



Statement

May 31, 2021

For Immediate Release

News late last week about the discovery of the remains of children on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School has brought profound sadness to British Columbians – in particular, to those who were connected to these lost children through family, community and Nation ties and to all those who have been impacted by the harms of the residential school system. These were 215 treasured children who were forcibly taken from their families and communities.

At the Representative's Office, we stood in grief with the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc Nation on Friday morning, shortly after hearing of the discovery – to honour and give prayers to the Nations, the families and loved ones of these innocent children who were victims of the residential school system.

The news is also causing each of us to reflect more deeply on the thousands of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous people who have been harmed and continue to be harmed by residential schools either directly or through the resulting intergenerational trauma. It is harm we see every day in our work and, for some of us, in our own families and friends.

While we stand in support of the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc Nation and all other Nations and people affected, we also acknowledge that the effects of residential schools and other colonialist policies are not historical – they are ongoing, and they must be addressed with sufficient resources and every ounce of energy that British Columbians and Canadians can muster.

At RCY, we pledge to walk alongside First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous communities, to bolster our work to improve the child- and youth-serving systems in B.C. and to support families in any way our mandate allows.

We do this in the memories of these 215 children and all the others still waiting and who deserve to be found.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth