

HONOURING

PROJECT OF HEART / SPEAKING TO MEMORY

Honouring: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory Exhibition + Publication

A collaboration between SD71 Indigenous Education Services and the Comox Valley Art Gallery

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665 16th Avenue

Courtenay British Columbia V9M1X6

P: 250.331.4040 W: sd71.bc.ca



580 Duncan Avenue

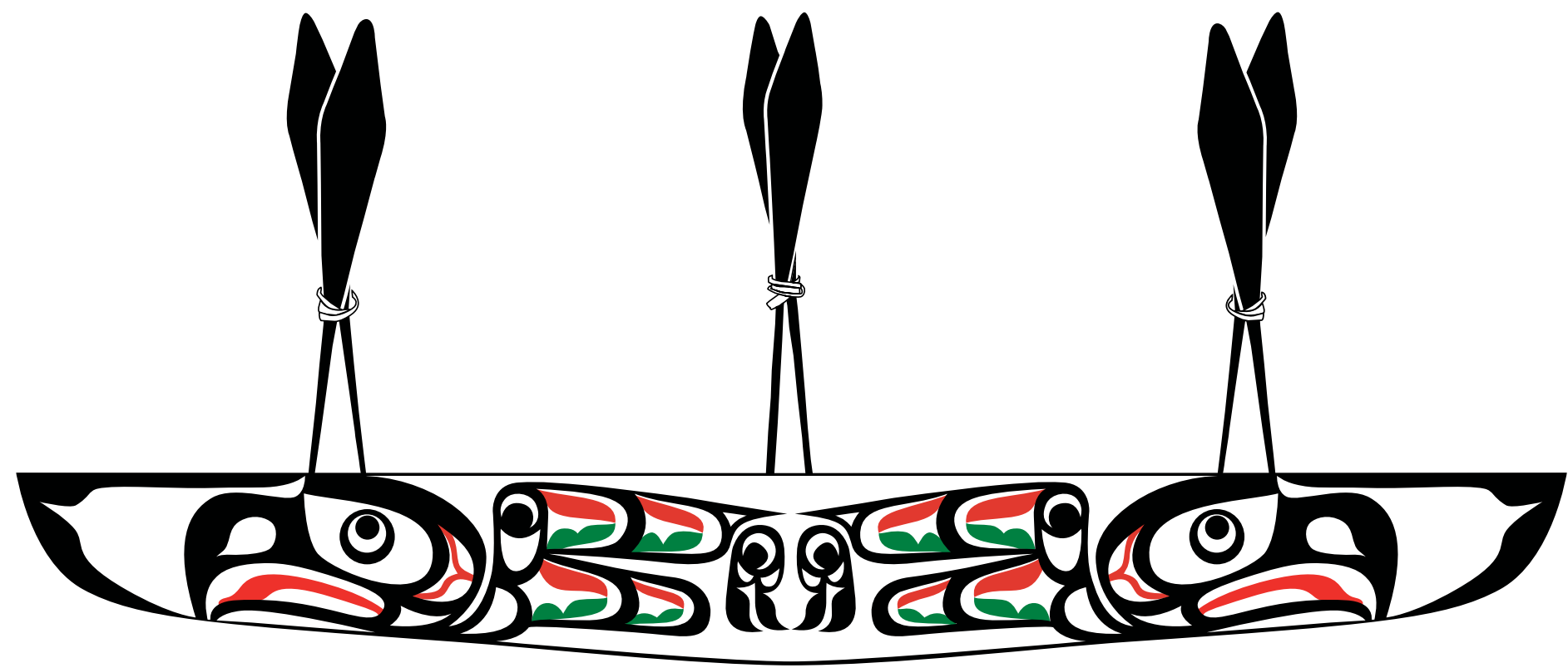
Courtenay, British Columbia V9N2M7

P: 250.338.6211

W: comoxvalleyartgallery.com

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HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT 71 AND THE COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY

The path to reconciliation can be a rough trail for some when we first become aware of the history of residential Schools in Canada. These exhibits touch our hearts and teaches our minds to educate future generations in knowing this history and will help them to ensure this history is never repeated. – Anonymous

This responsive legacy project that honours the intent of two originating projects; *Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* and *Project of Heart: Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC*. These arts-based presentations examine the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia.

Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School was developed by University of British Columbia Museum Of Anthropology curator Bill McLennan with Anna Pappalardo and Pam Brown, and in cooperation with the Umista Cultural Centre (UCC), 'Namgis First Nation at Alert Bay, director Sarah Hollan and curator Jaunita Johnston. The exhibition provides the unique perspective of Beverly Brown, who used a small camera to take photographs of her classmates while they were residents of St Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay.

Project of Heart was originally created, by educator Sylvia Smith and coordinated by Charlene Bearhead in Ottawa, Ontario in 2011, to instigate truth and reconciliation through arts-based education. In response of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work, the British Columbia Teacher's Federation created *Project of Heart: Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC* out of the originating project. In 2012, Aboriginal artists Derrick George and Una Ann Moyer worked with students from participating schools to create the *Project of Heart Commemoration Canoe* as a way to foster reconciliation and healing.

Indigenous Educational SD 71 and the Comox Valley Art Gallery developed *HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory*, a multimedia installation. Housed within the Comox Valley Art Gallery's Gather Place learning centre, the installation facilitates deeper learning opportunities for educators, students and families of School District 71, over an extended run of two months. All components of the installation have been digitized and are accessible through CVAG's website. The intention is to tour the project within the district and beyond.

Multimedia Installation Elements – *HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory*

The original Commemoration Canoe is translated into sculptural lightbox work comprised of a large scale illuminated image of the canoe housed within a fifteen foot fabricated cedar sculpture, fabricated by Alan Macunalty and Werner Karsten. A single channel HD video compoent, comprised of five hundred+ images of the canoe tiles, runs as a continuous loop, illustrating the extensive contributions of the participating children.

A Single channel HD video projection –*Speaking to Memory*, contains Beverly Brown's photographs and handwritten overlays by St Michael's Indian Residential School survivors. These overlays identify students in the pictures to capture the essence of the original project.

Emerging artist Jesse Everson created the graphics that have been silkscreened onto cushions for seating during sharing circles and facilitated engagement with the project.

The Kwikw, or Eagle is seen as an animal that is wise and can guide others. The Eagle is placed on the canoe to help make a path, a path for reconciliation. Reconciliation is something that is helping allow Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples across Canada to better understand the events that happened from 1884 to 1951. In that span of time, The Government of Canada had set in place 'The Potlatch Ban'. The Potlatch Pan was made to assimilate Indigenous culture across Canada. This includes, Language, songs and dances. Also, with The Potlatch Ban. The Indian Residential School system was put into action. Indian Residential Schools operated from about 1870 to 1996. The schools were designed to 'take the indian out' of young indigenous children. They were run by the church, in order to Christianize the children. If the adults were to practice their culture, they would be thrown into jail. Their masks and regalia were taken away. The Canoe design represents The journey that everyone Canadian should take to better understand Canada's dark past. – Jesse Everson

The e-publication and the printed publication of *HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory* hold content and images which trace and honour the original projects.

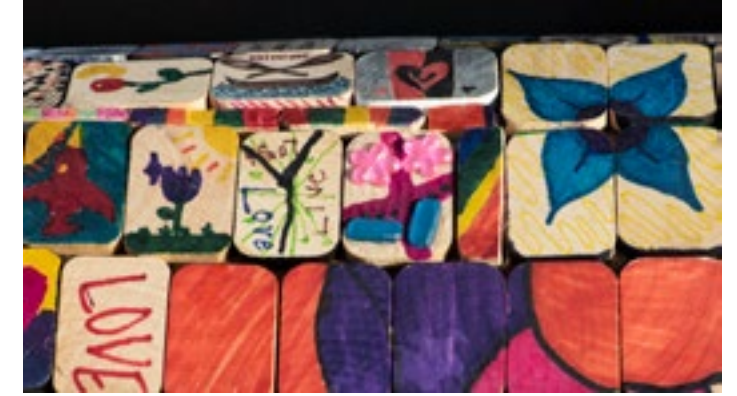


HONOURING (instalation view), Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018.





Commemoration Canoe (top view), 190 x 14.75 x 9.5", Project of Heart, Comox Valley Art Gallery.

