

WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE DONOR NEWS

Approaching the Finish Line

The Official Unveiling of the
Former Mohawk Institute is
Happening on September 30th -
Get Exclusive Updates Inside

Education Programming

Sign up for Truth and
Reconciliation Programming
this September

And more...

Hope and Resilience: A Call for Continual Reconciliation, a Message from our Executive Director

HEATHER GEORGE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every September, Canadians' thoughts turn to Reconciliation. At Woodland, it is our busiest month of the entire year. It's also the hardest on staff—not just because it's busy, but also because almost every staff member at Woodland has family who were taken to the Institute. Our emotions are stretched to their thinnest, and we spend much of the month battling the burnout of the reality that much of the work of reconciliation has fallen on Indigenous peoples.

Each year, I take this time to reflect on the word reconciliation and where Canada is at in this journey. This year, on the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I thought about how few of the 97 Calls to Action have been completed, or how Indigenous communities remain under boil water advisories, or the youth suicide crisis, or any of the myriad issues facing Indigenous communities today—all indications of how far we are from true reconciliation. But then I reflected on something else: the kindness and hope of so many of the Survivors of Residential Schools I have met.



In the world we live in today, where hate and racism have been normalized and weaponized, holding onto hope and kindness might seem naïve. However, choosing to refuse to be hard and bitter when those emotions are more than justified is one of the most beautiful displays of strength I have seen.



As Canadians, coming to terms with the history of their country as a perpetrator of genocide—and as Indigenous people continue to experience the ripple effects of that and ongoing colonial oppression—the idea and practice of reconciliation requires an incredible amount of hope and kindness. So this year, as we finish up the restoration and interpretation work on the Mohawk Institute and prepare to open it to the public as a Site of Conscience and commemoration on September 30th, I am choosing to protest through hope and kindness. Make no mistake—this is a protest, albeit a quiet one.

My reflection on reconciliation this year is that it's a protest that refuses to give up on the belief that many good people will continue to join us on this often painful path—people who will find hope and kindness in the face of hate and racism, and who will see reconciliation as an ongoing journey, not a task with an end.



Heather George
Executive Director

Support
WCC



Final Steps: A Place of Healing, Truth, and Reconciliation

In 2014, the Save the Evidence campaign was launched by the Woodland Cultural Centre, a vital initiative to raise awareness and support for the restoration of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School building. The vision was to transform the building into an Interpretive Historic Site and Educational Resource. Following the conclusion of the successful Save the Evidence campaign in 2022, our team has worked tirelessly through construction and is now focused on the installation of interpretive exhibits.



Illustration renderings of Mohawk Institute heritage exhibition by WeatherstonBruer.

We're excited to share with you exclusive renderings, providing a glimpse into the carefully considered design of the space. Please keep in mind that these are materials from our interpretation consultants and may not exactly reflect the final appearance of the space. The building itself is the primary artifact, brought to life through the stories and experiences of the children who were sent there. Minimal contemporary displays and sensitively placed recreations will allow visitors to connect with the purpose of each space and the experiences of Survivors. Knowledgeable tour guides will help to bring this history to life, supplemented by self-guided and audio tour options.



Illustration renderings of Mohawk Institute heritage exhibition by WeatherstonBruer.

As we approach the official unveiling of the former Mohawk Institute on September 30th, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible support of our donors, who have made this transformative restoration project possible. Together, we are creating a place of healing, truth, and reconciliation that will serve as a national site of conscience.

The Mohawk Institute, once a residential school, stands as a testament to a dark chapter in Canadian history. Thanks to your generosity, the building has been carefully restored to become a powerful space for education and remembrance. The restored Mohawk Institute will be an historic site and exhibition centre to tell the truth about what happened there and be a place of healing and reconciliation for the tens of thousands of Indigenous children subjected to this policy and program.





Visitors will journey through thoughtfully designed spaces that interpret themes of admission, censorship, separation, and authority, including a recreated classroom experience. The basement will reveal the student dining hall, an isolation cell, and other poignant reminders of daily life. The third floor will feature a recreated dormitory experience, while the second floor will house staff quarters, concluding at the Dwaḡwəḡagá:da:t Language Centre, which focuses on Indigenous resilience and language revitalization.

The former Mohawk Institute will become a significant site of conscience, shedding light on the history of residential schools within the broader context of a national system and its lasting impact on Indigenous people and cultures. It will be a place where the voices of Indigenous children and families are amplified, providing a platform to share their experiences.

Illustration renderings of Mohawk Institute heritage exhibition by WeatherstonBruer.

The unveiling of the restored former Mohawk Institute marks a new chapter in our shared journey towards reconciliation. With your continued support, we are creating a powerful and enduring legacy of healing, truth, and understanding for generations to come. Thank you for being a part of this important work.



