



October 2nd, 2023

Bigstone Cree Nation Truth and Reconciliation Acknowledgement 2023

2023 marks the third year of the National Truth and Reconciliation Day as declared by the Government of Canada. However, the grassroots movement, “Orange Shirt Day” which motivated the declaration of the Statutory Holiday, was founded in May 2013. *“The color is a reminder of the shirt Phyllis Jack Webstad had taken from her on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission School in British Columbia.”* (Schafer, 2023) Indigenous people in Canada have a shared history when we acknowledge residential schools. While individual experiences differ, one truth remains consistent and it’s the fact that Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their home; what’s more is many of them never made it back.

Bigstone Cree Nation Leadership acknowledges Truth and Reconciliation Day. And we honor the strength & resiliency of our Elders who survived the historical injustices. They say time heals all; And maybe it does for some. But for others it may take more than one lifetime. Although, we look forward to the day when our children have outgrown the intergenerational trauma that was inflicted because of the Indian Residential Schools. Furthermore, we anticipate the healthy families and communities that are being built on resiliency and perseverance. On Saturday, we seen a glimmer of hope as our community came together to celebrate Truth and Reconciliation in Wabasca. Our Bigstone Child and Family Service department was instrumental in organizing and executing the event. We appreciate all the efforts and hard work of everyone who helped make it a success.

Having amazing staff that understand the significance of coming together is a reminder of how valuable Education is. Whether it be knowledge from our Elders or Postsecondary institutions, we all recognize the importance of Education. And we are very thankful for the Elders who are still here to guide us as we continue to move forward. And more so we are thankful to have the resources to Educate our Children at home, in their own schools, where we can create a safe place for them to thrive and succeed today as well as in the years ahead.

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Chief Andy Alook – Bigstone Cree Nation