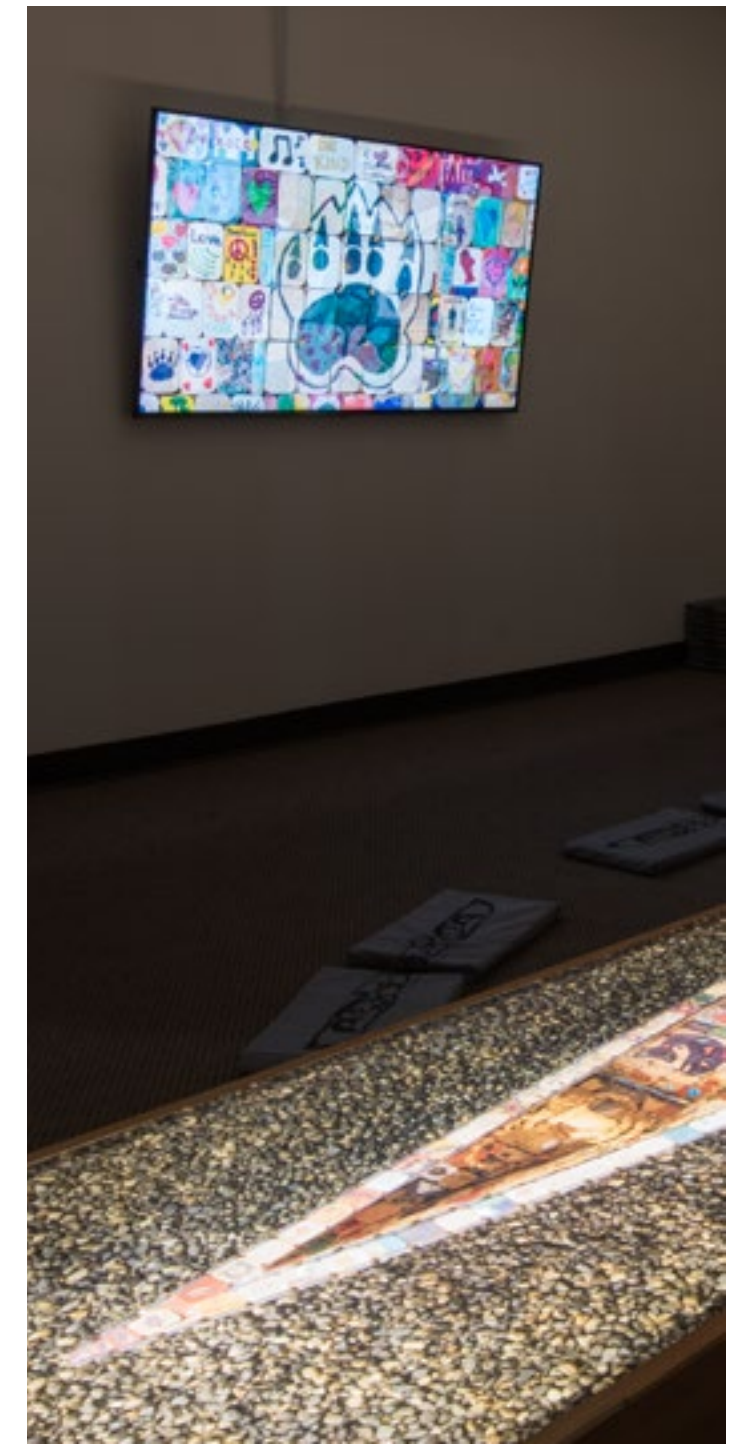


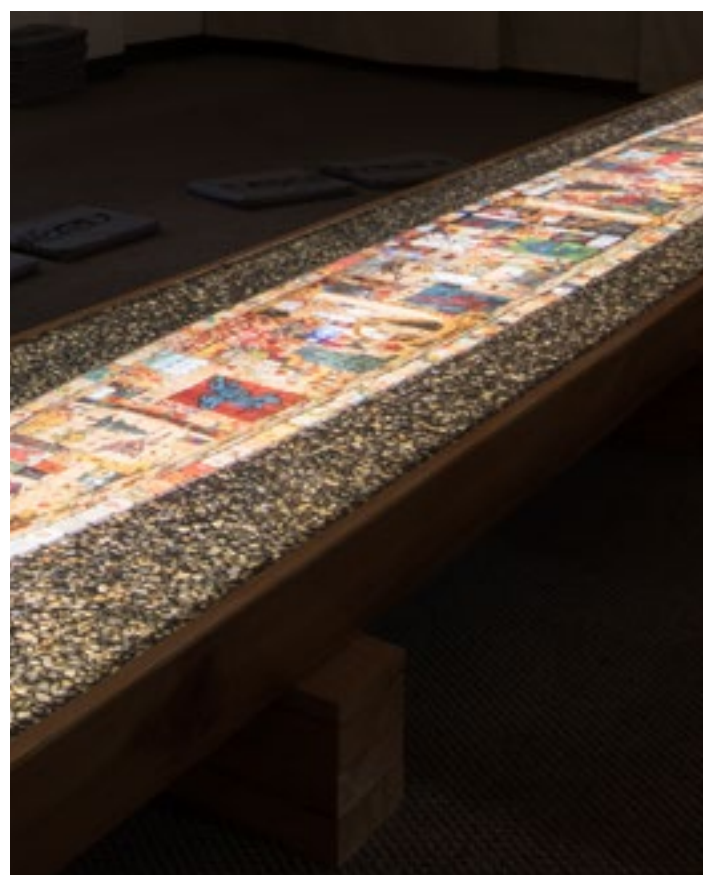


Commemoration Canoe (details), *Project of Heart*, Comox Valley Art Gallery.

(above right) Exhibition instalation, *HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory*, **GATHER:PLACE**, Comox Valley Art Gallery.

