

# ORANGE SHIRT DAY

## Every Child Matters



September 30th



# What Is Orange Shirt Day?

Annual Event Inspired By A Girl Who Couldn't Wear Hers



Phyllis Webstad was six-years-old when the new orange shirt she excitedly chose for her first day of school was stripped off her back. She never saw it again. It was the early '70s and Webstad was the third generation of her family to attend St. Joseph's Residential School in Williams Lake, B.C. Most people knew it as The Mission. She was a kid. She didn't



know that merely being born an Indigenous child surrendered her to an education system designed to break down her identity. "The colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing," she said in a statement. "All of us little children were crying and no one cared."

From the 1880s until the last school shut down in 1996, Canada's residential school system forced about 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis children to attend church-run facilities that aimed to "take the Indian out of the child." The students faced widespread neglect and abuse in the schools, which was examined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that released a report with 94 recommendations earlier this year. It took Webstad 40 years to find a way to re-frame her experience to fight racism and bullying under the motto "every child matters" — and by using orange. On Sept. 30, 2013, Webstad organized the first Orange Shirt Day in Williams Lake to acknowledge the harm that Canada's residential school system has left in generations of indigenous families and their communities. And every year on Sept. 30, Canadians are asked to wear orange as a sign of support.

Citation:

Lum, Z. (2018, September 28). Orange shirt day inspired by a girl who couldn't wear hers. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/09/29/orange-shirt-day-residential-schools\\_n\\_12250652.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/09/29/orange-shirt-day-residential-schools_n_12250652.html).

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Phyllis Webstad Orange Shirt Day Presentation



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# What is the importance of Orange Shirt Day and what can you do?

**Orange Shirt Day** is an opportunity for us to recognize the intergenerational trauma resulting from residential schools, and come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come. Wear an orange shirt to show your support.

