous history. Nearly 20,000 participants joined these virtual sessions, with over 100 guests attending the Community Perspectives on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples lunch-and-learn, a hybrid virtual/in-person event held at the Canadian Museum of History.

## New stamps honour Survivors

In recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Canada Post and the NCTR Survivors Circle unveiled a new collection of stamps.

This impactful series, the third in Canada Post's Truth and Reconciliation initiative, features artwork by Survivors Robert Burke, Helen Iguptak and Adrian Stimson. Through their artistic voices, these stamps reflect the history and ongoing legacy of residential schools.

Canada Post's ongoing partnership with the Survivors Circle ensures that the perspectives and experiences of Survivors remain central throughout the stamp creation process. These powerful stamps serve as a lasting tribute to Survivors and a call to action for reconciliation.



The stamps are available for purchase online at [canadapost.ca](https://canadapost.ca) and at postal outlets across Canada.

## Protecting Our Ancestors

In February, we were proud to support and participate in the Protecting Our Ancestors Conference hosted by Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak Inc. and the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. At the gathering, our staff hosted an archives research room where Survivors and community members could search the archives for public records with our assistance, if needed.

While presenting on the work the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is facilitating to further Calls to Action 72 and 73, Senior Archivist Jesse Boiteau noted: "In combination with increased community engagement efforts, the NCTR Archives plans to further develop our geographic information system and online mapping capacity to help visualize and preserve the work of community-led research projects and investigations that aligns with community protocols and Indigenous data sovereignty."



## Indigenous History and Heritage Gathering

In June, the NCTR and the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres co-hosted the second annual Indigenous History and Heritage Gathering in Ottawa, unceded Algonquin territory. This gathering, presented through the support of Know History, welcomed almost 400 participants and diverse groups working to amplify the distinct stories of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island.

## Treaty One Awards Gala

We were proud to sponsor the inaugural Treaty One Awards Gala in May. This special gathering celebrated the achievements of his Honour, the late Murray Sinclair, and former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine.



PHOTO: Courtesy of Treaty 1

## Statement Gathering

In 2024, the NCTR gathered 14 statements of the residential school experience from Survivors, intergenerational Survivors and their families at 10 gatherings in communities across Canada, plus in sharing circles.

The truths of the impacts of residential and day schools, as well as those impacted by other colonial systems, were audio and video recorded and will be preserved and honoured by the NCTR.

We also supported capacity-building around statement gathering. We provided virtual training to communities and groups interested in gathering statements for their community needs, whether for Missing Children and Unmarked Burials, residential or day school history, or other. The *NCTR Statement Gathering Guide* serves as a reference and provides essential information for statement gatherers, including principles and procedures for trauma-informed services.

#### **2024 VIRTUAL STATEMENT-GATHERING TRAINING SESSIONS:**

*January 2024:* Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Indian Residential School Project (Treaty 8)

*February 2024:* IRS Project – Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations (Treaty 6)

*April 2024:* Iskwatwizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation (Treaty 3)

*June 2024:* BC Indian Residential School Technical Working Group (all across BC)

*July-August 2024:* Beauval Indian Residential School Project Group (Treaty 10)

*October 2024:* Lac Seul First Nation (Treaty 3)

## Irish Consul General

In November, Irish Consul General Janice McGann paid a visit to the NCTR to learn about our work, the experiences of Indigenous children under colonization through the residential school system and what steps her office can take to support truth and reconciliation.

## Brazil's Amnesty Commission tours the NCTR

Early in the year, we welcomed Dr. Eneá Stutz e Almeida, President of Brazil's Amnesty Commission, for a tour and discussion around the work at our Centre. As her work involves reparations for human rights violations, she indicated a keen interest in learning more about Canada's experiences with transitional justice and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

## Australia meets Canada

In the spring, we were pleased to welcome the Honourable Kyam Maher, South Australia's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the State's Attorney-General and proud Aboriginal person to our Centre. Minister Maher and his advisors met with NCTR Executive Director Stephanie Scott and leadership from Archives, Research and Education. The group discussed the importance of Indigenous representation and truth-telling processes.



## The Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In June, Norwegian researchers Else Grete Broderstad and Eva Josefsen visited the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) to discuss the work of Norway's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Established by the Norwegian parliament in June 2018, Norway's TRC submitted its Final Report in June 2023. Canada's TRC served as a model for Norway's TRC, though there are distinct differences reflecting each country's history.

The two groups talked about the history of Norway's Indigenous Sámi people and the state's past policies of Norwegianization, which aimed to assimilate the Sámi and had devastating impacts on their language, identity and way of life. Norway's TRC scope also includes Norway's Kven and Forest Finn minority ethnic groups, who faced similar challenges.

