



*Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## MCK addresses its Residential School Survivors in wake of further discovery of large number of unmarked graves

For immediate release

**(Kahnawake – 24, Ohiarí:ha/June 2021)** The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to make the following statement to the community in the wake of the discovery of a large number of unmarked graves in Saskatchewan.

Coming on the heels of the previous discovery of the bodies of 215 children in Kamloops, British Columbia, today's news is no less shocking.

There is no doubt another round of mourning and anguish that will be unleashed across Turtle Island.

From the very beginning, settlers who later formed the country we now call Canada have aggressively inflicted their assimilative intentions on our people. These intentions remain and are engrained in the institutions that govern the country, and as a result, continues to cause trauma to our people. As we have stated earlier in the month, Kahnawà:ke was not spared from the reach of these institutions, as a substantial number of our parents, grandparents, and great grand-parents were taken from their families to be taught, basically, that being 'Indian' was wrong.

With that being said, it is important to realize that there are still Residential School Survivors among us. These events undoubtedly trigger the deep emotions of those who have endured a lifetime of painful memories. We ask that our people take time to acknowledge our Survivors and keep them in our thoughts at this time. Despite the challenges, we must find the strength to carry on and strive to succeed. We should not hide from our sadness, and we need to support those who may need an extra hand to help them through the trauma. For those Survivors who require quiet contemplation, we ask that their wishes be respected as well.

As the MCK has stated in the past, there is great value and power in acknowledgment. It is not only healthy and helpful, but it is one of the first and most important components of the healing process. As Kanien'kehá:ka people, we are natural caregivers, and this is the time for us to allow that important quality to come to the forefront. We must help and support one another. We must listen to each other.

These are dark days for Indigenous people, but they may be darker for Canadians as they discover that their history is not as honorable as they have been led to believe. The need for true reconciliation has never been more of a priority than it is right now.

Prime Minister Trudeau has stated the pain and grief of Indigenous communities is "Canada's responsibility." Let us hope that the acknowledgment of this dark history leads to much brighter days ahead. As Canadians become more and more aware of our shared history, they will gain a better understanding of why so many Indigenous people, including right here in Kahnawà:ke, struggle with the inter-generational trauma placed on our people. We need to find a way to move forward without the old ignorance and prejudices of the past to stand in our way. Let's hope that Canadians are also up to that challenge.