



A pivotal time
A sacred space
**A permanent
legacy**



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Centre national pour la
vérité et la réconciliation

UNIVERSITÉ DU MANITOBA



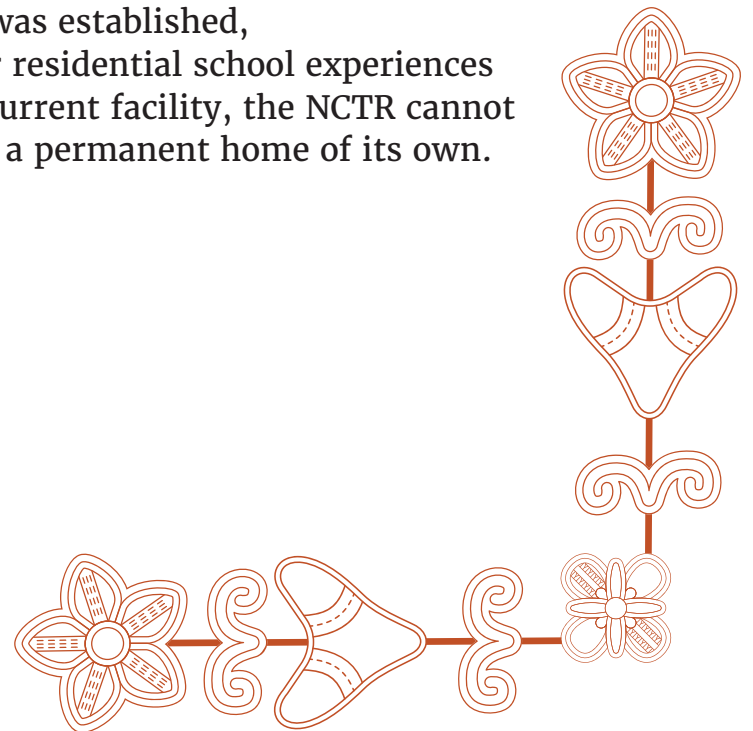
The Bentwood Box is a lasting tribute to all residential school Survivors. The sacred box and the sacred artifacts in this collection are deeply personal symbols of their experience.

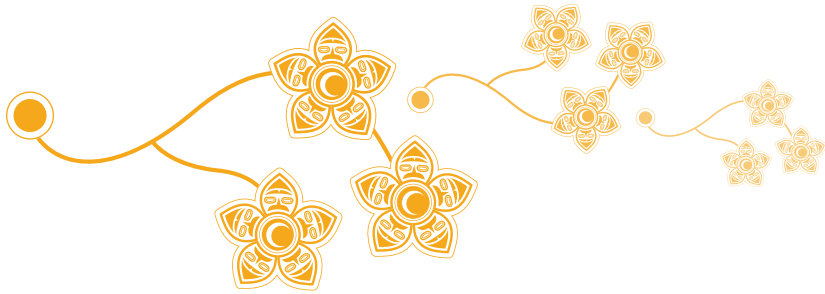
Imagine a young woman walking through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in search of her history. She stops for a moment in a ceremonial garden of prairie medicinal plants to think of her grandfather, a residential school Survivor. Then a display of residential school notebooks catches her eye. She thinks about how young her grandfather was when he was taken from his home. At one end of the gallery, a family has gathered around a big screen to watch their own relatives relating what life was like in the schools. At the other end, a student sifts through photographs, taking notes. The young woman thinks that when she has children, she will want to bring them here as well.

When the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) was established, Survivors had a vision to create a place where the truths of their residential school experiences would be honoured and kept safe for future generations. In its current facility, the NCTR cannot accommodate the sacred collection it is entrusted with. It needs a permanent home of its own.

cover photograph:

Elder Florence Paynter and her granddaughter Florence OMeara





The NCTR's new home will be a safe space for Survivors to come together to share their knowledge and experiences. The Centre will also be a place where family members may visit for healing and to reconnect with lost histories and loved ones. It will be a place where children, families, people from all walks of life can embark on their own journey of Reconciliation based on understanding and appreciating the true history of residential schools. The Centre will be a memorial for children who attended the schools and for those who did not return home, a place where the fire of Reconciliation will burn forever.

