

“care for children and you care for the world”



This ISSUE

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Native Past is Not
Prologue: Building a Better
Tomorrow

Forced re-education of
native children

Last Word

Freedom at its root is
diversity.

Native Past is Not Prologue: Building a Better Tomorrow

On July 8, 2021, children's shoes and other symbolic objects were lined up in a memorial around the Centennial Flame at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada, in memory of the 215 indigenous children who were found buried in unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops Residential School.

The purpose of boarding schools such as Kamloops, was to remove First Nations children from their families and raise them to be a part of Canada's European culture thus, suppressing their traditional ways of living. These discriminatory policies were enforced over several generations against indigenous communities in Canada, as well as in the United States and Australia. The forced placement and re-education of indigenous children resulted in significant social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual damage to these native tribal communities.

Can storytelling help us to tell the truth? Imagine that you have a of circle time and you share history but instead of telling them some facts, you invite them to feel the situation like...

For example, imagine living on tribal lands only a few decades ago. A grandmother is collecting strands of grass with the oldest of her three grandchildren. As they rest by the river, they take the strands and braid them, honoring Mother Earth for sharing this important resource. The grandmother is passing along ancient wisdom to the next generation. She is sharing the proper way their community harvests, so these grasslands survive and thrive year after year. As the sun now falls lower in the western sky, the grandchildren head home while the grandmother continues making baskets from the collected strands, which will be used in the coming fall harvest.

But when she returns later that evening, the grandmother discovers that her three grandchildren have been forcibly taken by government agents to a boarding school. The baskets these children would have made now will never be. The ancient wisdom the grandmother tried to pass on will now die with her. The tribe will eventually fade away. Our newsletter argues that our country's educational curriculum must be revised to reflect a commitment to indigenous education through a process of indigenization, the recognition and revitalization of tribal cultures and their languages, and the acknowledgment of past injustices.

“The truth needs to be heard from the perspective of those who were harmed,” declared the leader of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Ojibwe Nation. As parents and educators, we must understand that when knowledge is provided to children from only a single Eurocentric narrative, that knowledge fails to include the competing voices of our shared history. It privileges one story by silencing all others.

Rising Advocates

We believe it is critical that schools widen the spectrum of history education, focus on who we are as people, and how we have treated each other, especially in the past. When we are honest about our past, we build a better foundation for modern relationships. It can also change the way that we view groups that were historically mistreated and silenced. So much of indigenous people's histories have been either diluted or outright removed from our history books. We must reverse what was mistaught to generations of Canadians before these stories become irretrievable.

A 2015 report from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) determined that the residential school system perpetuated "cultural genocide" against Canada's First Nations communities. Unfortunately, in America records for most of their Indian Boarding Schools have not been made public. A survey conducted by The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition estimates that less than 10% of Americans know anything about US Boarding Schools. Rising Advocate condemns the practice of weaponizing children to commit indigenous erasure in Canada, the United States, and Australia and stands in solidarity with the families and communities who are still dealing with their historical trauma and cultural loss.

For more information:

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition:
<https://boardingschoolhealing.org>

Recommended Reading List:
<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/resources/recommended-book-list/>

National Indian Education Association (NIEA):
<https://www.niea.org/>

National Museum of the American Indian –
Smithsonian:<https://americanindian.si.edu/>



Last Word

A free society cannot remain free indefinitely if it fails to respect the myriad shades of people and opinion within and without its borders.