## NCTR staff on the move

In January, members of the NCTR team traveled to Iqaluit, Nunavut for the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor's National Gathering on Unmarked Burials. NCTR's Executive Director Stephanie Scott met with the Premier of Nunavut, P.J. Akeeagok; Inuit Association of Manitoba CEO Nastania Mullin; and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak's Grand Chief Garrison Settee and Executive Director Kelvin Lynxleg.

Senior Archivist Jesse Boiteau and Community Engagement Coordinator Lynn Jones also traveled north, where they spent the week connecting with Survivors and family members from Iqaluit and surrounding communities.

In February, Jennifer Wood, NCTR's Intergovernmental and Community Relations Liaison, attended the Assembly of First Nations and First Peoples Wellness Circle's National Wellness Gathering for Indian Residential School Survivors in Vancouver, British Columbia.



## NCTR goes to Harvard

In May, Executive Director Stephanie Scott presented at the Global Justice, Truth Telling and Healing Symposium, hosted by the Institutional Antiracism and Accountability Project at the Harvard Kennedy School. This symposium brought together academics and researchers whose focus is on the impacts of global historical truth and reconciliation work at the national and community levels.

Part of that ongoing work is to survey international examples of truth-telling and harm repair, including truth commissions and tribunals. We were honoured to speak of the importance of truth-telling, education and archival research: the cornerstones of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the work that we do to protect the oral histories of residential school Survivors.

## Holiday Open House

On December 13, the NCTR hosted its annual Open House, where attendees could visit our building, meet our staff and hear about the work we do to support Survivors.



## OPERATIONS

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Inineew, Anisininew, Dakota and Dene peoples, the National Homeland of the Red River Métis and home to many Inuit. We are open Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT and can be found on the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus, in Chancellor's Hall at 177 Dysart Road.

## Communications

Our primary focus is to raise the NCTR's profile and protect its reputation. Through our work, we promote the Centre's mandate, programs and initiatives on a national level via various channels including social media, a newsletter, media relations activities, our website and more.


### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2024:

- Published a 37-page annual report that provides a fulsome overview of our work and priorities
- Coordinated 60+ media responses, statements and interviews on a variety of topics
- Created 130+ posts and stories for our social media channels, with significant increases in reach and engagement
- Coordinated media relations at nine in-person gatherings, announcements and events
- Managed a hugely successful marketing campaign for Truth and Reconciliation Week
- Developed and distributed digital newsletters to almost 12,000 subscribers

## Human Resources

In 2024, NCTR staff continued supporting learning and dialogue about the truths of the residential school experience in Canada. This included supporting Survivors, families, communities and others affected by the residential school system.

As our work has been expanding through special projects such as the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials initiative, so has the need for resources. Over the past year, important human resources were added to the NCTR team: nine permanent employees and 30 contract (term) employees. They complement the existing staff and enhance the areas of Education, Outreach and Public Programming; Operations and Administration; Communications; and Archives.



Facebook	97,000+ followers
Instagram	18,600+ followers
Linkedin	8,400+ followers
Twitter/X	23,700+ followers
Youtube	6,900+ subscribers
Website	70,000 visitors per month



## ARCHIVES AND PRIVACY OFFICE

In 2024, we continued our efforts to restructure and decolonize the archives. This important project will rebuild the digital architecture of our archives, which currently holds five million documents originally collected by government and church offices for colonial purposes.

## Proactive disclosure requests

Typically requested by researchers, external agencies, academics, the media and communities, records requested through this process are more focused on a specific purpose rather than a specific individual.

### DISCLOSURE REQUESTS

Proactive release requests received	37 requests*
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Pages of records released through proactive disclosure	12,537 pages
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Hours of video and audio footage released through proactive disclosure	15:05:58
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\*There has been a decrease in proactive release requests since 2023. In 2021, the discovery in T̓k̓emlúps te Secwépemc resulted in an increased need to access records held by the NCTR. Since 2023, we created the option for communities and researchers to enter into Memorandums of Agreement to assist in missing children and unmarked burials research, which led to a decrease in proactive disclosure requests.

## Access requests

Individuals, such as Survivors or their families, can request access to residential school records or records collected by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, including Survivor statements. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) Access and Privacy Team reviews these requests and provides access to the records.

### ACCESS REQUESTS

Access requests completed in 2024	111*
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Individual record requests in 2024	195 individual names requested**
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Number of pages of records released in 2024	26,036 pages of records provided to Survivors and intergenerational Survivors
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\*One request was placed under rush status, when the Survivor or intergenerational Survivor indicates the records are urgently required due to health concerns, for legal reasons or for compensation claims. Survivor requests are deemed priority requests. As Survivors will not be with us forever, we recognize the urgency and importance of access to their records.

