



Indian Residential School Survivors (IRSS) Legacy Structure Backgrounder



Restoration of Identity

In its final report, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called for provincial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations to establish a highly-visible, publicly accessible structure in each capital city to commemorate the victims and survivors of Canada's residential schools.

Objective

To establish, through the engagement and interaction with residential school survivors and intergenerational members, an Indian Residential Schools Survivors (IRSS)

Legacy "Restoration of Identity" structure prominently displayed in Toronto to commemorate the victims and survivors of residential schools.

Truth and Reconciliation

Between 2007 and 2015, the Government of Canada provided support for the TRC as they spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada hearing from more than 6,500 witnesses to create a historical record of the residential school system.

The TRC's Final Report is a testament to the courage of each and every survivor and family member who shared their story. Some [150,000 Indigenous children](#) were removed and separated from their families and communities to attend residential schools. The last federally-run school closed in the late 1996. Incorporated under the *Indian Act* by the federal government, Residential Schools were created for assimilation of Indigenous youth through education and religious institutions. Children as young as 4 years were removed from their home community far from parental influence and were separated from their siblings as schools were segregated according to gender. They were forbidden to speak their languages and ability to practice their culture. Children were institutionalized to integrate them into Canadian society, disrupting their growth, lives and communities and causing long-term impacts. Many children experienced excessive punishment; physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse.

In June 2015, the TRC held its Closing Event in Ottawa and presented the Executive Summary of the findings contained in its Final Report, including 94 "Calls to Action" to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. For more information please visit the [TRC website](#).

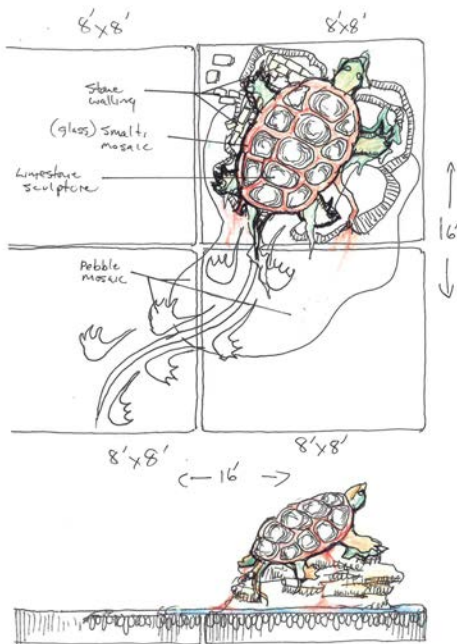
Call for Legacy Structure

The IRSS Legacy recognizes these dark facts of the residential school system and commits towards Truth and Reconciliation through the creation of the “Restoration of Identity” structure in the City of Toronto. This commitment responds directly to [Call to Action: 82](#) “We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.”

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (TCFNCC)

Committed in honouring its relationship with the Indigenous community of Ontario, the province reached out to Council Fire to lead the project designated for Toronto. We are an autonomous, vibrant cultural agency that involves and serves the Indigenous community of Toronto with confidence for and commitment to their well-being. Our mandate is to provide counselling, material assistance and other direct services to First Nations people as well and to encourage and enhance spiritual growth. We have been delivering cultural and social services to the Indigenous community of Toronto since 1976. The Centre is an active member of the [Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres](#) (OFIFC) and the [Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council](#) (TASSC).

Meaning of the Turtle



Ojibway artist Solomon King from the Cape Crocker community is currently working on the TRC legacy structure. The Restoration of Identity structure for Toronto, Ontario will be the Turtle, symbolic of Mother Earth and important to all First Nations from the west coast to the east coast. Solomon will recreate the Turtle climbing over a boulder containing the name of 13 residential schools in Ontario representing the resiliency, recovery and overcoming by residential school survivors.

The Turtle will cover an area of 16 feet by 16 feet and 4 feet high. It will be 12 feet long and 6 feet wide, making it a large structure. The sections on the top of the Turtle shell will represent the 13 new moons and will have the names of the 12 First Nations to this region as well as the Inuit. Along the outer shell will be 28 sections that represent our clans. The TRC legacy structure will be unveiled to the public in Fall 2018 with smaller versions placed around Toronto in areas of significance.

Links:

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577>

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

<http://www.ofifc.org/about-us/general-information/ofifc-overview>

<http://www.tassc.ca>