“In the future, there will be fewer Survivors. This is why it is important to have a home where we can preserve our truths, our stories, our hopes, for future generations.”

EUGENE ARCAND

Member, NCTR Survivors Circle



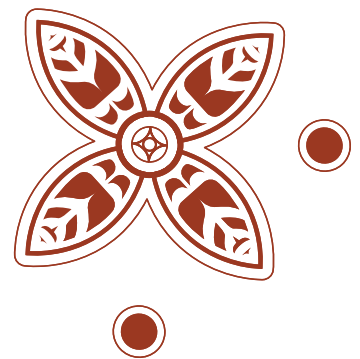
Coming together to fold the Memorial Cloth, which displays the names of 2,885 children who never made it home from residential schools. The list of names continues to grow as names are added to the National Student Memorial Register.





“The work of Reconciliation is the work of generations. It is vitally important that the voices of Survivors can continue to guide us on this national journey. Their statements, and other records of our history, must be safeguarded with love and respect. And they must continue to be shared in ways that move Canadians to action. This is what a permanent home for the NCTR can mean for our children and grandchildren and for generations yet to come.”

THE HONOURABLE MURRAY SINCLAIR,
Former Chair
Truth and Reconciliation Commission
of Canada





A Pivotal Time

Reconciliation is about the past and the future we must forge together. Understanding our history is the foundation of Reconciliation. Creating a place where this history is preserved and learning continues is the Survivor's vision and their legacy gift to us all.

In May 2021, non-Indigenous people were shocked by the announcement of new evidence that pointed to the possible location of 215 unmarked graves on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

Hearts and minds were opened. People were finally listening to the truth of the residential schools.

There was shock. There was anger. There was grief.

There is a noticeable change in the tone of the conversation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. There is a need to know the truth about the residential school system; a desire to learn more about the harms done; and a willingness among many individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to take action.





The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was established in 2015 through an agreement between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the University of Manitoba. A national Centre, led by Survivors and accountable to Indigenous peoples, the NCTR has accomplished much in that short time, including:

- created a safe place for the truths, memories, and experiences of over 7,000 residential school Survivors and over 4 million records of the residential school system
- been internationally recognized at the cutting edge of digital archiving and preservation to ensure these records are here not just now, but for all time
- led globally unique, ground-breaking research to advance understanding of the residential school system and its continuing effects
- engaged millions of Canadians in educational programs
- celebrated the inscription of Archival Records of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation into UNESCO's Memory of the World International Register
- created the National Student Memorial Register documenting and honouring the names of thousands of children who never returned home from residential schools
- provided funding support for Survivor-led healing and commemoration projects
- built a national and international network that extends across Canada, from Columbia to East Timor, from Norway to Australia and beyond, including UN Agencies
- worked in partnership with the federal government to establish National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- grown to a staff of over 50, located in four locations across the University of Manitoba campus.



Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honours Survivors of residential schools and the children who never returned home.





