

## September 30<sup>th</sup> is Orange Shirt Day National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

*Imagine... It's September and you're going to a gathering. You're really looking forward to it and you've bought a special outfit for the occasion. With high hopes, you say goodbye to your family and make the long journey to the gathering.*

*Upon arrival, your host doesn't greet you by name, but gives you a number instead and just past the foyer, you're taken into a side room where the host cuts off your hair, takes off your clothes, scrubs you in a bath and douses you with lice powder ... "Just in case". Afterward, you look everywhere for your new outfit, but it's gone. You're told you must wear the same plain clothes as all the other guests. You're not allowed to speak your own language as you mingle; you must use the host's language. Not knowing it, you say nothing. Instead of enjoying your evening and learning new things as you had hoped, you're asked to clean up. Later you're given a little food, but it tastes so unusual, you aren't sure it's safe to eat.*

*You're desperate to go home; you can't believe you wanted to come here! But the host insists you stay, showing you to a large, cold, damp room where you and all the other guests are told to sleep.*

*10 long months pass before the gathering ends.*

*Back at home, you're shocked to discover you no longer understand your family when they speak to you and their habits seem strange, even backward. You're ashamed of your family because they can't speak your new language and they don't seem to know what is right and true – what your host taught you. You feel anger deep in your gut. You feel loose – disconnected from your family – nightmares constantly disrupt your sleep.*

*After two short months, it's September again; this year you will not wear anything that's special.*

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48 years ago, Phyllis Webstad's grandmother gave her a new orange shirt to start residential school; Phyllis wore it to "The Mission," on her first day. You can listen to [Phyllis's own account](#) of Orange Shirt Day or to [a reading of Phyllis's story](#) by Karen Upper. Phyllis's story is one of thousands of stories of Indigenous children being forced to attend Residential Schools across Canada.

**WEAR ORANGE ON SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>, share Phyllis's story, and start a conversation about Canada's history.**

Submitted by [Mississippi Mills All My Relations](#) Continue the conversation with us.

You can purchase an orange shirt locally:

1. [Turtle Lodge Trading Post](#) is an Indigenous owned home-based mail order wholesale/retail company in Clayton, Ontario. They sell [Orange Shirt Society shirts](#) for \$20.00



2. Algonquin artist, traditional teacher, and Ottawa's Poet Laureate, [Albert Dumont](#), has designed [orange shirts](#) in Algonquin, French or English for adults and youth for \$30.00. ALL PROFITS advance Indigenous reconciliation and promote awareness of the intergenerational impact of residential schools. Albert has been paid for his art and the [Orange Shirt Society](#) supports these sales. Send orders & questions to Pamela: [pnaymark@gmail.com](mailto:pnaymark@gmail.com).