\*\*Requests are logged as one request regardless of how many family members' records are included in that request (i.e., John Smith made a request for himself and eight family members. This would be recorded as one request to ensure all records are kept together and provided to the requester at the same time).



## NCTR Archives visits the Danish Institute for International Studies

Part of our work at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is to speak to global audiences about what we do and to share our expertise. Our Senior Director of Research and Head of Archives, Raymond Frogner, traveled to the Danish Institute for International Studies to provide a keynote address, speaking to the importance of decolonizing archival processes.

The seminar featured leading experts in the fields of international law and archival science that discussed the importance of archives to both past and ongoing decolonization efforts.

## NCTR and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate sign supplemental agreement

In December, the NCTR signed a supplemental agreement with the Oblates of OMI Lacombe Canada (the Oblates) to accelerate access to personnel files of Oblate members who worked in residential schools in Canada. This agreement will enhance the transparency and availability of critical historical Oblate documents by facilitating access to previously restricted files.

Through ongoing dialogue to secure additional documents, this agreement will further ensure personnel files of Oblate members who have

been deceased for at least two years are available for research. Previously, personnel records were sealed until 50 years after a member's passing.

Through this agreement, the Oblates and the NCTR will ensure personnel records, documents and information are available to the fullest extent that federal and provincial privacy laws allow. For the next year, to help support these efforts, the Oblates will fund an archivist position at the NCTR to oversee the transfer of Oblate records, conduct historical research on the Oblates' involvement in residential schools, and ensure the accurate documentation and accessibility of these records.

*"We know that additional residential school records will provide more information to help further reveal the truth. This agreement will support transparency and access to critical historical documents, including previously restricted files—the significance of this cannot be overstated."*

**-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR**

This agreement is part of ongoing efforts between the two organizations to strengthen collaboration and expedite access to critical residential school records for those who seek them. This includes working closely with the archives that own or hold Oblate collections related to residential schools, while also providing direct support to Survivors, their families and Indigenous communities in their search for truth.





## CALLS TO ACTION

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*The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada tabled 94 Calls to Action to address the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) reports annually on its own contributions to advancing the Calls to Action.*

*The NCTR Archives is actively working on the following Calls to Action:*



### TOWARDS RECONCILIATION LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

#### ***Call to Action 17***

*We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.*

The NCTR Archives staff is working with the Québec vital statistics office to identify Survivors of residential schools in Québec. The Québec government has agreed with Call to Action 17.

Survivors who were assigned European names (French/English) in place of their original Indigenous names can apply to have their original names applied to government documentation if the Survivor can supply evidence they attended a residential school. This is the first provincial government to adopt this Call to Action. As this initiative progresses, the NCTR hopes to work with other provincial governments to assist Survivors to reclaim their original Indigenous names.



### TOWARD RECONCILIATION CHURCH APOLOGIES AND RECONCILIATION

#### ***Call to Action 59***

*We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.*

The NCTR has recently struck an agreement with the Oblates of OMI Lacombe to make personnel files accessible two years after the death of the priest. In addition, the NCTR has completed over two years of research to compile a list of Oblate priests related to the administration or operation of the residential school system across the country.

#### ***Call to Action 65***

*We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and*

*its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of Reconciliation.*

The NCTR, through this partnership, supports the establishment of a national research program where the funded recipients will participate in activities managed by the NCTR, in its role as coordination hub for the Reconciliation Network.

The focus of the six funded projects ranges from amplifying Indigenous stories to locating and commemorating residential school burial landscapes and will play a crucial role in advancing Indigenous research, research training and knowledge mobilization in the social sciences and humanities across Canada.

*Read more on page 27.*



**TOWARD RECONCILIATION**  
**MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES**

## Call to Action 69

*We call upon Library and Archives Canada to:*

- i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Orontlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.*
- ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public.*
- iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.*

The NCTR is working with Library and Archives Canada to continue to develop

and coordinate access procedures. This will improve availability of records and ensure an Indigenous perspective informs the ordering, storage and sharing of records related to Indigenous heritage.

Specifically, the two institutions will share information on proactively released record sets and information on records currently in the public domain. This will expedite access to records that share a similar provenance. In addition, the NCTR is in discussions to promote IT collaboration with work on participatory description projects, descriptions standards and linked data.



**TOWARD RECONCILIATION**  
**LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

## Call to Action 71

*We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.*

The NCTR is collaborating with the Coroner of Ontario to investigate the deaths of Indigenous children related to residential schools. The NCTR is also planning to acquire coroners' files from the Royal BC Museum, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, and Manitoba Coroner's Office.





TOWARD RECONCILIATION

## MISSING CHILDREN AND BURIAL INFORMATION

### *Calls to Action 72 to 76*

This is the most significant research project the NCTR is pursuing. In addition to developing the National Student Memorial Register (Calls to Action 72 and 73) and a student burial site register, the NCTR has initiated a program of engagement to “respond to families’ wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.”

