



STATEMENT ON MARIEVAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FINDINGS

CW: anti-Indigenous Racism, Residential Schools, Colonial Violence

June 24, 2021

The York Federation of Students would like to extend our support and reaffirm our solidarity with all Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. On June 24, the Cowessess First Nation and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations announced the findings of 751 unmarked graves outside of the former Marieval Residential School in Saskatchewan. These findings, along with other mass graves recently discovered across so-called “Canada”, highlight the ongoing genocide and colonial violence that Indigenous communities continue to face.

It is estimated that 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend residential schools in “Canada” up until 1996. It is important to recognize the mass graves found outside of the Marieval Residential School in Saskatchewan and the Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia are not isolated incidents. Indigenous communities and Elders have long known these findings to be true. The impact and effects of residential schools are just one of the various forms of harm that the “Canadian” government continues to perpetuate against Indigenous communities on this land: whether it be through police and state violence, suing residential school survivors, building pipelines through Indigenous territories, boiled water advisories, or the lack of coverage on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, the list goes on.

With July 1st being so-called “Canada Day”, there is a collective responsibility to support and remain in solidarity with Indigenous communities by avoiding celebrations of the state. “Canada Day” serves as a tool used by the government to obscure and erase the genocidal history of “Canada” as a settler-colonial state, while pushing propaganda and narratives that harm Indigenous Nations. “Canada Day” is a celebration of genocide and settler colonialism. Those who are settlers on this land are urged to support Indigenous communities in their calls for action.

We recognize that this time may be incredibly difficult for Indigenous students and communities. If you are in need of resources, please do not hesitate to reach out to us for support. Here is a list of resources you can access:

Indian Residential School Survivors Society: 1 (800) 721-0066.
Indian Residential School Survivors and Family Hotline: 1 (866) 925-4419
First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1 (855) 242-3310
Native Youth Crisis Hotline: 1 (877) 209-1266
Kids Help Phone: 1 (800) 668-6868
Crisis Services Canada: 1 (833) 456- 4566 OR Text 45645

Students can also visit <https://www.yfswellness.ca/> to access more local mental health, wellness, and further resources. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your President, Riaz Nandan, at president@yfs.ca.