

Gleneagle Orange Shirt Day Recap

Lucas Hung

On September 30, 2019, a group of Con-X Leadership students from Gleneagle Secondary School organized an Orange Shirt Day event to raise awareness about residential schools and current issues that the Indigenous peoples in Canada still face.



This event was first brought to the attention of Con-X students by Mrs. Carrie Clark, Gleneagle's Aboriginal Youth Worker, on September 18th. Grade 12 Con-X student Lucas Hung recruited a committee of 10 members to help plan an awareness campaign.

Five days before the event, posters were printed and placed around the schools. Committee members went around to multiple classes to encourage students to wear orange, an Instagram account was made to advertise the event, and students also made morning announcements on the PA.

A short informational brochure was also created, intended to provide interested students with a background on residential schools and how the effects of generations of deliberate action against the Indigenous peoples of Canada can still be seen today.

Poster designed by Deon Feng, grade 12 student.

On the morning of Monday, September 30, committee members began handing out orange wristbands and brochures to students and staff and they entered the school.



Committee members handing out wristbands, including to Gleneagle principal Ken Cober (second image, far right).



EVERY CHILD MATTERS.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY
SEPT.30

From 1881 to 1996, the Government of Canada operated around 130 residential schools. More than 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their communities and forced to assimilate to Euro-Canadian culture.

If you attended a residential school, you had a 1 in 25 chance of dying. If you were a Canadian serving in WWII, your odds of dying were 1 in 26. (Truth and Reconciliation Report)



Residential schools were just one part of a larger, systemic effort by generations of politicians to undermine and erase Indigenous culture. The effects are still felt.

Today,

- Indigenous suicide rates are 3 times higher than among non-Indigenous Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2011-2016)
- 56 Indigenous communities across Canada are still under boil-water advisories (Government of Canada, 2019)
- Indigenous youth make up 46 per cent of youth criminals, while accounting for just 8 per cent of the youth population (Statistics Canada, 2017)

Visit wherearethekids.ca and orangeshirtday.net for more info.

WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY.

Brochure designed by Deon Feng/Lucas Hung, grade 12 students.

Finally, on the morning announcements, this message was read out:

"Today is Orange Shirt Day - a day where we recognize a chapter of Canada's past that is too-often overlooked. The last residential school for Indigenous children closed just 23 years ago, and the effects of assimilation are still felt today. We thank everyone who took the effort to wear orange, and there will also be volunteers in the foyer at lunch handing out wristbands. Every child matters, and as Canadians, it is our responsibility to work towards a more inclusive nation for all. Thank you."

In all, roughly 50 students and staff wore orange to support the cause, but the overall outreach of the campaign was much higher - 468 students and staff received wristbands and brochures, and the event was featured on the morning announcements, as well as Gleneagle's Instagram and Twitter pages. Thank you to all those who supported the event, and a big thank-you to Mr. Hayes, Mrs. Clark, Ms. Galligos, and the planning committee!

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Gleneagle students acknowledge [#OrangeShirtDay](#) and raise awareness that every child matters.



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