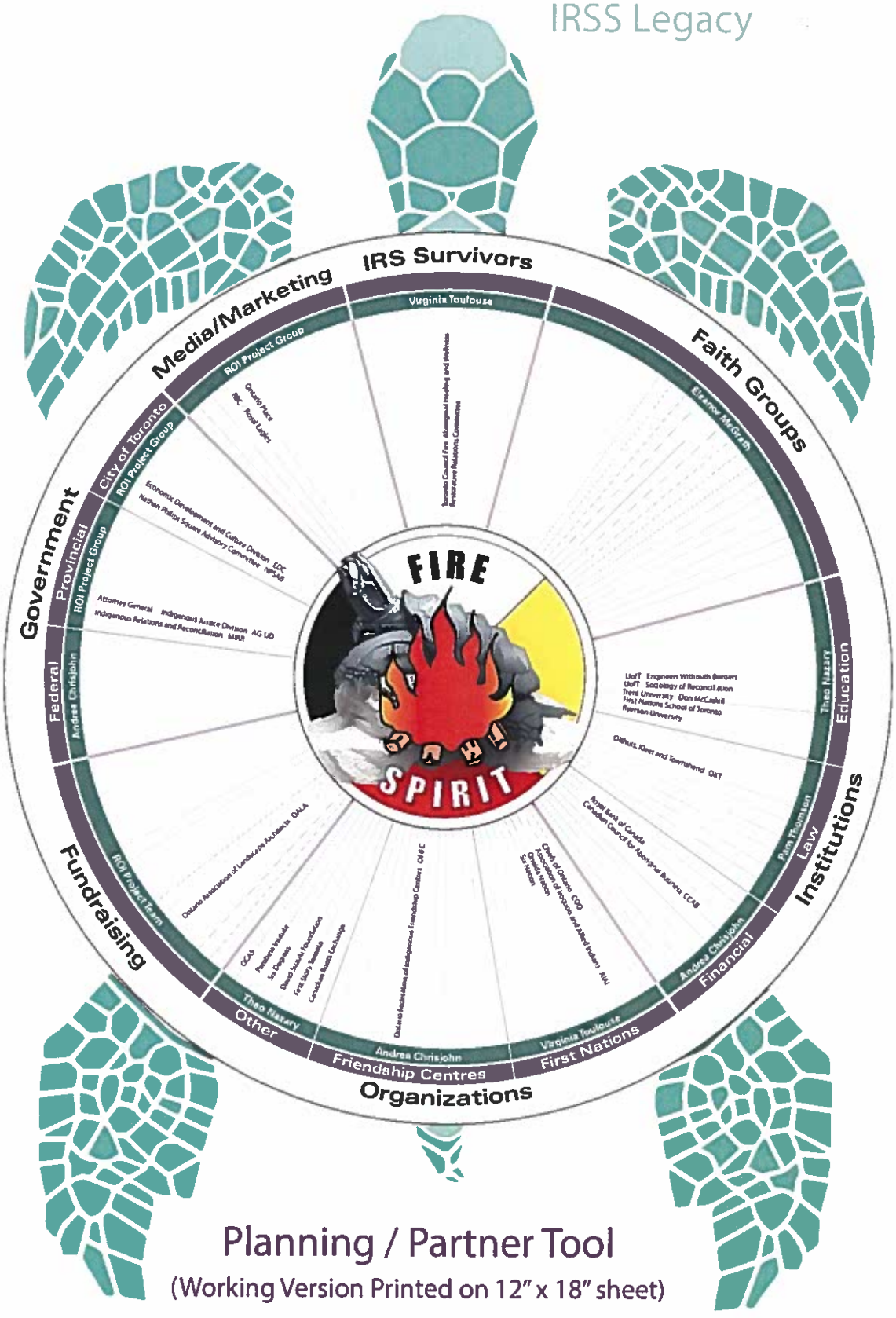
RESTORATION OF IDENTITY

IRSS Legacy

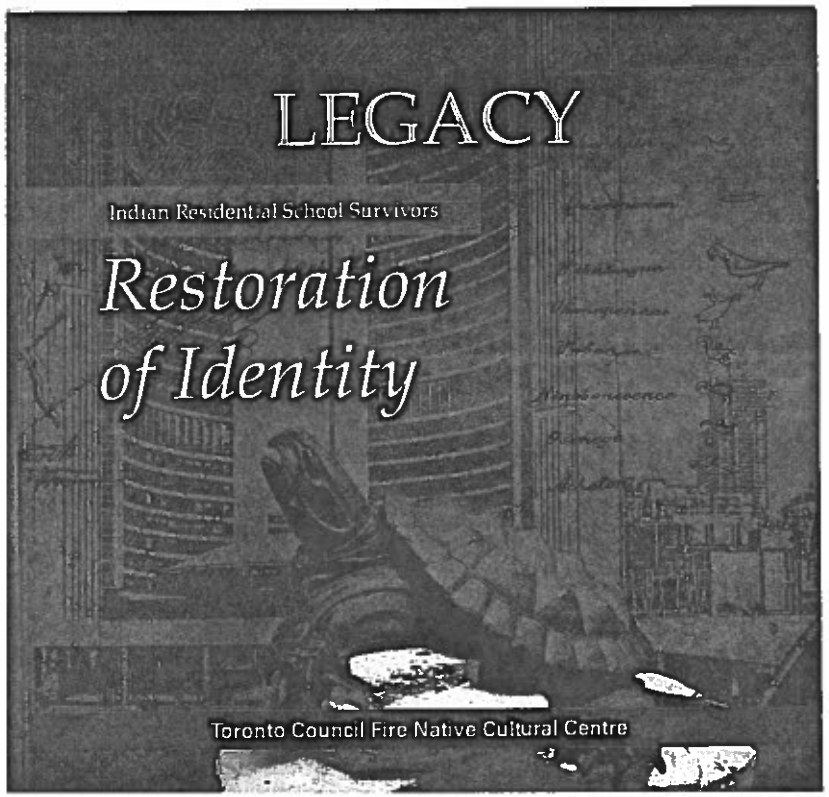


Planning / Partner Tool

(Working Version Printed on 12" x 18" sheet)

EX28.16.5

Submitted by Andrea Chrisjohn, Toronto Council Fire


LEGACY
Indian Residential School Survivors
Restoration
of Identity
Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre

RESTORATION OF IDENTITY

2016 marked 140 years since the first Indian Residential Schools (IRS) were implemented (1876-1996) under the Indian Act allowing the federal government to establish Residential Schools; incorporating religious-based, industrial schools for the purpose of assimilation of Indigenous youth through education and religious institutions under official government policy. Children as young as 3 years old were removed from their home communities isolated far from parental influence, separated from their siblings (schools were segregated according to gender), forbidden to speak their first language and their culture prohibited. Our children were institutionalized in order 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.

The IRSS Legacy project recognizes this fact and commits to work towards Truth and Reconciliation through the creation of a structure entitled the RESTORATION OF IDENTITY. The structure recreates the Turtle, symbolic of Mother Earth, acknowledges former IRS students, their Nations and Clans, and roots them back to their rightful place within creation. The Turtle climbing over a boulder structure (listing Residential Schools in Ontario) is intended to remind ALL of the struggles experienced by Residential School Survivors and to demonstrate their continued recovery and resilience.

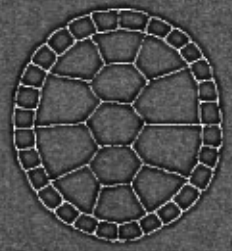


The Unveiling Ceremony
In advance of the completion of the overall Restoration of Identity space, Toronto Council Fire is planning an unveiling event for the Turtle sculpture. On October 9, 10 & 11, 2018, one hundred thousand (100,000) attendees are expected for the 3 days of workshops, ceremonies and events. One hundred (100) teepees will be erected on Nathan Phillips Square, representing Indigenous persons living in Toronto. The teepees will include arts and crafts, educational information and presentations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizational vendors.

