



# TSESHAHT FIRST NATION

5091 Tsuma-as Dr. Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8X9  
P: 250.724.1225 | F: 250.724.4385 | Tseshah.com

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**Warning: The following may be triggering. Please know that supports are available.  
Information on Cultural and Mental Health Supports are listed at the end of the notice.**

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Port Alberni, BC February 20, 2025** - On behalf of Tseshah First Nation ḥawiiḥ (hereditary chiefs), Elected Chief and Council, and Tseshah members we would like to congratulate the family of the late Art Thompson, in particular his daughter, Evelyn Thompson-George on the publishing a book of her father's memoirs, **The Defiant 511 of the Alberni Indian Residential School**.

A **book launch** event will be held:

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

**10:00 am | Great Room**

Tseshah Administration

5091 Tsuma-as Drive

Port Alberni, BC

Tseshah First Nation invites community, members of the public and media to attend the book launch. Light snacks and refreshments will be served. Inquiries and media interviews can be arranged, please see the below for more information.

**Background:** Many Indigenous children experienced the grim realities of residential schools—from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse to malnourishment, forced religious indoctrination, and attempted cultural eradication. In this memoir, Evelyn Thompson-George shares her father's deeply personal account of his time at the Alberni Indian Residential School, where he endured unimaginable abuse from ages five to thirteen.

Despite the trauma he faced in remembering and retelling his story, Art Thompson made the courageous decision to share his experiences and expose the grim reality of life within the walls of the residential school in hopes of finding healing and closure. Art Thompson emerged as a leader, creating the initial sparks for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada when he and seventeen other brave individuals sought accountability for the atrocities committed against Indigenous



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children by initiating—and winning—a lawsuit to hold the Government of Canada, The United Church of Canada, and his abusers accountable for their participation in the horrific abuses suffered by him and other Indigenous children.

In writing this book, Evelyn Thompson-George used transcripts from her father's testimony, giving readers insight into the lasting impact of residential school experiences, including the intergenerational trauma that continues to affect Indigenous communities today. Art Thompson's story is a poignant reminder of the ongoing journey toward Truth and Reconciliation and healing for Indigenous Peoples in Canada, as well as a powerful testament to resilience, courage, and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

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## **About Tseshaht First Nation**

čišaaʔath (Tseshaht First Nation) has over 1300 registered members whose ʔaḥuʔi includes from the Somass watershed including the entire Alberni Valley, the western portions of both Horne Lake and Cameron Lake, the Alberni Inlet and surrounding lands and watersheds to the Broken Group Islands of central Barkley Sound, and out to the Pacific Ocean. Tseshaht possesses Aboriginal Rights within the ʔaḥuʔi [ha-houl-thee] (Chief's territory) owned by our tayii ʔawil [ty-ee ha-wil-th], including Aboriginal Title. For more information, please visit [www.tseshaht.com](http://www.tseshaht.com).

## **Media Inquiries & Interview Requests:**

**Evelyn Thompson-George**, Author | [etg1187@hotmail.com](mailto:etg1187@hotmail.com)

## **General Inquiries:**

**Melissa Bigmore**, Communications Liaison  
čišaaʔath (Tseshaht First Nation) | [mbigmore@tseshaht.com](mailto:mbigmore@tseshaht.com)

## Mental Health and Wellness Supports



# čišaałath [Tseshaht]

## First Nation

### łuułatumin yaqckłiimitqin

(Doing it for our Ancestors)

Alberni Indian Residential School Project

Support for members, Elders, Survivors and all other Survivors of AIRS during our łuułatumin yaqckłiimitqin Research project (AIRS Project).

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

**250.730.0547**

We extend our gratitude to:

- NTC Teechuktl Mental Health
  - Tsow Tun Le Lum
  - Uut Uustukyuu Society
- for their continued in person/ virtual cultural supports.

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

**Teechuktl Mental Health**  
250.724.3939

**Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum Society**  
1.888.403.3123

**Metis Crisis Line**  
1.888.403.3123

**Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society**  
1.800.588.8717  
[www.kuu-uscrisisline.com](http://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com)

**IRSSS Crisis Line 24/7**  
1.800.721.0066

**Hope For Wellness**  
1.855.242.3310

**First Nations Health Authority**

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/residential-schools>

**Coastal Health**

[http://www.vch.ca/locations-services?search\\_term=counselling](http://www.vch.ca/locations-services?search_term=counselling)



Did you know, if you text **686868** when you're feeling down, depressed or suicidal, a crisis worker will text you back

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