



JUSTICE | HEALTH | FUNDING

Project Communications Narrative Report

ʔuuʔatumin yaqckʷiimitqin

(Doing it for our Ancestors)



Project Overview

Justice

Conduct independent legal investigations not led by the RCMP due to their history.

The Nuu-chah-nulth phrase "ʔuuʔatumin yaqckʷiimitqin" means "Doing it for our Ancestors." This project, led by the Tseshah First Nation, aims to locate unmarked graves at the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS) site and connect with the ancestors of those who didn't return. It also provides wellness support to Survivors sharing their stories.

Health

Establish an independent body to investigate medical records related to IRS.

The initiative is built on four pillars: engagement, research, scanning, and memorialization, all focused on uncovering the truth about the past. While initially seen as a place of learning, AIRS was actually a site of trauma where children faced abuse and neglect, leading to significant harm and loss of life. This history highlights the need for education about Indigenous experiences to foster meaningful coexistence.

Funding

Secure funding to deliver information about student deaths at AIRS to families.

Guided by Survivors and community leaders, the project seeks answers and documentation of those lost at AIRS. It also provides counselling support for affected individuals. Ongoing research aims to fill gaps in historical records, and additional funding from the federal government is sought to deliver vital information to families. True reconciliation requires acknowledging these truths.

Media Contact

Elected Chief Councillor
Washmeesh (Ken Watts)



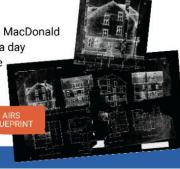
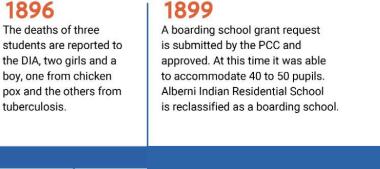
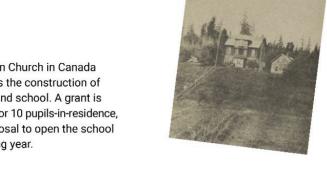
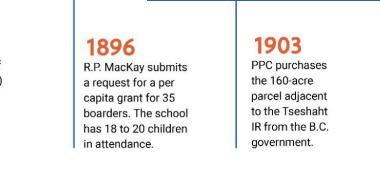
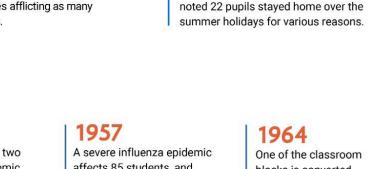
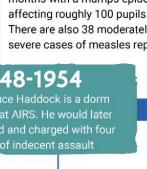
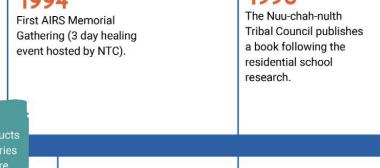
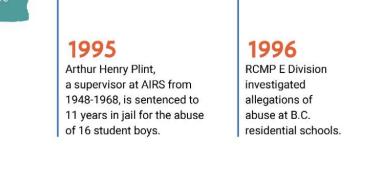
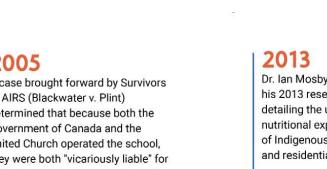
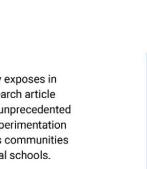
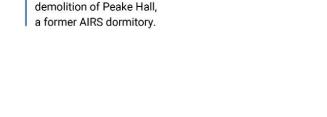
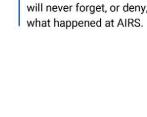
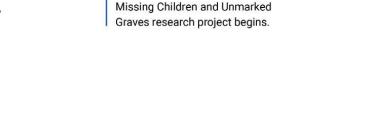
Miigwetch/Thank you for inviting us into your community through sharing your sacred ceremony. What an honour you have shared with us today. Again MIIGWETCH!

Shirley D. Johnson

wikālin hasiik (We are not done)

The Tseshahit concept of hishuk-ish-ts'awlk embodies the deep spiritual connection between the spiritual and physical worlds. Before contact, distinct family lines and roles like tutuupata and tluukwana were well-defined, but these began to diminish with the onset of Colonialism, disrupting traditional seasonal rhythms and the economic landscape.

The c̓isaa?ath̓ (Tseshahit) First Nation has over 1,200 registered members, with their h̓aaħuułi (territory) spanning from the Broken Group Islands, through central Barkley Sound, both sides of Alberni Inlet, and into the Alberni Valley and central Vancouver Island.

1892 Rev. John A. MacDonald establishes a day school in the Tseshahit Reserve. 	1893 The Women's Foreign Mission Society takes over the administration of the "Alberni Girls' Home." A new schoolhouse is built on 16 acres of Tseshahit land. 	1896 The deaths of three students are reported to the DIA, two girls and a boy, one from chicken pox and the others from tuberculosis. 	1899 A boarding school grant request is submitted by the PCC and approved. At this time it was able to accommodate 40 to 50 pupils. Alberni Indian Residential School is reclassified as a boarding school. 
1892 Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) funds the construction of residence and school. A grant is submitted for 10 pupils-in-residence, with a proposal to open the school the following year. 	1895 The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) provides a \$1,500 grant towards a new building for the Girls' Home. 	1896 R.P. MacKay submits a request for a per capita grant for 35 boarders. The school has 18 to 20 children in attendance. 	1903 PPC purchases the 160-acre parcel adjacent to the Tseshahit IR from the B.C. government. 
1904 A request is submitted to increase the grant from 30 to 50 pupils, as the administration has insufficient funding "for the maintenance of 43 children" enrolled. 	1920 Amendments to the Indian Act made April 1 by Duncan Campbell Scott made it mandatory for all First Nations children to attend Indian residential schools from ages 7-16. 	1913-1941 No attendance records are available. 	1937 AIRS destroyed by fire again. Enrollment is 115 pupils. A recommendation is made to rebuild the school to accommodate 150. Closure of Ahousaht IR is also recommended. 
1910 The 'Indian Problem' was said many times, and formed the foundational ideology of Duncan Campbell Scott (Superintendent of Indian Affairs) amendments to the Indian Act. 	1922 Dr. Bryce published "The Story of A National Crime - An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada". 	1925-1969 The United Church takes over the school. 	1942 An Indian Agent notes "the health of the school is not good" while it is under quarantine due to five students suffering from the mumps. It was also noted 22 pupils stayed home over the summer holidays for various reasons. 
1942-1952 Nutrition experiments are conducted by the Government of Canada, with support of the United Church of Canada. 	1943 A measles epidemic affects 75 students, some of whom became very ill. 	1948-1954 Donald Bruce Haddock is a dorm supervisor at AIRS. He would later be convicted and charged with four counts of indecent assault. 	1957 A severe influenza epidemic affects 85 students, and a few cases of German measles are recorded. 
1966 All boarding students are integrated into the Alberni and Port Alberni school system and classrooms are converted into additional boarding space. 	1969 The Government of Canada takes over management of AIRS. 	1994 First AIRS Memorial Gathering (3 day healing event hosted by NTC). 	1996 The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council publishes a book following the residential school research. 
1968-1969 Michael Dennis Flynn is a dorm supervisor at AIRS. He would later be convicted and charged with sexual abuse. 	1992-1994 The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council conducts research to highlight the words and stories of the Nuu-chah-nulth people who were affected by residential schools. 	2005 A case brought forward by Survivors of AIRS (Blackwater v. Plint) determined that because both the Government of Canada and the United Church operated the school, they were both "vicariously liable" for the abuses experienced by students. 	2013 Dr. Ian Mosby exposes in his 2013 research article detailing the unprecedented nutritional experimentation of Indigenous communities and residential schools.
2009 Tseshahit First Nation hosts Survivors to witness the demolition of Peake Hall, a former AIRS dormitory. 	2014 Sculpture by artist Connie Watts is unveiled. The art installation ensures people will never forget, or deny, what happened at AIRS. 	2019 Tseshahit First Nation invites 203 B.C. nations to the Reclaiming of Lost Souls healing event for AIRS Survivors. 	2022 The ɬuuʔatunin yaap̓kʷiim̓tqin (Doing It for Our Ancestors) project team is formed. Tseshahit First Nation-led Missing Children and Unmarked Graves research project begins.



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