



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Grand Erie Participates in Orange Shirt Day; Residential Schools Resource Shared

Brantford, Ont. – A wave of orange will fill the halls of Grand Erie schools on September 28, as the board recognizes Orange Shirt Day to educate and raise awareness of the residential school system, and the continuing impact it has had on Indigenous communities.

Orange Shirt Day grew out of the St. Joseph Mission Residential School commemoration event in British Columbia in 2013. It is the legacy of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad's story of having a new orange shirt taken from her on the first day of school at the Mission, and it has become an opportunity to stoke the discussion on all aspects of residential schools, bringing Indigenous leaders, local governments, schools, and communities together in the spirit of Reconciliation.

The date for Orange Shirt Day was chosen because it is the time of year when children were taken from their homes to residential schools. To learn more about Phyllis' story, and the origins of Orange Shirt Day, visit <https://bit.ly/2cOfyER>.

"The Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School is within Grand Erie's boundaries," said Jeannie Martin, Six Nations Native Advisor. "Its presence is a reminder of the past. Ensuring all students understand this history is critical to Grand Erie's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation."

During the past year, Grand Erie's Indigenous Education team worked with community partners, including the Woodland Cultural Centre, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Mississaugas of the New Credit, to develop a resource for educators on the history of residential schools.

The resource is meant to facilitate meaningful learning and engage students in critical thinking. The goal is to allow students to examine what led to this point in history and spark intentional discussion and planning on where to go next.

Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan includes Equity as one of six indicators to guide the work of realizing *Success for Every Student*, and promotes practices that help students, families, and staff feel safe, welcomed, and included.

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Contact:
Kimberly Newhouse
Manager of Communications and Community Relations

Grand Erie District School Board
349 Erie Avenue, Brantford, Ontario, N3T 5V3
Office: 519-756-6301 ext. 281147 | Cell: 519-732-8540
GrandErie.ca