Trisha Kelley
Development and Marketing
Manager



Illustration renderings of Mohawk Institute heritage exhibition by WeatherstonBruer.

National Day For TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

**Official Unveiling of the Former Mohawk Institute
Residential School as an Interpreted Historic Site**

September 30, 2025

**10am - 6pm | Woodland Cultural Centre
184 Mohawk Street, Brantford ON N3S 2X2**

- Opening Ceremony;
- Self-Guided Tours;
- TRC Activities;

- Food & Drink;
- Film Screenings;
- Social Dances.

Timed Ticket Admission!

Provided by the Government of Canada
Financed and co-financed by the Government of Ontario
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Mark your calendars! On September 30, 2025, the Woodland Cultural Centre will officially unveil the former Mohawk Institute Residential School as an Interpretive Historic Site on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

To manage capacity and provide a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone, we will be using timed entry for this event. Entry will be on a first-come, first-served basis, as there is no pre-registration for the event. For your convenience, a limited number of bracelets allowing early access can be picked up at our gift shop on September 25th and 26th (while supplies last).

Gates will open at 9:00 AM to begin bracelet distribution for time slot admissions.

Visit our website for the full schedule!

We're excited to share that the building will reopen on September 30th and stay open to the public. We invite you to plan your visit after the opening for a more detailed and unhurried exploration of our exhibits.

Woodland Cultural Centre's Education Department Announces **September Orange Shirt Day Programming**



The Woodland Cultural Centre is excited to announce our Orange Shirt Day programming! This September we will be having Truth and Reconciliation virtual events for two weeks.

There is virtual programming for elementary and in-depth programming for middle and high-school, as well as education opportunities for Organizations.

What is Orange Shirt Day?

Orange Shirt Day or National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30th) is a day when we honour the Indigenous children who were sent away to Residential Schools in Canada and learn more about the history of these schools. It has become a National Campaign to raise awareness and provide education about Residential Schools in Canada.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous supporters who have already registered their classrooms and organizations. As a non-profit, the revenue generated from our education programming is crucial for sustaining the operations of our entire Centre. With your support, we can continue to provide high-quality programs grounded in a Hodinohsho:ni worldview, celebrating and sharing Indigenous cultures, languages, and art. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission.



School Programming

These virtual events will take place over Zoom, and will be \$10.00/participant. There will be a pre and post package provided. To secure your spot, register early! Number of participants can be adjusted before deadline and this form is to secure your spot for a virtual tour. A follow-up email will be sent out to confirm number of participants closer to booking date. Download our booking form to get full descriptions of programming.

Program Options:

- Mohawk Institute Residential School Virtual Tour and Debrief - Grade 6+, 1.5-2 Hours
- Truth & Reconciliation Commission Workshop - Grade 7+, 45 Minutes
- Thanksgiving Address -K+, 45 Minutes
- Importance of Apples and Orange Shirt Day - K+. 45 Minutes

School Registration Form

Organization Programming

This virtual event will take place over Zoom, it will be \$13.00/participant. Each session includes a debrief/Q&A session with one of our Cultural Interpreters to give your group a chance to ask questions. To secure your spot, register early. Number of participants can be adjusted before given deadline. This form is to secure your spot for a virtual tour. A follow-up email will be sent out to confirm number of participants closer to booking date. Download our booking form to get full descriptions of programming.

Program Options:

- Mohawk Institute Residential School Virtual Tour and Debrief - 1.5-2 Hours
- Truth & Reconciliation Commission Workshop - 45 Minutes

Organization Registration Form

Nyá:wəh/Niá:wen to GrandBridge Corporation for Three Years of Support

Sarah Hughes, President & CEO of GrandBridge Corporation, recently visited the Woodland Cultural Centre to present a \$7,500 donation and enjoy a guided tour led by Heather George, Executive Director. This generous contribution will support the Centre's operational needs and marks the third consecutive year GrandBridge has provided funding as part of its ongoing commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation in our community and beyond.

These funds will be instrumental in addressing some of our most pressing operational needs, including critical repairs to the museum roof and covering ongoing maintenance costs. Your support, together with commitments like GrandBridge's, ensures that we can continue to deliver our vital programs, serving our community and visitors while preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages, art, and history.



Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Adi

Following the discovery of the remains of Indigenous children at former residential schools in 2021, Adi Hunt became aware of the Woodland Cultural Centre and its Save the Evidence campaign. A mother and a nurse, Adi began volunteering at WCC to incorporate Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action into her personal life and professional practice.

"Call to Action #24 calls for medical professionals to have skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism," says Adi. "I thought volunteering at Woodland Cultural Centre would help me build my cultural competency and also support a cause I feel passionate about."