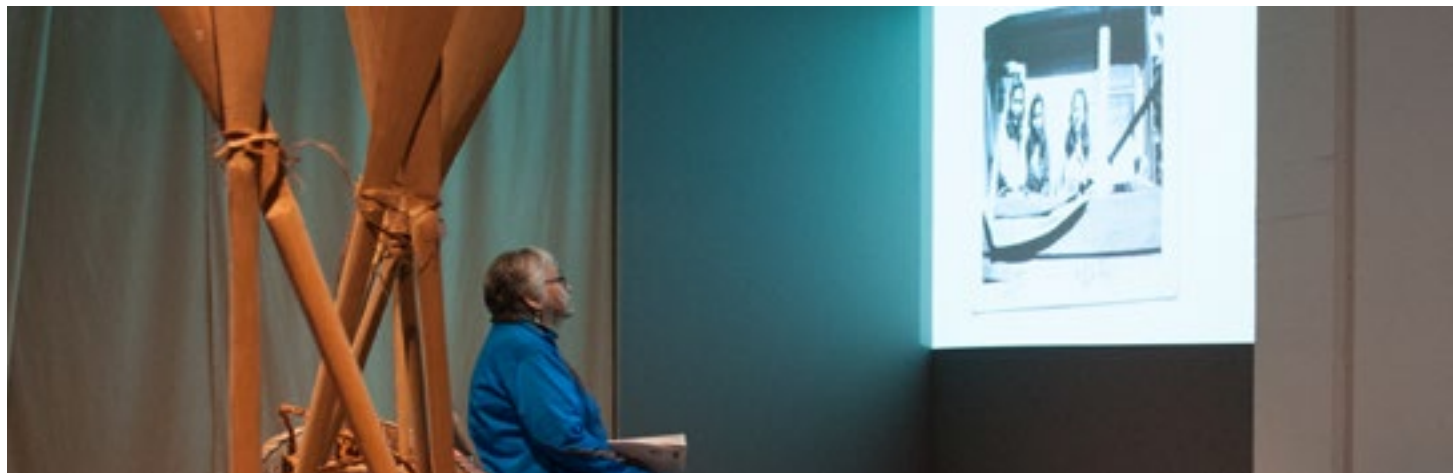
The Exhibition GATHER:PLACE

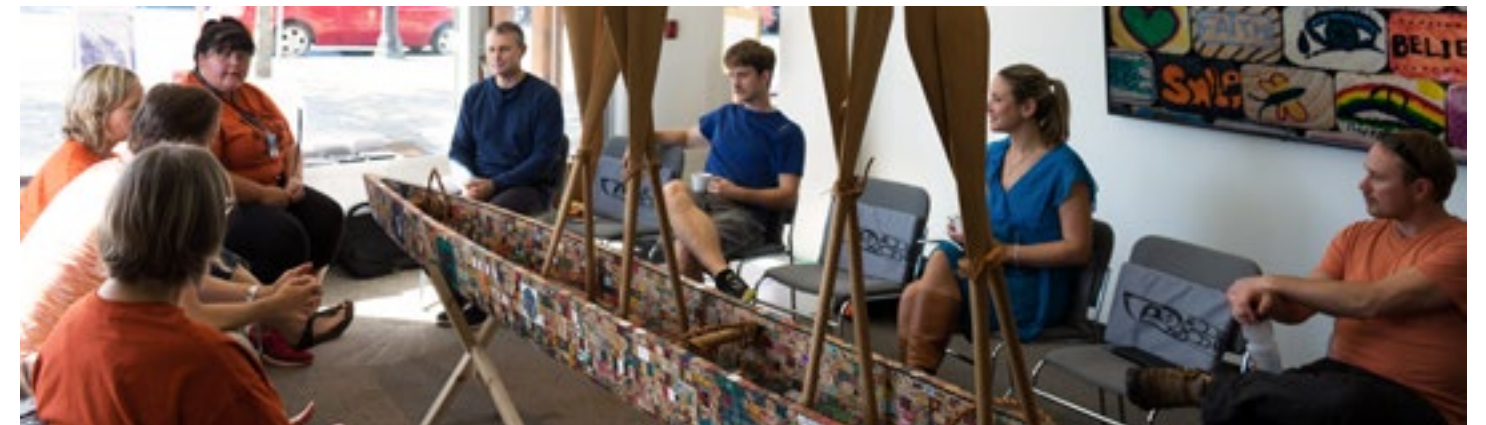




Exhibition installation: Canoe lightbox, 16' 21/2" L x 2' 1 1/2" W x 1' 13/4" H (fabricators: Werner Karsten, Alun Macanulty). HD Video projection, *Speaking to Memory* 13:20 min., CVAG, 2018. HD Single channel video, *Project of Heart* 69:42 min., CVAG, 2018. Silkscreened fabric cushions (image concept: Jessie Everson), CVAG, 2018. Publication, *HONOURING*, 75 pages, full colour, CVAG, 2018.

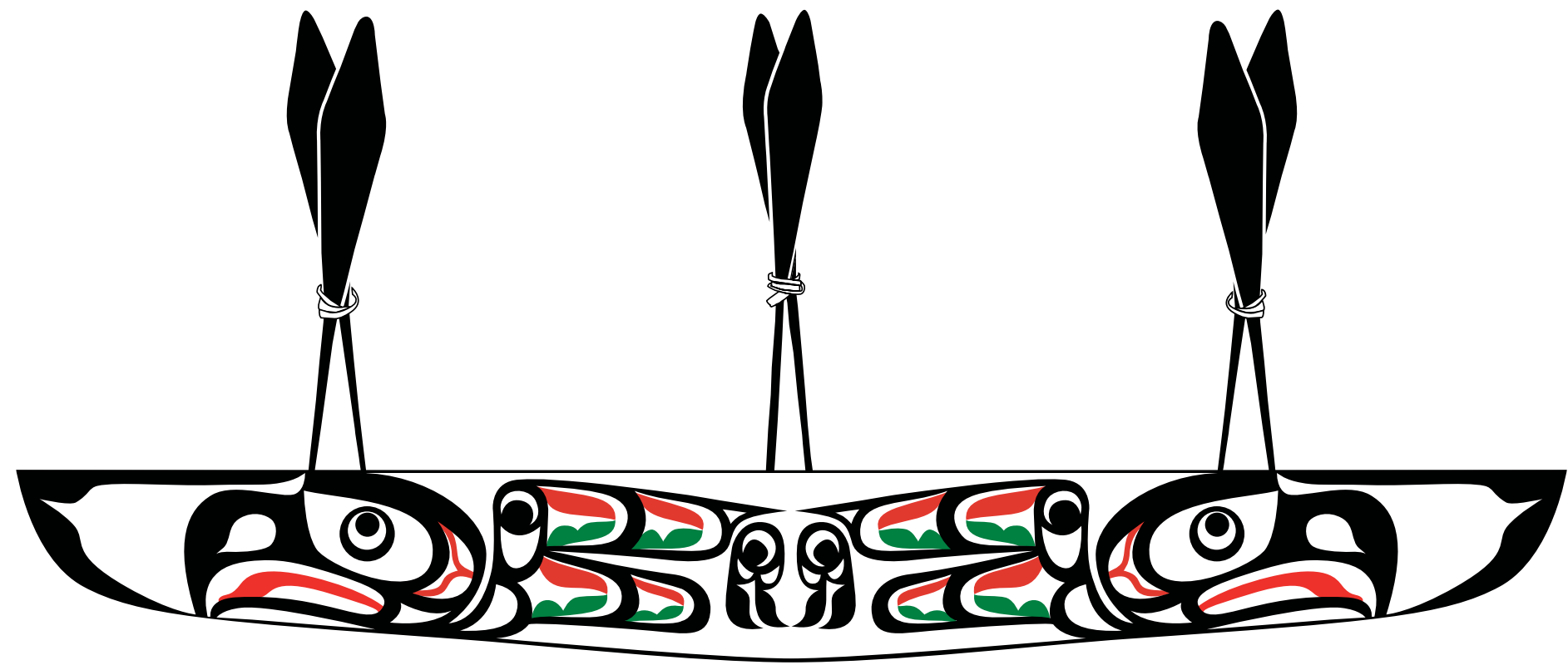
Community Engagement GATHER:PLACE





(left) children, elders, students and community members visit the exhibition.

(above) SD71 and SD72 Teachers professional development workshop in the **GATHER:PLACE**, Comox Valley Art Gallery.



Speaking to Memory Images and Voices From St. Michael's Indian Residential School

During the late 1930's and early 1940's, Beverly Brown used a small camera to capture images of her friends and classmates while they were students at St Michael's Indian Residential School.

Developed by the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MOA) with the U'mista Cultural Centre (UCC) in Alert Bay, the original exhibition was based on Brown's photographs. It was first presented at the MOA from September 2013 – March 2014. St. Michael's Indian Residential School stood within a hundred metres of UCC and was demolished in February 2015.

Writing from the originating MOA exhibition offers insight into the images:

The residential school system was implemented in 1879 by the Canadian Government to eliminate the "Indian problem." That is, to absorb the Aboriginal population into the general Canadian identity. Christian religion, English or French as the language and the abandonment of family traditions. St Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay (1929 - 1974) was one of a 140 residential schools that operated in Canada.

The personal statements from former students of St Michael's recall their experiences at the school. Extracts of apologies, from a variety of sources, express recognition of the impact of residential schools.



photo credit: (pages 19–53) *Children at St. Michael's Indian Residential School*, Beverley Brown Fonds, 1937-1949.

Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Exhibition Originating from The Museum of Anthropology 2013 – 2014.