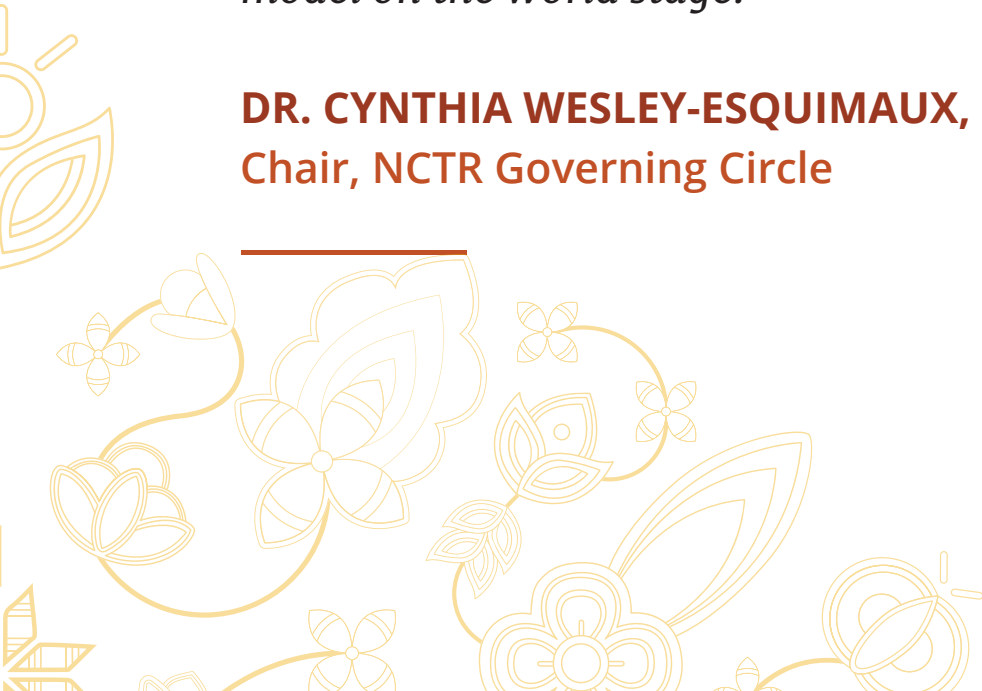
Elder Philip Paynter, Kalan Awashish, Métis Survivor Brian Norman, and Inuit Survivors Dr. Levina Brown and Maata Evaluardjuk-Palmer

The Government of Canada has recognized the NCTR's unique contribution to the ongoing work of Reconciliation and the importance of the NCTR having an appropriate permanent home. In November 2022, the federal government invested \$60 million to be the catalyst in creating the long-awaited new home for the NCTR.

Survivors have been clear they want their stories to be heard, their history preserved, and they want to see meaningful change in their lifetimes. The opportunity is now to get this right for the generations who will follow us.

“The NCTR is for all Canadians. The Centre presents an opportunity for Canada to step up and truly listen to Indigenous Peoples, embrace their wisdom, and elevate their values so we can move forward in harmony and friendship. Canada can be a role model on the world stage.”

DR. CYNTHIA WESLEY-ESQUIMAUX,
Chair, NCTR Governing Circle





“We are humbled to be the host of the NCTR and to partner with them in the ongoing journey of Truth and Reconciliation.”

DR. MICHAEL BENARROCH,
President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Manitoba

The TRC selected the University of Manitoba as host of the NCTR because they believed UM would offer the commitment, resources and infrastructure to best support the Centre’s success. UM was the first university in Canada to offer a formal apology for its role in educating the teachers who worked at residential schools.

The university’s leadership and the UM community remain deeply committed to the Reconciliation process and are eager to be active partners in building a better Canada that stands firmly on a foundation of truth.





The Centre has more than 2500 sacred objects that Survivors have entrusted to us, and most are held in storage due to limited space.

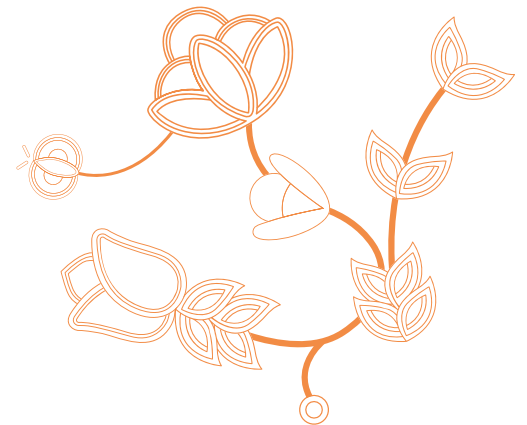
Since its inception, the NCTR has been operating out of a 5800 square foot brick house, the original residence of the University of Manitoba's president. We have outgrown that home.

As a result, these sacred objects cannot be seen or readily accessed. In fact, the much larger collection of documents and records cared for by our Archives is separated and held at several different locations due to lack of space.

In the words of one of our Elders, this collection is homeless. This, despite the fact that it is so important to the history of Canada and to the future of Reconciliation. When the NCTR was created, it assumed the responsibility to house the statements, documents and other historic materials that were gathered during the TRC.

