

EVENT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT TITLE: Kootenay Indian Residential School 1912-1970, 50th Anniversary of Closing

***Society:** The event is coordinated by the Ktunaxa Traditional Knowledge and Language Enrichment Society (TKLES).*

Introduction:

On June 26, 1970 the Kootenay Indian Residential School was shut down forever.

It had been in operation since 1912, first as the St Eugene Industrial School then in 1925 was renamed the Kootenay Indian Residential School.

The past 50 years has seen an incredible transformation. The Ktunaxa Nation has taken a symbol of darkness and reclaimed it to become a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Approximately 5,000 students attended this residential school from the local Ktunaxa communities and from southern Alberta and the interior of BC. We are inviting all survivors and their families to join us in remembering our past and celebrating our future.

We are planning a four day gathering starting with a golf tournament on June 25, the commemoration on the 26th, an International Pow Wow on the 27th and the celebration of Holy Mass with Bishop Gregory in the 103 year old St Eugene Church on Sunday June 28, 2020.

Project Rationale:

The event is a celebration of an important milestone in the history of indigenous people in Canada. The 50 year anniversary of closing a large residential school, home to nearly 5,000 students of various first nations. In 50 years, much has happened, but the wounds and intergeneration trauma caused by that school are still evident in the lives of thousands of students and their families.

Celebrating this positive step in history: the CLOSING, is an important part of healing. This event seeks to acknowledge the wrong, to speak to the truth, to acknowledge reconciliation efforts and potentials, and to support students to continue to move towards healings. This event will be a reminder of the incredible resilience of First Nations, who in the face of such horror still survived and thrived. This event is a reclamation of what is ours: ***We shall speak our language, dance our songs, and live our ceremonies in the same place that tried to strip all away. Because we won, and we were not erased. Because we survived and we will thrive.***

The Kootenay Indian Residential School was located in Cranbrook, BC, Ktunaxa Territory. As the school was located in Ktunaxa territory, it was fitting the Ktunaxa Nation hosts this event. There are no other Nations currently working on this celebration. The main challenge for this event will be ensuring that adequate supports for mental health and spirituality are available during and after the event. This will be addressed through adequate funding to secure qualified professionals and spiritual leaders.

Collaboration in Healing:

This event is in line with the nation-wide movement towards healing and reconciliation. Most indigenous Nations in Canada have been working within their capacity to support residential school survivors towards healing. The following are Nations who attended the Kootenay Indian Residential School. All these Nations have counsellors and ongoing support to their members to address mental health:

- Ktunaxa
- Blood
- Piikani
- Okanagan
- Stoney

This event will gather all these Nations efforts and bring awareness of future services and supports needed, open collaborations of support, and enhance support availability.

Objective

The event is aimed to help promote healing for the past students and their families. The event will also promote awareness of the history of the residential school and celebrate healing and resilience.

Activities	Details	Objectives
Day 1: Golf Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The first day of the event will be a golf tournament	<i>Celebration of Resilience</i> The Ktunaxa reclaimed their land and transformed the old residential school in a golf course casino resort. In June 2020 it will be 20 years since the golf course opened. This is a celebration of how a dark building was transformed in a success story. The tournament will also promote many of the Indigenous golfers that have played in the course and gone onto a successful golf career.
Day 2: Ceremony day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Speeches and addresses from Nations who attended the school	<i>Reconciliation</i> Government Officials will have a chance to speak to reconciliation movement and state their support towards healing from the residential school. Members of all Nations who attended the residential school will have an opportunity to speak to their Nations' resilience and movement towards healing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ceremonial walk of "welcoming students home"	<i>Healing/ Belonging</i> Many students were left behind in the residential school when it closed. The walk of welcome home ceremony will further support healing for these students whose sense of abandonment has hunted them from the day the doors closed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Spiritual ceremonies from each Nation	<i>Empowerment/Healing</i> All students and families will have an opportunity and space to practice their spiritual ceremonies on the grounds of the school that tried to erase their

		culture in the first place. Spiritual ceremonies will not only empower their spirit but will empower their mind and hearts as they reclaim what it is theirs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering and sharing 	<i>Resilience/Support/Healing</i> Students will have gathering opportunities to share pictures and stories with each other. This will promote sense of community and support as well as engage in topics of resilience and healing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counsellors 	<i>Immediate support/mental health</i> The event will have counsellors available at all times to support students who may be triggered and in need of immediate support.
Day 3: Powwow Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dances 	<i>Healing, Empowerment, Culture</i> To host a powwow in the ground of what once was a residential school. A celebration of how far we have come in reclaiming our identity. The powwow floor is spiritually powerful and the dances support healing, promote culture, and empower both dancers and spectators.
Day 4: Mass Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass 	<i>Spiritual Healing</i> This mass will be celebrated by the local Bishop. This is a symbol of reconciliation as the mass readings and choir will be in the Ktunaxa Language for the first time.
Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch and Dinner will be served in all 4 days of the event 	<i>Culture/Support</i> Sharing meals is a very important part of Indigenous cultures. Sharing meals will allow further support healing, support, and culture

Outcomes

Activities	Goals	Measurable Outcomes
Golf tournament	Celebration of Resilience	Presence of indigenous golf pros
Powwow Day	Healing, Empowerment	Presence of dancers and spectators Visible counsellors and support staff Opportunities for gathering (photo slide show room, meals, visiting areas)
Ceremony Day	Healing, Empowerment, Reconciliation, Mental Health	Public address from each of the Nations Public address from each of the government officials Welcoming ceremony Opportunities for visiting and gathering (meals, social spaces)
Mass Day	Reconciliation	Ktunaxa language spoken in liturgy, Ktunaxa choir Presence of students

Partners and Collaborations

- The Ktunaxa Nation is formed by 6 Bands, 4 Bands located in Canada (aqam, akisqnuk, tabacco plains, and lower kootenay) and 2 in the United States (Kootenay Tribe of Idaho, and Elmo Band). Each of these Bands have been requested to contribute \$10,000 towards this event. Shuswap Indian Band is also located in Ktunaxa Territory, and has also been asked to contribute the same amount.
- Partnership requests have also gone out to many local organization and business that operate and profit in Ktunaxa Territory.

Continuation of Support

The event main focus is to further promote healing to students and their families. In the preparation of this event, on going communication will take place with all Nations attending. A list will be made for each Nation, outlining all sources of mental health supports available in their communities. Event organizers will ensure all students are given this comprehensive list. These lists will also be available through the onsite counsellors in the events. A follow up with each Nation will be done with highlights of the event, any concerns, and opening dialogue for future partnerships in healing activities/events.

Funding Request

The Society requests a donation to cover the costs associated with this large-scale reconciliation and healing event. The grant funds will be used for the following:

- Event equipment, facilities, and supplies.
- One-time wages of staff needed for the days of the event (counsellors, facilitators, servers, cleaners, and security staff)
- Food and beverages