T. B. Lodge

St. Mike's



↑
Sarah Nelson
Kungome

Beatrice Dean
Alert Bay

a034146







Bobby Harris
Belle

Raymond
Belle

Paula
Belle

Walter Smith
Belle

2039136

Danny Walker
Belle

Edward
Belle









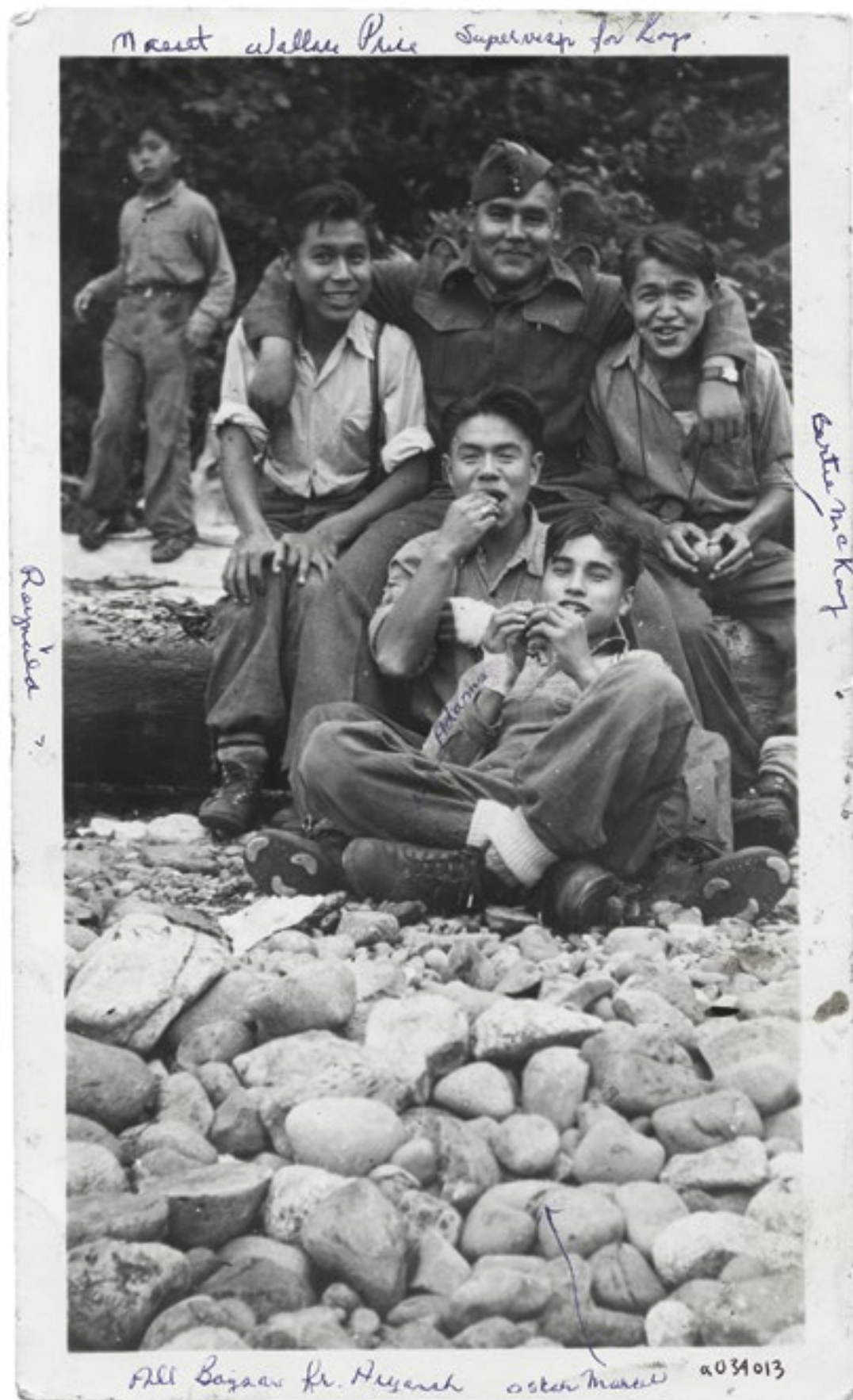
T. B. Lodge
St Mike patients.

a034081













Laura Jean Muesel

Helena Bane
Klema
Norma Myfan
Charlotte Muesel
Aynach

Jean Carpenter
Bella Bollen

Sola Holm
Belle Bollen

Nana White
Bella Bollen

a033990













Harvey Brown
Donald Wanda

Roger Jackson

Kenneth / Wanda Lee, Reed

Taylor Brown

All from Bella Bella

a 033951





Laura Kernal
Massett

Edna Wesley
Cwikano

Valencia
Summitt
Hawkins

2033937





Katherine
Glendale
Campbell Rivers

Lilac
Hotel
Rivers
Barn

Ethel Jones?
Campbell Rivers

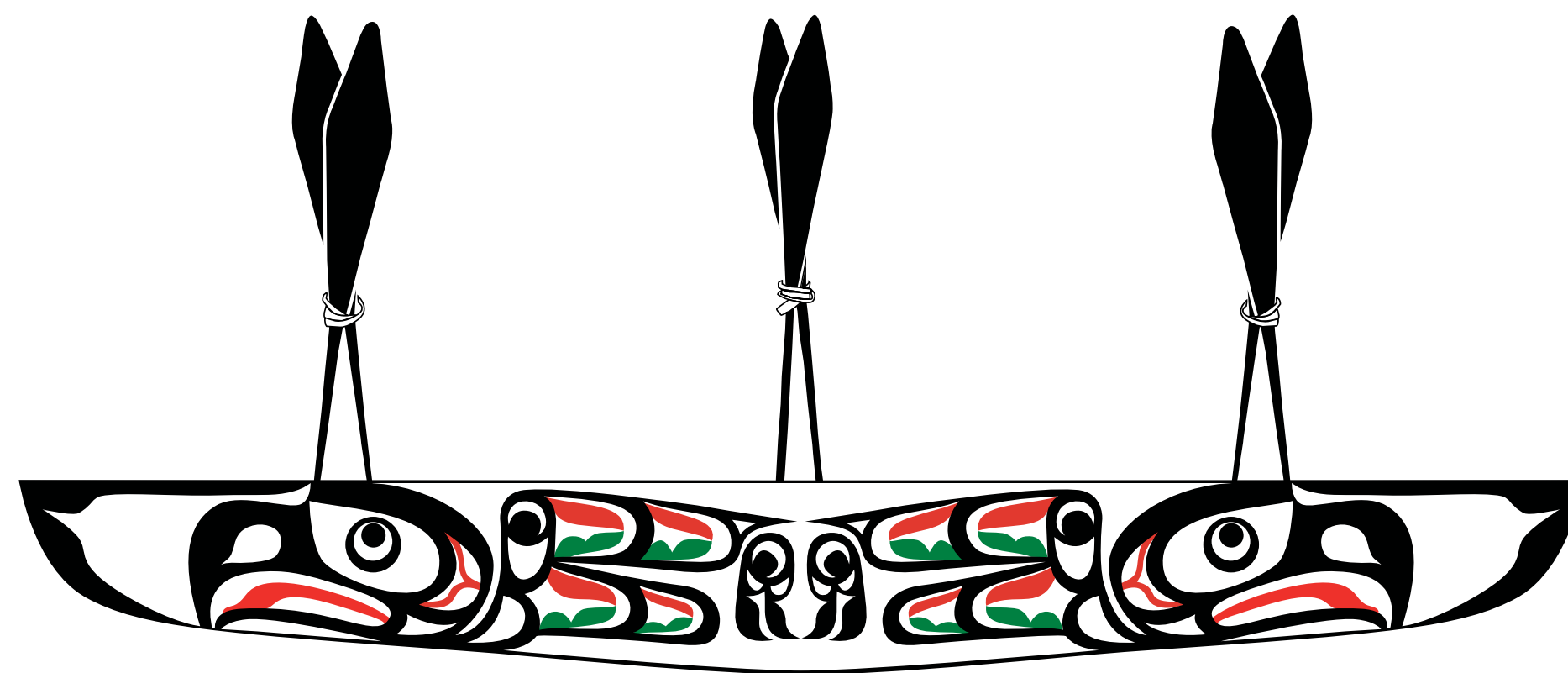
a033933

Doris Hall
Belle Belle

Louise Motter
aynash



a033907



Personal Statements from Former Students of St. Michael's School

30 Anonymous quotes comprise the beginning of this chapter:

Well, so many beautiful things happened, and I can't understand why some people are saying that they had a hard time in school, because I don't recall anything that was too hard for me. You know, everything was beautiful. And what we really appreciated, my sister and myself, is how we were trained on cleanliness, you know, and everything like what they taught us. Little bit of everything: first aid, music, and mending clothes and laundry in the kitchen; scrubbing the floors and waiting on the staff dining room; and then we also did the dining for us kids.

We were not allowed to pass the line. We couldn't go near the boys and the boys couldn't come near us, and we weren't allowed to go outside the gate or outside the fence. If we did that we got punished. We were well protected, you know. That's what I like about that. That saved me maybe from a lot of things, you know. When they get that strict with us and we learn obedience and we learn to try and follow the rules, you know.

And these people that came as supervisors and teachers, they were from England and they were more like missionaries, you know. And they were good examples and we followed them. And with what we learned from these missionaries and our teachers and supervisors is still with us today, and it helped us through life. There's so many beautiful things that happened to us here; it molded us. You know, I was lost before I came here, but when I came here it seemed that I found myself.

I was in school but I sure lost track, because while I was in there I wasn't home to listen to my dad and my mother talk about what they must have been talking about—you know, our culture— 'cause I missed out for years. That's sort of what I lost. I was lost, you know, from being in my home and listening to the ways of our people, the culture and the way of living and all that, you know.

But anyway, I hear of people who were badly beaten or they were really spanked. But I think they more or less got the supervisors pretty upset about something. I don't think they would go and do a thing like that to beat us for nothing. There was a reason. So we can't blame. We had to be punished. That was the rule in the school.

This one thing that happened to me. They never used to let us talk Kwak'wala in school. So I and my friends were talking Kwak'wala when we were just going out of the classroom, and the teacher just came and grabbed me by the neck and told me to go back to the classroom. And she gave me a book to write down 500 times, "I must not talk Kwak'wala." Now they're teaching those kids to speak it. As I said, I felt bad.

Yeah, well, if you're working in the barn, yeah, and then you only go half a day until Grade 7; by that time you're ready to be kicked out, anyway. I don't think they wanted Indians to get educated, to tell you the truth. The other funny part of it is they wouldn't let us speak our language when I was over there, and they used to get us all dressed up come Sunday morning to come and listen to Mr. Corker preach in Kwak'wala language.

Well, as soon as you get to Grade 8 you're out. You really want to push right head. It was all young fellows; they were smart, real smart. They don't take long to go to Grade 8, and they're out. They can't afford to go, anyway.

Well, the best part of my life was in that school. We were orphans. No use, we can't complain. We couldn't. I'd tell my brothers, "Don't complain." The principal used to give me work on the weekend so we could get a little bit of money. You can't get a better principal than that... Be crazy if somebody calls him down.

I went to St. Michael's School just before I turned nine, in 1939. The little bits that I do remember were good. I know I've heard so many negative things about

St. Michael's School, but during the time that I was there I enjoyed being there—probably because it's the first chance I had of learning to read and write. So I was there for three years, and I was very fortunate that there were quite a few teenage girls that I knew, so they sort of took me under their wings, and if I needed someone they were there for me.

And the main reason that I was put in St. Mike's was, according to the officials from the Indian agent, that any parents that did not send the children to a school would get charged. And they threatened the parents of the children, so it was mandatory for me to go to school—and because there is no school for Fort Rupert, St. Mike's was the closest place that they could send me. And that was the main reason why I ended up at St. Michael's School.

I went to school in St. Mike's. I was only there for—what was it—two years, because of how they were treating us. I just couldn't take it anymore. They treat us so bad. Whenever we try to speak our language we just get a strapping or stand in the corner. We had to go through this all the time, every day. We have to do chores more than our homework.

Forever staying in for talking my language, I missed a lot of Saturdays and got a lot of strapping. I missed lots of biscuits. I never get a biscuit because of that. We were looking forward to get that biscuit, three or four o'clock in the afternoon, every day. But if you did something wrong you didn't get a biscuit—you get two tablespoons of cod liver oil. And I start to look forward to that cod liver oil, every day.

Then you go to school for half day. And it seems like I never learned anything there. Every time I go back, I was growing older; seems like Grade 4 was my favourite grade, I guess. Every time I go back I am Grade 4. One thing I learned in that school was not to be lazy. If you're lazy you're in trouble; and now today I don't even know what lazy is. I like to work. I learned that in school.

One time I moved in the carrot field—I moved to the next lane picking carrots, and the old farmer seen me move. I wasn't supposed to move. He grabbed the big board and he strapped me with that big board. Just for that. Oh, that hurt. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to move. I just moved over to the second lane; he didn't like that. That board, when he hit me with that, that hurt. Oh, I never forget that.

We were lining up on Saturday. And it always seems to be a northern boy: he was fooling around and I got the blame again. And I stayed in while everybody take a walk down the street to Alert Bay. And I had to wash the stairs right from the top to the bottom. And when I was finished, it was nice and clean, I thought to myself. No—I was told to do it again. Then I went to start again from the top to the bottom.

And so in the mornings we get up, have our breakfast, and this and that for the day. Like laundry—we had to do laundry. We also helped in the cooking, preparing the meals. We were told just what to do. There was a real good training for me. And we had to keep the staff dining room clean, polished the glasses, and there was a pantry there where they kept all the food—and that's what I remember. I sneaked out some cookies or something, but we were never punished for that.

There's nothing that I regret or nobody ever did anything bad to us that would be ashamed of today. I'm very thankful about that, because I hear some are saying that they were abused, even on the boys' side. I don't know if it was happening during the time I was there. So I'm very sorry about these things. All we can try to do is get that healed so we don't go on talking about them anymore—that you forgive those people that hurt us in that way.

The thing I remember most about St. Mike's is that I was constantly hungry. But not hungry enough to eat the porridge that most of the time had worms in it. Although we made butter, we never had any for our bread, but we had drippings. If we were good we had hardtack daily at 4 pm. If we were bad we went hungry.

It was hard for us because there was no nurturing, no encouragement, only put-downs. As children we had to rely on each other for comfort. Our spiritual needs were not met, even though we had prayers. There is not love or kindness to go to lessons. I am ashamed to say we learn to steal, as we did steal food to ease our hunger pangs.

And they did not spare the rod, perhaps that's where our people learned to hit as a way of getting their way. And when we got into alcohol we drank as if there was no tomorrow. If there is anything good to be said about St. Mike's, it would be soccer. They brought soccer to us. Oh yes, as a special treat on Easter Sunday we had one hard-boiled egg. The only time we had an egg.

I can name thirty people, without even trying, who died within five years of leaving St. Michael's—through alcoholism, suicide, depression, drowning, and all that directly related to the experiences they had at the school. They were broken in spirit when they finally got out, and didn't care what happened to themselves.

They told me they were going to make an example of me and I would be lucky to sit down for a week. Most people don't believe me about the school and don't understand my bitter feelings toward that school, but I have scars on my backside from that whipping.

They were always trying to make us feel small and bad. I remember you weren't allowed to go to the bathroom during classes. If you did go, you were really strapped later. One time, a smart, pretty, and real nice girl had to go, and put up her hand to go to the bathroom. The teacher just kept saying, "You know the rules, you know the rules," very quietly. So there we were, singing a hymn, and this puddle was spreading around the girl's desk. It was disgusting, the thing they did.

I ran away from the school five times and was brought back each time. I would have tried some more but I finally realized this was an island with no way to get off it.

We were very bitter towards our families because they wouldn't come to see us when they were in town. Later on, when we were out of that school, we found that the principal and staff were telling our families not to come around because it was too disruptive for us and the school.

When we first arrived we were lined up. I started talking to the person next to me in our own language. The next thing I knew I was hit hard on the side of the head by one of the teachers, and he was yelling at me. I asked the guy next to me, again in our language, why I had been hit, and again I was hit hard on the side of the head by the teacher, and he was yelling at me again. What I didn't know was the teacher was yelling at me to speak only English and not speak our language, all in a language I did not understand or speak.

If you wet your bed, and lots of people did, you were made to feel embarrassed and humiliated by bringing all your bedding to the laundry and washing it in front of all the girls who worked there. After a while, people wouldn't tell if they wet their beds; they just made them up, because they were willing to live with the smell instead of going through the shame they put us through.

But I found out early that if we told on someone picking on us or assaulting us we got it worse. We weren't allowed to talk, and after a while we learned to keep quiet and try to hide. The best thing we could do is hide in closets or under the stairs, anywhere we could think of where we won't be found by older kids.

I was twelve years old. At that time the supervisor had a room up on the top floor in the back. His room was right up on the top, on the corner in the back. He stuck his head out the window and he called me up to his room, and that's when he told me to drop my pants and that's when he sexually assaulted me. I was quiet and you think that everybody knew what had taken place. It wasn't until about ten years ago when I ran into Willie Abrahams when he told me what happened to him by the same supervisor. That was 1951, when I was twelve years old.

— Anonymous, 1991

That's the infirmary right there on top of the main door. I spent most of my life there in that infirmary, yep, busted ear: I got slapped right across, eardrum bust. I just got off the Catala, the steamboat, just got there and the supervisor, I don't know what she wanted me to do, I didn't know how to speak English. Well that's what happened, she got mad and whacked me across the ear. I suffered most of the time in that place, the infirmary.

You get punished if you spoke your language to other kids. We could talk by the fence on Saturdays down in front. They are all standing by the fence, whoever they want to see.

I went down to Alert Bay for an event: Elders Conference (1991). I couldn't find any of my friends; most were dead, I guess. That was a big school to me, and when I saw it again it looked small. Makes a difference when you have grown up, I guess.

They had about half a dozen kids with TB in that sanatorium. I worked there, too, keeping the furnace going, for a month; then they move you around. Kids that get punished saw wood up in the woods. That's how they got away from buying wood. That was using a big double-ended saw.

He wasn't bad, Major Durham. I know him, he was quite a guy, he was a big guy. He had been in the First World War. When we were in the cadets and we were on the field marching, he said he was going to go about a mile up the hill, right on top. He was going to stand there and give orders. That is how many men he had to look after in the war. So that is what he did. We could hear him, when we were marching; he had a loud voice. He was pretty strict, too.

— Cecil Morven, Nisga'a, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1933 to 1944 (starting at age 5)

I enjoyed the residential school days. They used to give us a couple hours a week to speak our language in the shower room. We had a pretty good drill team.

— James Adams, Nisga'a, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1940 to 1944 (starting at age 11)

My mother and her sister, they both got it [TB], and when they came home they passed it on to their three sisters and sixteen-year-old younger brother. They were healthy before they went to residential school [in Alert Bay]. They all died of TB. My mother, she died from TB about a year after I went to residential school. Her sister died about a year or so later. The two older brothers survived because they weren't living at home and didn't get infected.