The NCTR is also working with related parties to “develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.” This work will be done with the guidance of “Aboriginal protocols” and the advice of community Knowledge Keepers.

*Read more about this important work on page 30.*



TOWARD RECONCILIATION

## NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

### *Call to Action 77*

*We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.*

The NCTR is in discussions with several provincial archives, including the Royal BC Museum and Archives; the Provincial Archives of Alberta; the Saskatchewan Archives; the Manitoba Archives; the Ontario Archives and the Bibliothèque et Archives Nationale de Québec. Each province is in the process of effecting a transfer of digital copies of records to the NCTR.





## National Student Memorial Register

The creation of the National Student Memorial Register builds upon the extensive work conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). It remembers, honours and acknowledges the children who died while attending a residential school in Canada.

This registry represents the first time the names of children who never returned are commemorated and made available on a national basis in Canada. It includes more than 4,000 named and unnamed children identified through records in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)'s care and from the testimonies of families.

The NCTR continues to collect names as part of the register, honouring the children and making their names known to help ceremonies and memorials take place in communities.

## Residential School Documents Advisory Committee

Composed of Survivors and First Nations, Inuit and Métis community members, the Residential School Documents Advisory Committee was created to ensure Indigenous voices are reflected in all discussions and decisions regarding the identification, review and sharing of residential school-related documents.

Through an initial scoping review, as many as 23 million additional documents related to residential schools and the implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) were identified for the committee to

consider. This collection goes beyond the type of documents that were required to be disclosed to the TRC under the IRSSA and are in addition to the more than 1.5 million documents and higher-quality images recently provided to the NCTR through the Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2022.

After building the foundation for the government to continue the work, the committee was suspended due to the minimal resources allocated to this important work.

## Reconciliation Network

In 2022, the NCTR and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) formed a partnership on a national research program as a response to Call to Action 65: "To establish a national research program in partnership with SSHRC with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation."

In May, SSHRC and the NCTR announced an investment of approximately \$6 million over five years to support six partnership grants through the Reconciliation Network. The names of the awarded projects are:

*Biskaabiiyaang: Creating a path towards Healing and Reconciliation through an Indigenous metaverse*

*Bringing the Children Home: Advancing Technology and Capacity for Locating and Commemorating Residential School Burial Landscapes*

*"We're Still Here": Amplifying Urban Indigenous Stories in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and St. John's through Indigenous-led Partnerships*

*Gi-inwewin Gi-naazikaanag / The Returning to our Languages Project*

*Developing and Implementing Indigenized Wildfire Recovery Processes for Ecological and Food Systems Reconciliation on St'at'imc Territory*

*Re-Neighbouring as Reconciliation: Indigenous Stories of Resistance*

## Imagine a Canada

“Imagine a Canada”—that was the challenge posed to youth across Canada, who responded by submitting their ideas of how a reconciled Canada looks to them.



*“Each year, I am inspired by the passion, insight and creativity of the young people who harness their talents and their ideas to help us all imagine a better Canada—a Canada where past harms inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples are shared and acknowledged, and where actions are taken to make amends, to support healing and to ensure that these atrocities never happen again.”*

-STEPHANIE SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCTR

In March, 11 art and essay submissions and 14 projects were chosen for their vision, creativity and contribution to the reconciliation journey in Canada. They will be featured in an art booklet, inspiring others with their powerful visions. Recipients from the project stream will also receive grants of up to \$1,500 to help bring their ideas to life.

At the end of May, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) honoured these 25 young minds at the 2024 Imagine a Canada National Celebration and Gathering. The group of future leaders and change-makers gathered at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights alongside their parents, teachers and special guests including The Honourable Anita Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, and Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba.

The Imagine a Canada program asks youth from kindergarten to grade 12 and CÉGEP to envision a reconciled Canada. Since 2016, we have received more than 1,500 submissions and worked with thousands of students to realize their hopes and dreams of a Canada they wish to see.

For more information, visit [nctr.ca/education/educationalprograms/imagine-a-canada](https://nctr.ca/education/educationalprograms/imagine-a-canada)

Imagine a Canada is presented with the generous support of IG Wealth Management and Power Corporation of Canada.



## OUTREACH EFFORTS

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In 2024, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) engaged with nearly 12,000 people through in-person and virtual tours, workshops, visits, conferences and presentations, including audiences from corporate groups to government sectors, universities to schools, professional associations to churches, and more.

The bulk of presentations were connected to learning about residential school history and its impacts, but NCTR's Education unit can also present on a variety of closely related subjects.

