



TSESHAHT FIRST NATION

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August 31, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: 50th Anniversary of Closing the Alberni Indian Residential School & National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

On July 3, 1973 the Nuuchahnulth leadership from the West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs, which later became Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council sent a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs that firmly propositioned the closure of the then Alberni Student Residence, which was formerly Alberni Indian Residential School. This letter signed by the West Coast Council's Chairman, George Watts, led to a historical meeting between Canada and Nuuchahnulth leaders demanding the closure. On August 31, 1973, the Alberni Indian Residential School closed its doors, FOREVER!

Over the last 50 years Survivors of the Indian Residential School system have been creating paths for others to follow in areas of healing and wellness, and culture and language revitalization. Former residential school buildings have been reused and renovated, torn down, and replaced and some still remain. Nevertheless, today we plan to celebrate, commemorate, and come together as one because, **WE ARE STILL HERE!**

On September 30, 2023, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Tseshah First Nation, the AIRS caretaker community, invites you to join us to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the closing of the Alberni Indian Residential School. The day will begin by gathering at the Best Western Barclay Hotel at 10:00 am, where a showing of AIRS student art will be displayed. From there we invite you to walk with us starting at 11:00 am to the Maht Mahs Gymnasium where, we will host a lunch, activities, drumming, singing, dinner and more.

Throughout the event Survivors and guests can expect an uplifting, celebratory environment. We know everyone is at a different place on their own healing journey and we are hopeful this day will help lift your spirits. There will be cultural supports and counsellors available onsite. Additional supports are available as listed on the following page.

Everyone is welcome to attend and we invite you to bring your children, your family, and your friends to join you on this momentous occasion.

For more information, please contact:

Elected Chief Councillor, Wahmeesh Ken Watts at kenwatts@tseshah.com

Event Coordinator, Esther Charlie esther.airs@tseshah.com

Communications Liaison, Melissa Bigmore at mbigmore@tseshah.com

Mental Health and Wellness Supports



ćišaa?ath [Tseshaht]

First Nation

?uu?atumin yaqck^wiimitqin

(Doing it for our Ancestors)

Alberni Indian Residential School Project

Tseshaht First Nation is providing counselling supports to Tseshaht members, Elders, Survivors and all other Survivors of AIRS during our research/investigation ?uu?atumin yaqck^wiimitqin project (AIRS Research Project).

Counselling support is also available through Linda Pelech who can be reached at **250.242.0114**

We extend our gratitude to:

- NTC Teechuktl Mental Health,
 - NTC Quu-asa
 - Tsow Tun Lelum
 - Uut Uustukyuu Society
- for their continued in person/virtual cultural supports.

IF YOU'RE IN NEED OF SUPPORT, PLEASE REACH OUT:

Quu'asa Cultural Support

250-724-3939

Tsow - Tun Le Lum Society

1-888-403-3123

Metis Crisis Line

1-888-403-3123

Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society

1-800-388-8717

www.kuu-uscrisisline.com

IRSS Crisis Line 24/7

1-800-721-0066

Hope For Wellness

1-855-242-3310

First Nations Health Authority

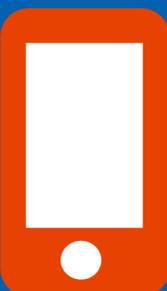
<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>

Coastal Health

http://www.vch.ca/locations-services?search_term=counselling

NTC Teechuktl Mental Health

<https://nuuchahnulth.org/services/teechuktl-mental-health>



Did you know, if you text **686868** when you are feeling down, depressed or suicidal, a crisis worker will text you back immediately and will continue to text with you until you feel ok. Many people don't like talking and feel more comfortable texting. This service is free.

Tseshaht First Nation 5091 Tsuma-as Drive | Port Alberni | 250 724 1225