Then when I went to residential school they used to make socks and sweaters for the armed forces. So they put me in there when they found out I could knit. Just the boys worked in the farm. In the kitchen where the cook stoves were and washing dishes—I probably started washing dishes when I was about eight, because I was six going on seven when I went to residential school.

We went home for the summer holidays, except that after my mother died, my brothers and I had to stay for the summer in school because I had no one to stay with. They used to fish seven days a week. My dad was a fisherman; he fished for Claxton Cannery for BC Packers. Up the Skeena and Naas is where they usually fished. So we had to stay in school; it wasn't too bad. If there was abuse, I wasn't abused. I had a real bad inferiority complex for years after I left. I didn't know how to show my children love. I was in residential school for ten years, from grade one to grade eight. I was lucky I did grade eight—I don't know how, because we worked half a day and went to school half a day.

The school was always warm in the winter. I don't even remember if we had any snow. There probably was some abuse, I wasn't aware of it. I thought it was a good school. There probably was some abuse. I kind of suspect my younger brothers got abused.

That's a smock, that's the way they dressed us. They were supplied by the school. We left all our own clothes in our suitcase and stored it in the old school block. I always remember—it was before my dad married his second wife, and he used to take me shopping before we left for school, and he never ever came into the store. I don't know why, maybe they didn't allow him or whatever. I picked clothes that were for older women, and that was the day somebody stole my suitcase and all the clothes that were in there. In the school block one of the staff members, I think, must have really liked those clothes. We had to wear all the same things like uniforms in the school.

I was lucky because my dad used to send my brothers and I a dollar each for the month and we would get 25 cents before we went down to the village for a walk. Even the kids that didn't have money used to go for the walk down. We always bought our treats from what we called Granny's store. We used to sneak down there sometimes too. Some of us used to buy War Bonds; we were never given certificates, we didn't know anything about that. I don't remember how much I spent on Bonds.

— Louise Martian (née Morven), Nisga'a, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1939 to 1947 (starting at age 6)

The preventorium was gone when I was there. The infirmary was still being used. That reminded me about one girl: she used to be pregnant; she was pregnant quite a few times—four or five times. Don't even know if it was the staff or who she was pregnant from. I remember they used to keep her in the infirmary and they used to keep us away from her.

It was really bad for the Haidas because traditionally they were enemies with the people in the south. Every day there was fights with different people. They probably talked about it in their homes, about the Haidas, and they got it bad all the time.

But when I was six years old, going on seven, they used to say every year that you were going home, and they would call your name about who's going home. Whose parents sent money for them to go home? That's when it got really tough. I cried really hard, but never cried after that again and I was only seven years old. I got really, really bitter and mean.

My one sister, she used to wet the bed and they beat the hell out of her. She [supervisor] had her in a room with a locked door, beating the hell out of her. She was the same one that beat that girl; she beat her with sticks on her head. She broke them on her head. She was lying on the floor, she looks like she's dead and she is still beating her. I just hated that lady; she never touched me because I threatened her because she did that to my sister. I know she suffered when she died. I know she suffered and I am happy she did. And I have nothing for her. I have terrible, terrible hate, but there is a lot that I do in the world that's good. None of the supervisors would intervene, nobody would, and they knew what was going on with sexual abuse and nobody did anything.

One thing I wondered that might have affected us is that DDT they used to put in our hair for the lice. And then they put it on your mattress where you went to bed. How does that affect you? The very first thing they did when we went there was chop our hair off. That's why I keep my hair long.

It was really horrible when we went to the reunion [1991, Alert Bay]. Every place you look there's people breaking down all over. It was like a horrible, horrible nightmare. They got pictures of it. I saw people walking around with a video camera. I wanted to be there, though.

Peggy Shannon (née Abrahams), M.Ed., Haida, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1950 to 1958 (starting at age 6)

You know I hear other kids that I went to school with talk about being punished for speaking their language. I don't remember that. The only time there was ever an incident about my speaking my language was I had spoken my language to one of the girls from my home, and there were other kids around that didn't understand it and accused me of talking about them. And then an argument broke out, the supervisor came and asked what was going on, and they said, "She was speaking her language and I know she was talking about us." I don't recall who the supervisor was, but she said, "You know, it is very rude to speak a language that other kids around you don't understand. It is very rude, so you must not do that again." I thought about it, and I thought, maybe it's being rude, and causing trouble is what rude is. I didn't really understand it as the term rude.

There were always storytellers in the dormitory. Intermediate and senior, there was always a storyteller. Intermediate was a girl from Bella Bella, she told kind of romance stories. Because the supervisor would come once a night before she would go to bed to check the beds, she would open the door and flash her flashlight around and leave. When the girl closest to the door would hear her, she would say "Shhhhhh, she's coming," then "Quiet," and then she would say, "Go ahead Doris, she is gone," and she would finish her story. I remember she told this one story where two young people were so in love and wanted to be married, but her family had arranged for her to marry someone else. The man, being so broken-hearted, he left the village and moved to a southern village and got on one of their seine boats. I remember lying there with tears coming down my face, so there was always that. Senior, it was always someone, a Nisga'a girl, who would tell legends. I used to love those times, late at night, listening to stories from other villages. So we had that—you know, we did things that made life bearable. And learned a lot from each other, I am sure. Learned a bit of language from other kids.

Rita Barnes (née Dawson), Kwakwaka'wakw, 2013
At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1941 to 1950 (starting at age 7)

I left school when I was sixteen—well, I couldn't go back after I was burnt. Everybody—the principal left that year, the teacher left, the farmer he left too, but the engineer took off and went back to England. What happened was the drum:

supposed to be emptied, and one of them still had gas in it, so when the guy filled it up it cuts off automatically at forty-five gallons. But with the gas in there, and I was standing there and I got it all over me. I tried to tell the engineer I can't feed the [hot-water] jackets, because I seen it before—when you throw coal in, the flames come right out. I told him I can't do it. He said, "No, you do it or you'll miss your Friday night show; you're going to miss... things," went on and on. Gee, I am penalized for four months, I will miss everything. No apples, no oranges on the weekends. So I figured I would stand far enough back and open the hot-water jacket with the long thing there [pole]. Threw the coals and bang! That is the last I remember.

Yeah, the government there—you know, we were being trained in the cadet force; we were being trained to kill. We would rather be out playing sports or some thing. There was twenty of us in our situation. We swore an oath not to talk about it. An old Japanese fellow came up to teach us. Oh we shined up our guns and bayonets, the 303 had bayonets. He said put all that stuff away, you're not going to need it. You just kill with your hands. I sure got a kick out of that... All I knew him by was Old Joe—that is all they referred to him as. They sent him up from Vancouver. We were not supposed to talk about it, but he died a long time ago. The government sent him. It was part of cadet training, but it was a method trained to kill.

Fred Reid, Heiltsuk, 2012
At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1936 to 1946 (starting at age 6)

When they first took us to the residential school, they took us away from our parents, and I remember the day: I was holding onto my mother's dress and I was crying really hard. My mom said to me, "You have to go, so go." They took us away down on the Coquitlam or Catella; I remember those boats from the time. They picked us up from Bella Bella. I was six years old at the time, in 1942. My older sisters went to Port Alberni. It was the Indian agent that set it up and separated us. I felt really bad. We were trying to ask why they were doing that to us. We wanted to stay together.

Alice Rosypsky (née Harris), Heiltsuk, 2013
At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1942 to 1957 (starting at age 6)

We used to make our own bread: 200-lb sack. Before we got the dough mixer, four of us used to mix the dough. When we got that dough mixer, that was good.

Anonymous, 1991

That's the big mixing machine from St. Mike's. Yeah, we always used to get shocks from it.

Peggy Shannon (née Abrahams), M.Ed., Haida, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1950 to 1958 (starting at age 6)

I seen that big mixing machine—I went near it but didn't touch it because I seen other people get hurt. I remember it had these big bowls for mixing batter for pancakes. There was a big pot that was flat on the bottom to make cornmeal mush. It had worms and maggots in it.