## Reconciliation Through Education

2024 saw the NCTR partner with the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba to promote an in-person *Reconciliation Through Education* learning series, allowing Manitobans the opportunity to learn about the truth of our history from First Nations, Inuit and Métis Knowledge Keepers.

Presenters shared experience and insights into how we can all play a role in the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation and healing to build a more respectful and just society for all. More than 500 people attended these sessions.

### *Presentations included:*

#### *The History of the Residential School System*

(Kaila Johnston, Director of Education, Outreach and Public Programming, NCTR)

#### *Unconscious Bias and Debunking Stereotypes*

(Dr. Cary Miller, Professor of Indigenous Studies, UM)

#### *Legal Fall-out of the Residential School System: the TRC and the NCTR*

(Kaila Johnston)

#### *Intergenerational Impacts and Ongoing Societal Discrimination*

(Kathy Pompana, Resolution Health Support Work, Anish Corporation)

#### *Residential School Denialism and How to Counteract it*

(Dr. Sean Carleton, Professor of Indigenous Studies, UM)

#### *Indigenous Legal Rights: UNDRIP, Treaty Rights, and the TRC's Calls to Action*

(Dr. Brenda Gunn, Professor of Law, UM)

#### *What is Reconciliation?: Allyship in a Colonized Canada*

(Tanis Kolisnyk)

## NCTR Dialogues

The popular *NCTR Dialogues* series presents lectures and discussions that explore diverse perspectives on reconciliation. Over the years, discussions with Elders, Survivors, Indigenous leaders and subject matter experts have tackled



a variety of topics that encourage continued dialogue. They are streamed live on the NCTR Facebook and YouTube channels, and an archive of presentations can be found there.

Some of the 2024 Dialogues included sessions on the NCTR's Na-mi-quai-ni-mak support fund, and *Sacred Women*, where Dr. Karine Duhamel, Kimberley Levasseur Puhach and Elder Amanda Wallin spoke about what it means to be an Indigenous woman in today's world.

## Residential Schools 101

Open to all, our *Residential School History and Legacy 101* webinars walked participants through the truth of residential schools, outlined the impacts still felt today and explained why we need reconciliation.

Over 600 people attended the 11 sessions from February to December 2024. Each session covered relevant topics, associated Calls to Action and practical, meaningful steps groups could take to advance their reconciliation efforts. We look forward to offering more sessions in 2025 and beyond.

## Decolonizing Lens

Sparked by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report in 2016, the *Decolonizing Lens* is a film and discussion series that features the work and words of Indigenous artists from Winnipeg and beyond. It provides a space to celebrate the work of Indigenous filmmakers in Canada and the incorporation of Indigenous actors, directors, producers and narratives in film.



Over the past eight years, *Decolonizing Lens* has grown substantially. We have screened over 100 films, hosted over 100 guests (including Survivors, filmmakers and artists) and reached thousands of audience members.

The 2024 season screened four films for an estimated 542 people: *Tautuktavuk (What We See)*, *Lii Michif Niyanaan: We Are Métis*, *When the Pine Needles Fall* and a work in progress from filmmaker Kevin Settee, with screening hosts Sonya Ballantyne, Matt Tétreault and Lorena Fontaine.

## Missing Children and Unmarked Burials

In 2024, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) continued to carry forward the critical mission of our Missing Children and Unmarked Burials initiative to fulfil Calls to Action 72 and 73, which urge us to identify and commemorate the children who died or were disappeared from residential school and the burial locations of these children.

Phase 3 of the project is now underway, focusing on building relationships with communities to confirm and remember the children, using a trauma-informed and community-led approach. To support this crucial work, we have been reaching out to communities to begin building relationships and working together.

The community engagement team consists of three liaisons (hired in March, April and July, respectively) and one coordinator. The team is sensitive to the traditional protocols, language and ceremony that each community represents and respects their needs.

From a research perspective, Phase 3 involves carefully re-examining the deaths in the National Student Memorial Register and assessing potential references to loss or death identified in Phase 2. This work is challenging for many reasons, specifically because there are so many gaps in the colonial records. That's why the support of family and community members is key.

In the summer, we engaged communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, both virtually and in person, with attendees including Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and both rural and community members. At the same time, researchers continued to work with communities to verify potential losses identified in Phase 2. Progress also continued on the definitive list of all children sent to residential schools.



## 2024 MILESTONES:

**March:** Letter and information hand-out sent to all First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations introducing the project and requesting participation

**April:** Lunch-and-learn on missing children held, featuring research lead and Geographic Information System lead

**May:** Brochures developed and printed in English and French

**September:** Virtual engagement webinars began, including interactive participation with attendees through questions and polls

## ONGOING:

*Weekly virtual presentations* and regular in-community engagements

*Continued awareness-building* through social media and other platforms

## The Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund

The Na-mi-quai-ni-mak (“I remember them”) Community Support Fund, administered by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), offers grants to Indigenous communities for activities focused on commemoration and healing. This includes support for community

ceremonies and feasts, the establishment of commemorative markers like gardens and plaques, and the maintenance of burial sites.