Our collection of 4 million plus records is growing at an incredible rate. We have identified an additional 23 million records that we expect to receive in the coming months and years. Appropriate care for these records, these documents, these Survivor statements are precious and vital to the understanding of our history.

The NCTR also holds the largest collection of materials on the history and impacts of the residential school system in the world, and one of the largest collections of oral history records in the country. Again, our limited space makes it difficult for the collection to be viewed or accessed.



A Sacred Space

In its new, permanent home, the NCTR will be an international attraction for its cutting-edge work where history and Indigenous cultures come to life.

From the moment you enter the building, visitors will experience a warm and welcoming environment, greeted by sacred items like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bentwood Box or the Memorial Cloth.

A family visiting for the first time might come across a community group sharing a meal in one of the multi-purpose community spaces and Elders leading ceremony in one of the indoor or outdoor ceremonial spaces.

The Gallery will provide ample exhibition space that will couple technology with the NCTR's unique collection of items, documents and photographs to mount exhibits that bring stories to life.

For the first time ever, the NCTR will be able to accommodate school groups for in-house education sessions in designated classrooms. A lecture theatre will provide a space for presentations and sharing circles with Elders and visiting scholars as well as film openings and book launches.



A safe and private space in the Centre will offer Survivors and their families a place to view records of their residential school experience. For those who would like to share their truths, it will also offer a place for Statement Gathering.

Befitting its sacred responsibilities, the Centre will be equipped with climate controlled vaults that will bring the NCTR's entire collection together for the first time. Designated spaces will be set aside for archivists to continue to work on the collection: examining documents, preparing them for digitization and uploading them into the extensive searchable online archive. Study rooms nearby allow researchers to analyze the records for a deeper understanding that will encourage all Canadians to better understand our history so we can all contribute to a better future.

The new home will be a sacred place where First Nation, Inuit and Métis Elders and Knowledge Keepers can share their wisdom, teachings and lived experiences. This knowledge will serve as an important guide for all of the ways we can create just and peaceful relationships amongst diverse peoples.

Situated on the banks of the Red River, the NCTR's new home will live on a 2-acre parcel of land gifted by the University of Manitoba. It will feature:

- Welcoming reception and multi-purpose public community spaces
- Public exhibition spaces
- Indoor and outdoor ceremonial spaces
- Private spaces for Survivors and their families to view records and give Statements
- A theatre and classrooms and library spaces
- Climate controlled archival vaults
- Video archive and data centre, and digitization and digital production facilities
- Rooms for research and study of the archives
- A childcare centre

Projected Timeline

NOVEMBER 2021
Land blessing
ceremony

MAY – DECEMBER 2023
National consultations
and visioning with
Survivors and communities

2025
Construction
documentation

2029
Construction completion
and opening

NOVEMBER 2022
Government of Canada
commits \$60 million
towards a permanent
home for the NCTR

2024
Announcement of
project architect

2024
Schematic design
and design
development

2026 – 2029
Construction

PROJECTED FACILITY COST:
\$100 MILLION

FUNDRAISING GOAL:
\$40 MILLION



November 2021, land blessing ceremony for the new site of the NCTR.



A Permanent Legacy

The NCTR's spirit name – bezhig miigwan – means “one feather”. Bezhig miigwan calls upon us to see each Survivor coming to the NCTR as a single eagle feather and to show those Survivors the same respect and attention an eagle feather deserves.

It also teaches that we are all in this together and it is vital to work together to achieve Reconciliation. We are all connected and can and must find ways to live in harmony and peace.

As the NCTR and the University of Manitoba embark on a \$40 million fundraising campaign to build the Centre's new home, we invite you to be part of this legacy project.

*We invite you to join us in
**bringing this vision
to reality.***

You can be a part of the change that our country needs.
Your gift will help create a place where the truths are not
forgotten, where the courage of Residential School Survivors
can guide us to a better future.

*“While we cannot change our past, we can change
our future. Let’s do that together.”*

STEPHANIE SCOTT
Executive Director, NCTR





nctr.ca

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March 2024