Alice Rosypsky (née Harris), Heiltsuk, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1942 to 1957 (starting at age 6)

I don't know how they did this, but the infirmary is at the front of the school above the entrance... So anyways, I was in a dormitory [on the third floor] where they could come from here, on top of the infirmary, in through the window, and my bed was right in the corner. I don't know where they came from. I woke up when my pillow kept going down and the girl across from me was staring at me. It was kind of moonlight and you could see, her eyes were wide open staring at me as these three boys, maybe more, came in, and they all went towards the corner. I am here and they go towards the corner, and some girls got up and they all held each other and cried. Just crying very softly, just kind of holding each other, and they left just as quietly. My friend and I we talk about it, remember, even talk about it when we were by ourselves. We never said a word about it. They could have been allowed on the boys' side on a Sunday; I guess they didn't want to wait until Sunday to mourn

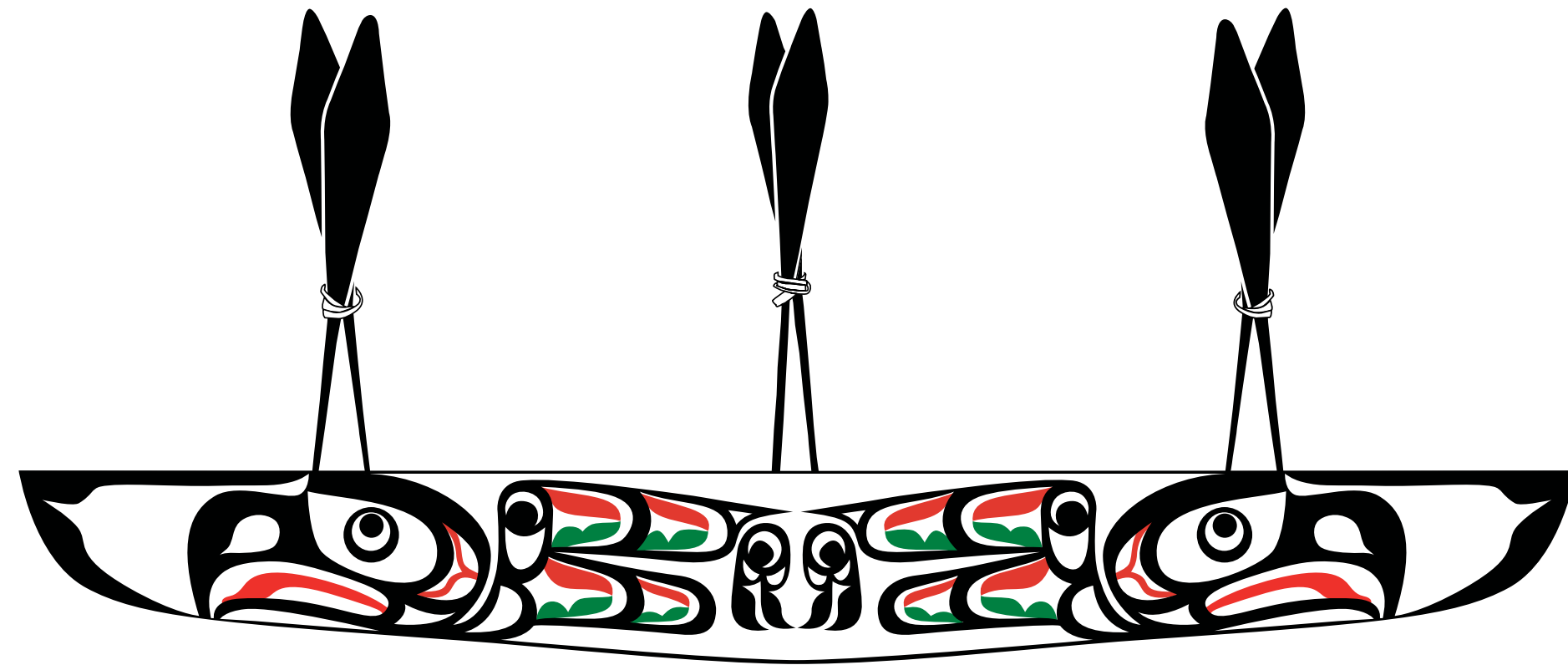
together. I think they were kids from around the Nass River. They all had a mutual relative that had passed away, maybe a grandmother, I don't know. But they never talked about it, I never heard anybody say one word about that incident.

My Uncle Tom, who was my dad's youngest brother—and he was three years older than me—well, he had gone to school in the Mission School for a while, had a little bit of schooling. Well, obviously he needed to go to school, and my grandfather finally got them to accept my Uncle Tom into the residential school. He wasn't there more than two years when he ran away. How can you run away in Alert Bay? It's an island. There's no place to run to. Him and his friend Dan Willie, also from Kingcome and Gilford Island, and Johnny Dudoward from Port Simpson, who apparently had been picked on really badly. My Uncle Tom always stood up for him. He was always used as a scapegoat for anything that went wrong, wherever he was. So they ran away. They went and stole a rowboat with oars and rowed all the way from Alert Bay to Gilford Island. My Uncle Tom tells me this story later. Their hands were so blistered, he said at one point; they would cry because they were so scared, whether they would make it or not. They finally got to Gilford Island. Someone in authority had gone to Gilford Island to get them back to school. My grandfather said no, they are not going back to where they must have had good reasons to run away, it must have been pretty bad. They didn't go back.

Rita Barnes (née Dawson), Kwakwaka'wakw, 2013

At St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay BC, 1941 to 1950 (starting at age 7)

Formal Apologies



Catholic Church Apology regarding Indian Residential Schools, 1991

We are sorry and deeply regret the pain, suffering and alienation that so many experienced. We have heard their cries of distress, feel their anguish and want to be part of the healing process.

We recognize that the negative experiences in the Residential Schools cannot be considered in isolation from the root causes of the indignities and injustices suffered by aboriginal peoples in our country.

Therefore, we:

Pledge our solidarity with the aboriginal peoples in their pursuit of recognition of their basic human rights;

Reiterate our respect for the dignity and value of their cultures and spiritualities and reaffirm the principle of inculturation;

Will support aboriginal peoples in pressing governments at all levels to respond to their legitimate aspirations;

Urge the federal government to assume its responsibility for its part in the Indian Residential Schools;

Urge our faith communities to become better informed and more involved in issues important to aboriginal peoples.

All dioceses in which residential Schools were located and that are represented here agree to set up, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, a process for disclosure, which respects confidentially, and for healing of the wounds of any sexual abuse that occurred in Residential Schools.

We have considered the request by some for a federal public inquiry. While we are committed to uncovering the truth, we do not think that an inquiry of that nature is the best vehicle for healing. The dioceses preferred to commit themselves to establish local forums of dialogue or other avenues for listening that will bring together former students and their families and the religious, clergy and lay staff who were involved in the schools so that they may reflect on their experience and work together towards healing and reconciliation.

The group that assembled here this week is firmly committed to building a renewed relationship with the aboriginal peoples and is very aware that much work still remains to be done. We intend to meet again and have selected a Steering Committee for one year with the mandate to propose to the concerned Catholic bodies (CCCB, Religious Congregations) a mechanism to follow up, coordinate, network and plan with native leaders and our ecumenical partners.

As Church, we are sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to liberate humanity from all oppression, especially from sin and evil, so that all may have life and have it more abundantly. Our gathering this week has been motivated by this basic mission.

Anglican Church of Canada Apology to Native People, 1993

My Brothers and Sisters:

Together here with you I have listened as you have told your stories of the residential schools.

I have heard the voices that have spoken of pain and hurt experienced in the schools, and of the scars which endure to this day.

I have felt shame and humiliation as I have heard of suffering inflicted by my people, and as I think of the part our church played in that suffering.

I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told and I hold in the highest honour those who have told them.

I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed.

I also know that I am in need of healing, and my own people are in need of healing, and our church is in need of healing. Without that healing, we will continue the same attitudes that have done such damage in the past.

I also know that healing takes a long time, both for people and for communities.

I also know that it is God who heals, and that God can begin to heal when we open ourselves, our wounds, our failures and our shame to God. I want to take one step along that path here and now.

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

I do this at the desire of those in the Church like the National Executive Council, who know some of your stories and have asked me to apologize.

I do this in the name of many who do not know these stories. And I do this even though there are those in the church who cannot accept the fact that these things were done in our name.

As soon as I am home, I shall tell all the bishops what I have said, and ask them to co-operate with me and with the National Executive Council in helping this healing at the local level. Some bishops have already begun this work.

I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing.

The work of the Residential Schools Working Group, the video, the commitment and the effort of the Special Assistants to the Primate for this work, the grants available for healing conferences, are some signs of that pledge, and we shall work for others.

This is Friday, the day of Jesus' suffering and death. It is the anniversary of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, one of the most terrible injuries ever inflicted by one people on another.

But even atomic bombs and Good Friday are not the last word. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that life and wholeness are the everlasting and unquenchable purpose of God.

Thank you for listening to me.

Michael Peers
Archbishop and Primate

The confession of the Presbyterian Church as adopted by the General Assembly, 1994

The Holy Spirit, speaking in and through Scripture, calls The Presbyterian Church in Canada to confession. This confession is our response to the word of God. We understand our mission and ministry in new ways in part because of the testimony of Aboriginal peoples.