In 2024, a total of \$554,177.50 in grant funds was awarded to diverse memorial and healing initiatives across Canada. Thirty-five of those initiatives were funded by Parks Canada and 34 through the NCTR Donor Fund.



One project organized in the Northwest Territories through the MakeWay Charitable Society is the Tarek Leahy Chicot Camp, which is part of the Northern Youth Leadership program.

This camp aims to provide a healing, educational and commemorative space for Indigenous youth and Survivors in the Northwest Territories. It strives to honour the legacy of Survivors by promoting healing, cultural connection and remembrance. Specifically, it seeks to address the impacts of the residential school system and support Survivors on their healing journey. Through this project, the experiences of Survivors will be preserved and shared, aiding in their healing while passing on their stories to future generations.

## IN 2024, FEDERATED CO-OPERATIVES LIMITED COMMISSIONED INDIGENOUS ARTIST LETICIA SPENCE

to design a piece of art to help bring Indigenous inequalities to light and encourage reconciliation and healing. Leticia’s artwork was showcased on orange t-shirts and available for purchase to Co-op team members across Western Canada. Proceeds from the sale of each shirt were to be donated to a charity of the artist’s choosing. Leticia chose the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund, resulting in a donation of \$7,304.





## National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials

The National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials (NAC) was established to ensure Indigenous communities have access to independent, trusted and expert information in their efforts to identify, locate and commemorate their missing children. As co-administrator, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is proud to support and collaborate with the NAC on this critical work.

The NAC hosted three webinars in 2024, as well as several knowledge exchange gatherings:

### MARCH 2024

*Regina, Treaty 4 Territory and the original lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and homeland of the Métis Nation*

The panel discussions and workshops focused on sharing information and knowledge about finding and honouring the children who never returned home. This included discussions on understanding Survivor-led and trauma-informed processes and understanding search processes, including ground searches and forensics.

More than 200 people attended, with another 300+ who tuned into the livestream broadcast that featured discussions and cultural performances by Indigenous artists and dancers from the area.

Staff from the NCTR were also present to record statements from any Survivors who wanted to create a permanent record of their own experiences.

## JUNE 2024

### *Ottawa, in the unceded, unsundered territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation*

More than 300 participants attended both in person and virtually as we heard from panels of experts in their fields of study and their experience as they shared their knowledge and guidance, with a focus on ground penetrating radar (GPR).

This included discussions on the work that needs to be done before starting a ground search, the strengths and limitations of GPR, interpreting the results, and other steps that Survivors and communities may want to consider for finding the missing children.

## SEPTEMBER 2024

### *Québec City, in the ancestral territories of the Wendat, Innu and Abenaki Peoples*

Similar to the June event, more than 300 participants attended both in person and virtually as we heard from panels of experts who shared their knowledge and guidance on carrying out searches in a good way.

This included case studies from the Québec region, a discussion on Québec's Bill 79 designed to support the families of missing or deceased Indigenous children in their search for information after they were admitted to a health and social services institutions, and presentations on the NCTR's ongoing work, including the ongoing research around missing children.

## NOVEMBER 2024

### *Vancouver, in the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations*

The event focused on lessons learned and pathways forward in the search for missing

children and unmarked burials. Panel presentations included topics like Taking Care of Survivors and Others Involved in the Search Process and a session on B.C. First Nations Investigations at Indian Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals.

The NAC also hosted a screening of *Sugarcane*, a powerful documentary that takes a difficult look into the impacts of trauma from the residential school experience.



## DONORS

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) would like to thank and acknowledge our generous donors who supported us in 2024. Many donors chose to support the NCTR Fund, which provides important support for the Centre's highest priority projects and initiatives, as determined by the NCTR leadership.

Other gifts provide support for specific priorities including the TD Internships for Truth and Reconciliation, the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund, Truth and Reconciliation Week and Imagine a Canada.

## GIFTS RECEIVED IN 2024

Gifts	1,224
Donors	400

## GIFT DESIGNATIONS

NCTR Permanent Home Building Fund*	\$1,174,845
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation	\$289,694
TD Internships for Truth and Reconciliation	\$100,000
Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund	\$31,343
Truth and Reconciliation Week^	\$14,549
Imagine a Canada^	\$3,455
Other	\$550
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,614,437</b>

\*Note that these are funds received. As of December 31, 2024, the NCTR and the University of Manitoba have secured funding and commitments totaling \$67,442,714 toward the construction of the NCTR's permanent home.