Adi has assisted with several different celebrations and special events while volunteering at the Centre. Last September, she supported staff-guided tours through the former Mohawk Institute Residential School building for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Speaking to her experience that day, Adi states, "It was very impactful to tour the building and to hear the stories of survivors. Reclaiming the space for connection and community symbolizes a powerful act of resistance and perseverance."

Adi goes on to say that volunteering at WCC has been an "incredible experience," adding that the staff are supportive, the shifts are flexible, and the work is important and inspiring.

If you're interested in being a special events volunteer like Adi, or would like to contribute to the Centre in a weekly volunteer role, [please visit our website](#).



More About Adi

Fun fact: I recently bought a pair of roller skates to relive one of my favourite childhood hobbies

Current TV show:

Couples Therapy

A favourite band or musician:

Ben Harper

Favourite season: Spring!

Favourite pastime: Travelling

Fundraise this September for WCC

Here at the Woodland Cultural Centre we continue to be overwhelmed by the amount of outreach and support we receive from our third-party community fundraisers. Seeing the passion and hard work that goes into these volunteer run initiatives is truly inspiring and we cherish the opportunity to work with these dedicated individuals and organizations.

We would be honoured to have the opportunity to work and collaborate with our third-party fundraisers again this year! [Click here to check out our third-party fundraising form.](#)

What would your fundraising contributions go towards? Your efforts will go towards our departments and will ensure they can continue to develop and provide programming and resources to our community and the public; they will also ensure that we continue to grow and thrive as a Cultural Centre.

We hope that you all can continue to be a vital part of our giving community and we can't wait to connect with you again this year!



Do you have any questions about fundraising? Please reach out to our Development and Marketing Manager, Trisha Kelley at development@woodlandculturalcentre.ca or 519-759-2650 x 232.

Meet Some of our Dedicated Fundraisers!

Hello! We are Tammy and Chris from **Wyndham Art Supplies** in Guelph. We have been running our art supply store since 1992 and connection to community has always been a large part of who we are. Since 2020 we have been marking July 1st and September 30th with fundraisers for Indigenous groups and organizations across the country. We donate a portion of our online sales on those days and the response has been very positive. We believe it's important for our business to take a stand for what we feel is right, and our staff and customers appreciate that. In the last few years we have made a connection with the Woodland Cultural Centre and visited the annual juried art show and other events, and have been so impressed with everything they do there. Thank you for providing this wonderful resource, and keep up the good work!



Dog Friendly KW is proud to support Woodland Cultural Centre through our annual Orange Shirt Day Pack Walk. As an organization dedicated to building inclusive and compassionate community spaces, we recognize the importance of honouring Survivors of residential schools, their families, and the children who never made it home.

As community leaders, we want to do what we can to take action and support the vital work Woodland Cultural Centre does to educate non-Indigenous people, support Indigenous communities, and share the stories of the impacts of residential schools. Our Pack Walk not only raises funds for Woodland Cultural Centre but also creates an inclusive space for Indigenous community members and members of marginalized communities to come together, walk in solidarity, wear orange, and learn. Supporting Woodland means helping to preserve Indigenous histories, languages, and cultures, while fostering healing, understanding, and belonging.





SUPPORT WOODLAND

Donation Levels

- **\$100 – \$499** -will receive acknowledgement on the WCC website updated twice per year (downloadable PDF)
- **\$500 – \$1,499** -will receive invitation to screening of a special virtual tour event and Q & A session and acknowledgement in the WCC Annual Report
- **\$1,500 - \$4,999** - will receive preview invitation to exhibitions, acknowledgement on the WCC website for the fiscal year period of the donation and invitation to donor recognition event
- **\$5,000 +** - will receive a copy of WCC anniversary and other publications

DONATE NOW!

Woodland Cultural Centre needs your help to ensure that we can continue to develop and provide programming and resources to our community and the public!

Support Woodland

INTERESTED IN HOSTING A FUNDRAISER?

We can't thank our fundraisers enough for all the hard work they put into their initiatives!

[Click here to access our third-party fundraising forms!](#)

If you're interested in running a fundraiser for the Woodland Cultural Centre, please contact us at 519-759-2650 x 232 or [email here](#). We are here to support you and we can't wait to work with you!

PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ I have enclosed a cheque
(payable to Woodland Cultural Centre)

☐ Donate online
(www.woodlandculturalcentre.ca/donate/)

Charitable registration number: 891177990RR0001

Woodland Cultural Centre respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of Woodland Cultural Centre through periodic contact. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these lists, simply contact Woodland Cultural Centre at 519-759-2650 X 232.

With my gift of \$ _____ I am please to support the Woodland Cultural Centre

CONTACT DETAILS

NAME

E-MAIL ADDRESS

STREET NAME

SUITE/APT #

CITY

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

PHONE

CELL PHONE

NAME FOR RECOGNITION ON WCC WEBSITE (FOR DONORS \$100 AND UP)