

## Kahnawake Holiday to honor Residential Schools victims on September 30th

For immediate release

**Kahnawake – 10, Seskehkó:wa/September 2021)** Kahnawà:ke's Executive Directors Committee (EDC), which represents nine (9) community organizations, wishes to announce that they have unanimously declared a special day to honor the victims of Residential Schools.

Recently, Canada announced September 30<sup>th</sup> as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This federal statutory holiday will be observed for the first time on Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Kahnawà:ke will also observe this day of reflection, though for a slightly different reason.

“This is an important and long-overdue step by the Federal Government,” said Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) Ohén:ton Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs (Grand Chief) Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer. “This annual event, which aims to seek the truth and reconcile differences, will be a day for us to reflect upon the failures of the Canadian Government, and to help educate the rest of Canada on the crimes and injustices their government imposed upon the First Peoples of this land. The discoveries at several Residential Schools sites have shocked the entire country. On September 30<sup>th</sup> we are choosing to honor the memory of those victims lost or affected by this federally-mandated tool of systematic assimilation.”

All offices and organizations in Kahnawà:ke will be closed on September 30<sup>th</sup>, which is now considered a statutory holiday within our community. Essential services provided by each respective organization will remain in operation. Concurrently, September 30<sup>th</sup> has been marked “Orange Shirt Day” since 2013, to honour the thousands of Onkwehón:we children who were taken to residential schools, and the families who suffered these traumatic losses.

“We wear orange in remembrance of the hardships, and to ensure our kids know that ‘Every Child Matters’,” said MCK Ratsénhaienhs Harry Rice, who has been instrumental in the promotion of the movement locally.

The EDC is comprised of the following nine (9) community organizations: Kahnawake Education Center, Kahnawake Fire Brigade, Kahnawake Shakotii'a'takehnhas Community Services, Kahnawake Youth Center, Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa Language and Cultural Center, Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre, Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, Step By Step Child and Family Center, and Tawatohni'saktha.

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