^Does not include sponsorships.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

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*“These acts demonstrate our commitment to learning from our past and honouring the lives of all those who died to protect the rights and freedoms Canada has sworn to uphold.”*

### THE BARRY FAMILY (SCOTT, JULIA, VIOLET, EVELYN AND DEVIN)

In 2020, Scott Barry was attending a Veterans' Week service at his children's school when he observed a land acknowledgement after the national anthem was played. It was the first time he had heard the two together—a powerful moment for the Canadian Armed Forces major. Later in the service, he learned Tommy Prince's story told by Prince's great-granddaughter. Deeply moved, he could sense the connection between acts of remembrance and acts of reconciliation and wrote of his experience.

“These acts of remembrance preserve the truth of wrongs we have done in our country's history and are helping us find peace with peoples we've harmed. These acts demonstrate our commitment to learning from our past and honouring the lives of all those who died to protect the rights and freedoms Canada has sworn to uphold. Such acts are exactly what we mean when we say lest we forget and are exactly the kind of undertakings it was hoped Remembrance Day would bring about.”

Reflecting on the experience, Scott and his wife, Julia, became committed to doing what they could to help with reconciliation. After some searching, they came across the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Now, their family



makes a monthly gift, divided equally between the NCTR's General Fund, the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak Community Support Fund and the Truth and Reconciliation Week Fund.

“Three kids, three separate funds—it made so much sense and seemed like the obvious next step,” Scott says.

Their commitment didn't end there. In 2023, Scott and his daughter Evelyn joined the NCTR on Parliament Hill for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation ceremony, carrying the Memorial Cloth that displays the names of thousands of residential school students who never made it home.

“There was real harm that happened, and we owe it to the people who were harmed, people who stood on guard for us, to stand on guard for them and move forward together.”

**REVENUE**

March 31, 2024 General Funds

Donations	\$ 779,884
Non-Government Grants	—
Advanced Education and Training (AET)	\$ 1,022,016
Other Province of Manitoba	\$ 125,000
Federal and Other Government Grants	\$ 5,804,927
Sales of Goods and Services	\$ 1,121,720
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 8,853,547</b>

**EXPENSE**

March 31, 2024 General Funds

Salaries	\$ 3,012,122
Staff Benefits and Pay Levy	\$ 554,437
Materials, Supplies and Services	\$ 2,181,810
Professional and Other Services	\$ 4,546,794
Utilities, Taxes and Insurance	\$ 1,523
Travel & Conferences	\$ 726,029
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 3,100
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 11,025,814</b>

Inter-Fund Transfers	\$ 3,303,087
NET	\$ 1,130,820
Fund Balances Beginning of Year	\$ 5,233,090
<b>FUND BALANCES END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 6,363,910</b>



Carla Buchanan, B.Comm.(Hons.), CPA, CA, CIM®  
Director, Financial Reporting, University of Manitoba

2025-01-31

Date

**TO IMAGINE YOU  
HAVE TO REMEMBER.....**

*A poem by Imagine a Canada honouree Najib Wasajja*

In the land of Canada,  
Where mountains meet the sky,  
Lies a history of pain,  
A past we cannot deny.  
But in [the midst] of darkness,  
A light begins to shine,  
A light of truth and reconciliation.

Reconciliation (waa-go-wiichi-weween)  
It breaks my heart that settlers look at  
Reconciliation,  
As a compensation that can only be  
made with money.  
My heart cries at the thought  
of how shallow  
Settlers convey the idea of Reconciliation.  
Have you forgotten?...  
Have you forgotten that reconciliation  
is healing?...  
Healing from generational  
wounds brought about by the  
catastrophic, traumatic,  
Events that our forefathers inflicted on  
the right full landowners of Canada.  
Have you forgotten that reconciliation  
is nurturing mending, connecting,  
caring, listening,  
And following through the process  
of regrouping the souls, mind, and  
emotions of the  
rightful landowners of Canada?  
Huh!  
How delusional am I?  
To think you can remember all that when  
you don't even recognise the truth.

The truth (Tapwe)  
The truth about what happened in  
residential schools,  
The truth about how settlers brought  
Bisons to extinction so that they  
could starve the  
rightful landowners and make sure that  
their lives [cease] to exist.  
The truth about how settlers played  
tricks on the rightful landowners  
and grabbed their  
mother earth.  
The truth about racism and injustice  
to the lost lives of Tecumseh, Big  
Bear, Wein jack and  
in our generation, Colten [Boushie].  
Once the truth is embraced, only and  
only then will reconciliation be effective.

After reconciliation, I see Canada not as  
Country with different nations and races,  
But as a country with one big Family.  
After reconciliation, I see Love, Unity,  
Support, Prosperity, and Peace.  
When I imagine Canada After  
Reconciliation, I see Utopia.  
But that is my view as a settler,  
As a rightful landowner, after  
reconciliation I see myself having the  
mother earth back to me  
And enjoying all that she has to offer  
without claiming ownership over her.  
And without treating her like a  
Commodity I can trade for money.  
After reconciliation, be it settlers or the  
rightful landowners of Canada,  
We all hope for Peace.  
Thank you.

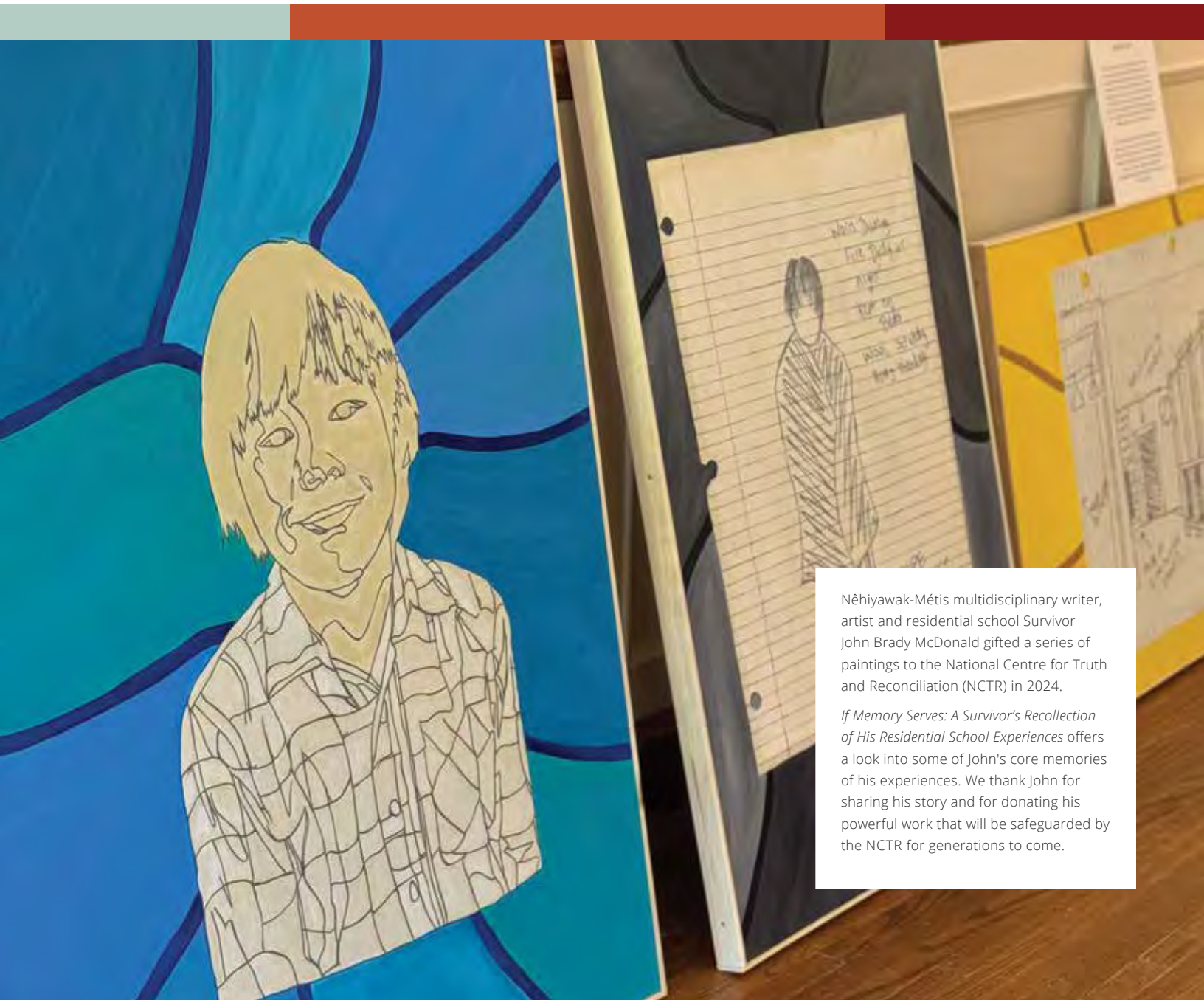


National Centre for  
Truth and Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

The NCTR is a place of learning and dialogue, where the truths of the residential school experience will be honoured and kept safe for future generations.

**NCTR.CA**



Nêhiyawak-Métis multidisciplinary writer, artist and residential school Survivor John Brady McDonald gifted a series of paintings to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) in 2024.

*If Memory Serves: A Survivor's Recollection of His Residential School Experiences* offers a look into some of John's core memories of his experiences. We thank John for sharing his story and for donating his powerful work that will be safeguarded by the NCTR for generations to come.