




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	September 23, 2021
SUBJECT:	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day – September 30, 2021 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Janette Smith City Manager City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	

Bill C-5, *An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)*, received Royal Assent on June 3, 2021, creating a new federal public holiday under the *Canada Labour Code*. This Bill officially came into force on August 3, 2021, which means that this will be the first year that this new holiday will be in effect.

The purpose of this update is to inform Council of staff's review of our collective agreements and plans to recognize this important day.

Human Resource Impacts

The new statutory holiday applies to all federally-regulated public and private sectors, including employers that are subject to the federal *Canada Labour Code*. This means that the holiday does not currently apply to provincially-regulated employers, however, provincial legislatures may follow suit at the provincial level. At this time, the Ontario government has not indicated whether it will recognize this federal holiday as a provincial holiday.

The collective agreements at the City with its various union stakeholders have differing provisions that come into play when new holidays are declared. Staff have reviewed the language and advise that unions at the City of Hamilton do not have language in their respective collective agreements that would automatically result in the addition of a

new statutory holiday to recognize the federal government's establishment of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with a paid holiday.

With more lead time in 2022, staff will be able to do a full review of all the options available to recognize this day and the cost implications, consult with key stakeholders and review what other municipalities are doing. This will be completed and a report brought to Council in the spring of 2022.

Plans to Recognize National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day -September 30, 2021

City Council approved the Urban Indigenous Strategy in July 2019 and in February 2021, Council approved the Urban Indigenous Strategy Implementation Plan. The Strategy is the City's plan to carry out the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada at the local level. We recognize many of the national issues that impact Indigenous people locally such as missing and murdered Indigenous women and the legacy of Indian residential schools.

In addition to the federal government proclaiming September 30th as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30th is Orange Shirt Day. Orange Shirt Day is meant to recognize the impact that Indigenous residential schools have had on our Indigenous community. By wearing an orange shirt on that day, staff can show our support and commitment to reconciliation, inclusion and anti-racism, and demonstrate that every child matters.

Orange Shirt Day was established by Phyllis Webstad, a residential school survivor who told her story of her shiny new orange shirt which was taken from her when she attended her first day of school at the Saint Joseph Mission residential school. The residential school era began in the early 1870's, with the last school closing in 1996. The Mohawk Institute residential school located in the neighbouring town of Brantford is one of the oldest residential schools which was established in 1828.

With the recent findings of over a thousand unmarked graves and counting at former residential schools in Canada, the significance of Orange Shirt Day and the new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it is important that the day is used to provide education to staff across the Corporation about residential schools, the importance of Truth and Reconciliation Calls for Action and the City's Urban Indigenous Strategy.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the City is only able to virtually recognize the day and it will be a jumping off point for more training and education for staff in the future.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Activities planned for the day include:

Hosting a virtual staff lunch and learn on the Mush Hole - Mohawk Institute:

- Mush Hole Voices - Survivors share their stories

In collaboration with the child care and early years community, a committee was created to organize Orange Shirt Day throughout EarlyON centres across the city. The committee has planned for:

- Orange shirts to be distributed to children in EarlyON programs and EarlyON staff
- Niwasa to provide a recorded video on how to use their Orange Shirt Day Resource Kit for educational purposes
- The team to help design a postcard with resources on Orange Shirt Day and Indian Residential Schools to distribute through EarlyON programs, families and the Indigenous community.

In collaboration with the Hamilton Public Library, a number of resource links have been shared via the Urban Indigenous Strategies website at <https://www.hamilton.ca/urban-indigenous-strategy> including:

- *In Jesus' Name: Shattering the Silence of St. Anne's Residential School*
- *Angry Inuk* (2017) Documentary
- *Birth of a Family* (2017) Documentary
- *Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada* series

Cross-promotion of the Woodland Cultural Centre
<https://woodlandculturalcentre.ca/every-child-matters/>

In addition to the activities above, the City's Indigenous Relations Team is working closely with Communications to ensure that strong messaging about the commemoration of this day is distributed through the City's various social media channels. An all-staff communication will be sent from the City Manager and as well, the Hamilton sign will be lit up in orange. Any media inquiries will be handled by the Communications team.

Association of Municipalities of Ontario Resources

The Association of Municipalities (AMO) has developed resources to support municipalities to address the Truth and Reconciliation Calls for Action. In partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, AMO has developed

training specifically for elected officials. Information about the awareness training is included in Appendix “A” attached to this Communication Update.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Communication Update – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day – September 30, 2021