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SCO RESPONDS TO MORE UNMARKED GRAVES AT FORMER RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SITE

It's going to be a long and difficult summer – Grand Chief Daniels

July 02, 2021

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is sending its condolences and prayers to members of the Ktunaxa Nation, who announced the discovery of 182 unmarked graves at the site of St. Eugene's Mission School, a former residential school, in what is now British Columbia.

“We knew this kind of news would surface in the weeks and months to come,” said Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. “However nothing adequately prepares you to receive it. My heart literally breaks for my Relations who make up the Ktunaxa Nation.”

The community of ʔAq'am, part of the Ktunaxa Nation, used ground-penetrating radar to search a site close to the former residential school. St. Eugene's Mission School was operated by the Catholic Church from 1912 until the early 1970s. It's been determined that children were sent to that residential school from all four bands of the Ktunaxa Nation, including Akisq'nuk, ʔAq'am, Tobacco Plains, and Yaqan nuʔkiy.

“To think, this is the third such finding in just over a month,” stated SCO Grand Chief Daniels. “At this rate, we will soon be talking about discovering thousands of unmarked graves belonging to our children who were stolen, never to return. During this difficult time it is critical that we continue to lift each other up, while also demanding that First Nations' priorities be at the forefront for all governments. Anything less will only dishonor the children lost to residential school.”

News of the St. Eugene discovery comes as Grand Chief Daniels makes his way to British Columbia to join other First Nation leaders and Survivors in honouring the victims and families from the former Kamloops Residential School and bringing them sacred gift bundles. Grand Chief Daniels also visited Cowessess First Nation this week to pay homage to the 751 children discovered at the site of the former Marieval Residential School in Saskatchewan.

Meanwhile, on July 1 in Winnipeg, SCO co-hosted an event with Treaty One Chiefs and other Indigenous organizations entitled “No Pride in Genocide.” It featured a peaceful walk from the Canadian Museum of Human Rights to the Peguis First Nation Urban Reserve in Winnipeg.

“Whether in BC, Saskatchewan, or in Manitoba, all First Nation leaders share the call for colonial governments to recognize the Indian Residential School legacy for what it truly is; a genocide,”

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concluded Grand Chief Daniels. “We demand they also provide the funding to search all grounds at former residential schools, and to work with the families of the lost children to determine how to proceed.”

Videos from the “No Pride in Genocide” event can be found on the [SCO Facebook Page](#).

SCO would like to remind people that an Indian Residential Schools Help Line 1-866-925-4419 is available 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience.

There are also six healing centres in southern Manitoba that offer support and services for IRS Survivors and their families.

The healing centres have created a safe space in Winnipeg for Survivors to give prayers, offer tobacco, and receive support. Called ‘A Fire to Honour the Children,’ the space is open every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday until July 13th and is located at the Peguis First Nation Urban Reserve at 1075 Portage Avenue.

More information on supports for Survivors can be found [on the SCO website](#).

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The Southern Chiefs’ Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 80,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples’ inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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