We, the 120th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, seeking the guidance of the Spirit of God, and aware of our own sin and shortcomings, are called to speak to the Church we love. We do this, out of new understandings of our past not out of any sense of being superior to those who have gone before us, nor out of any sense that we would have done things differently in the same context. It is with humility and in great sorrow that we come before God and our Aboriginal brothers and sisters with our confession.

We acknowledge that the stated policy of The Government of Canada was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to the dominant culture, and that The Presbyterian Church in Canada co-operated in this policy. We acknowledge that the roots of the harm we have done are found in the attitudes and values of western European colonialism, and the assumption that what was not yet molded in our image was to be discovered and exploited. As part of that policy we, with other churches, encouraged the Government to ban some important spiritual practices through which Aboriginal peoples experienced the presence of the creator God. For the Church's complicity in this policy we ask forgiveness.

We recognize that there were many members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who, in good faith, gave unstintingly of themselves in love and compassion for their aboriginal brothers and sisters. We acknowledge their devotion and commend them for their work. We recognize that there were some who, with prophetic insight, were aware of the damage that was being done and protested, but their efforts were thwarted. We acknowledge their insight. For the times we did not support them adequately nor hear their cries for justice, we ask forgiveness.

We confess that The Presbyterian Church in Canada presumed to know better than Aboriginal peoples what was needed for life. The Church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, "If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship

like us, sing like us, and work like us, they would know God and therefore would have life abundant". In our cultural arrogance we have been blind to the ways in which our own understanding of the Gospel has been culturally conditioned, and because of our insensitivity to aboriginal cultures, we have demanded more of the Aboriginal people than the gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ who loves all peoples with compassionate, suffering love that all may come to God through him. For the Church's presumption we ask forgiveness.

We confess that, with the encouragement and assistance of the Government of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed to take the children of Aboriginal peoples from their own homes and place them in Residential Schools. In these schools, children were deprived of their traditional ways, which were replaced with Euro-Canadian customs that were helpful in the process of assimilation. To carry out this process, The Presbyterian Church in Canada used disciplinary practices which were foreign to Aboriginal peoples, and open to exploitation in physical and psychological punishment beyond any Christian maxim of care and discipline. In a setting of obedience and acquiescence there was opportunity for sexual abuse, and some were so abused. The effect of all this, for Aboriginal peoples, was the loss of cultural identity and the loss of a secure sense of self. For the Church's insensitivity we ask forgiveness.

We regret that there are those whose lives have been deeply scarred by the effects of the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. For our Church we ask forgiveness of God. It is our prayer that God, who is merciful, will guide us in compassionate ways towards helping them to heal.

We ask, also, for forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples. What we have heard we acknowledge. It is our hope that those whom we have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say. With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people.

Apology to Former Students of United Church Indian Residential Schools, and to Their Families and Communities, 1998

From the deepest reaches of your memories, you have shared with us your stories of suffering from our church's involvement in the operation of Indian Residential Schools. You have shared the personal and historic pain that you still bear, and you have been vulnerable yet again. You have also shared with us your strength and wisdom born of the life-giving dignity of your communities and traditions and your stories of survival.

In response to our church's commitment to repentance, I spoke these words of apology on behalf of the General Council Executive on Tuesday, October 27, 1998:

"As Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I wish to speak the words that many people have wanted to hear for a very long time. On behalf of The United Church of Canada, I apologize for the pain and suffering that our church's involvement in the Indian Residential School system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on Canada's First Nations peoples. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry.

"To those individuals who were physically, sexually, and mentally abused as students of the Indian Residential Schools in which The United Church of Canada was involved, I offer you our most sincere apology. You did nothing wrong. You were and are the victims of evil acts that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused.

"We know that many within our church will still not understand why each of us must bear the scar, the blame for this horrendous period in Canadian history. But the truth is, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens."

Our burdens include dishonouring the depths of the struggles of First Nations peoples and the richness of your gifts. We seek God's forgiveness and healing grace as we take steps toward building respectful, compassionate, and loving relationships with First Nations peoples.

We are in the midst of a long and painful journey as we reflect on the cries that we did not or would not hear, and how we have behaved as a church. As we travel this difficult road

of repentance, reconciliation, and healing, we commit ourselves to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority.

"We pray that you will hear the sincerity of our words today and that you will witness the living out of our apology in our actions in the future."

The Right Rev. Bill Phipps
Moderator of The United Church of Canada

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Apology, 2004

Many aboriginal people have found the courage to step outside of that legacy of this terrible chapter in Canadian history to share their stories. You heard one of those stories today. To those of you who suffered tragedies at residential schools we are very sorry for your experience. Healing has begun in many communities as you heard today, a testament that is a testament to the strength and tenacity of aboriginal people and aboriginal communities.

Canadians can never forget what happened and they never should. The RCMP is optimistic that we can all work together to learn from this residential school system experience and ensure that it never happens again.

The RCMP is committed to working with aboriginal people to continue the healing process. Your communities deserve better choices and better chances. Knowing the past, we must all turn to the future and build a brighter future for all our children.

We, I, as Commissioner of the RCMP, am truly sorry for what role we played in the residential school system and the abuse that took place in that system.

RCMP Commissioner

Catholic Church's Apology for Indian Residential Schools, 2009

Pope Benedict has said he is sorry for the physical and sexual abuse and "deplorable" conduct at Catholic church-run Canadian residential schools.

The Vatican says the pontiff expressed his sorrow and emphasized that "acts of abuse cannot be tolerated" at a meeting Wednesday with representatives of native Canadians.

"Given the sufferings that some indigenous children experienced in the Canadian residential school system, the Holy Father expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity," a statement from the Vatican said.

CTV News, Wednesday, April 29, 2009

On behalf of the Government of Canada, Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, 2008

The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.

For more than a century, Indian Residential Schools separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities. In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United Churches. The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very

young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian Residential Schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian Residential Schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement began on September 19, 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities, and Aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership. A cornerstone of the Settlement Agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential Schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

June 11, 2008

On behalf of the Government of Canada
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper,
Prime Minister of Canada

HONOURING: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory

CREDITS:

EXHIBITION INSTALLATION

Video projection, *Speaking to Memory* 13:20 min., 2018
Single channel video, *Project of Heart* 69:42 min., 2018
Forty silkscreened fabric cushions (canoe concept image: Jessie Everson), 2018
Publication, *HONOURING*, 75 pages, full colour, 2018
Canoe lightbox, 16' 21/2" L x 2' 1 1/2" W x 1' 13/4" H (fabricators: Werner Karsten, Alun Macanulty)

DESIGN / PRODUCTION – Comox Valley Art Gallery's Creative Team

Executive Director Administration – Sharon Karsten
Creative Direction / Curatorial / Concept – Angela Somerset and Denise Lawson
Digital Production / Technical – Leigh Selden, Alun Macanulty, Sam Patterson, Alyssa Willis,
Paige Friesen, Krista McAllister, Marlo Wylie
Photography – Alun Macanulty, Leigh Selden, Denise Lawson

COMMUNITY

Digital Production Support – Ernst Vegt (Coast Imaging Arts),
Fabrication Production Support (silkscreening) – Andy Macdougall and Wachiy Studio + One Tribe,
Lori Ann Kenney
Community Production Collaborators – SD71 Print Shop, ABC Printing, Industrial Plastics & Paints

CONCEPT CREATORS

Project of Heart Commemoration Canoe, artists Derrick George and Una Ann Moyer, the participating students and staff across BC, BC Teachers Federation / project leader Gail Stromquist and team, Fibre (carved), painted wood tiles, carved cedar paddles, cedar cordage, 16'L x 12'W x 10'H.

Speaking to Memory, Beverly Brown and the Brown Family, Umista Cultural Centre, 'Namgis First Nation at Alert Bay / director Sarah Hollan and curator Jaunita Johnston and University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology / curator Bill McLennan with Anna Pappalardo and Pam Brown.

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Canoe Detail, Project of Heart, **GATHER:PLACE**, Comox Valley Art Gallery.

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Canoe image concept: Jessie Everson

page 7. Krista McAllister, Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018

page 8-9. Alun Macanulty, Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018

page 10-11. Alun Macanulty, Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018

page 12-15. Alun Macanulty and CVAG Team, Gather:Space, Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018

page 12-15. Speaking to Memory Video 13 min 20 sec, produced by CVAG, 2018

page 19-53. Beverley Brown Fonds, St. Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay, BC, 1937-1949

page 74. CVAG Team, Gather:Space, Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2018

Acknowledgements

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The Comox Valley Art Gallery and SD 71 Indigenous Education Services are located on unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.