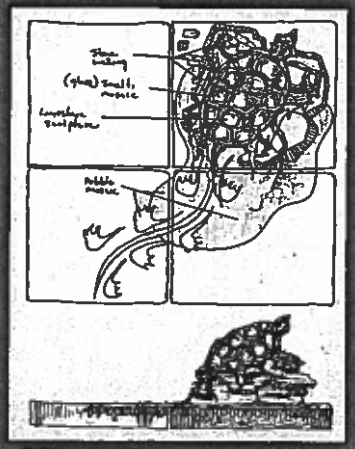
The Turtle is a shared symbology amongst Indigenous Nations all around the world Organizations from Hawaii to New Zealand will be invited to the event. More importantly, this will be an opportunity for IRSS survivors from across Canada to gather and to participate in an event that will honour their strength and resilience.

RESTORATION OF IDENTITY STRUCTURE

Project Design Note: The Legacy design is based on the traditional Indigenous story of Turtle Island. The tiles on top of the turtle shell represent the 13 new moons in the Indigenous lunar calendar. The 28 surrounding tiles represent the number of days between the new Moons.



Thematically, the 13 top tiles will represent the 11 Nations specific to the Ontario region along with the Inuit and Metis.



The Turtle sculpture will be approximately 5' in length and width and approximately 3' high. It will be placed on an elevated base which will be approximately 6' in height.



PROJECT ARTIST - SOLOMON KING

Solomon King is an Anishinaabe artist and the owner of Stone Artisan Studios Ltd. Solomon is a focused, self-directed individual, who has over fifteen years experience working in community arts. He believes that art is a journey of self-discovery, and a catalyst for reclaiming and empowering the spirit. He also sees the arts as a forum for the exchange of ideas and visions between all people. Solomon is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design University and he has completed a number of Heritage Restoration, Stone Masonry and other specialized certificate courses in Canada and the U.S.

BACKGROUND

In its final report, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called for the establishment of 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 inter-generational members, an IRSS Legacy "Restoration of Identity" Structure to be predominately displayed in the City of Toronto to commemorate the victims and survivors of residential schools. Also, to create a complimentary inter-active Healing Garden for traditional ceremonies, gatherings, education, contemplation and the building of good relations.

Ontario

In partnership with the province of Ontario

TORONTO

In partnership with the City of Toronto

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre

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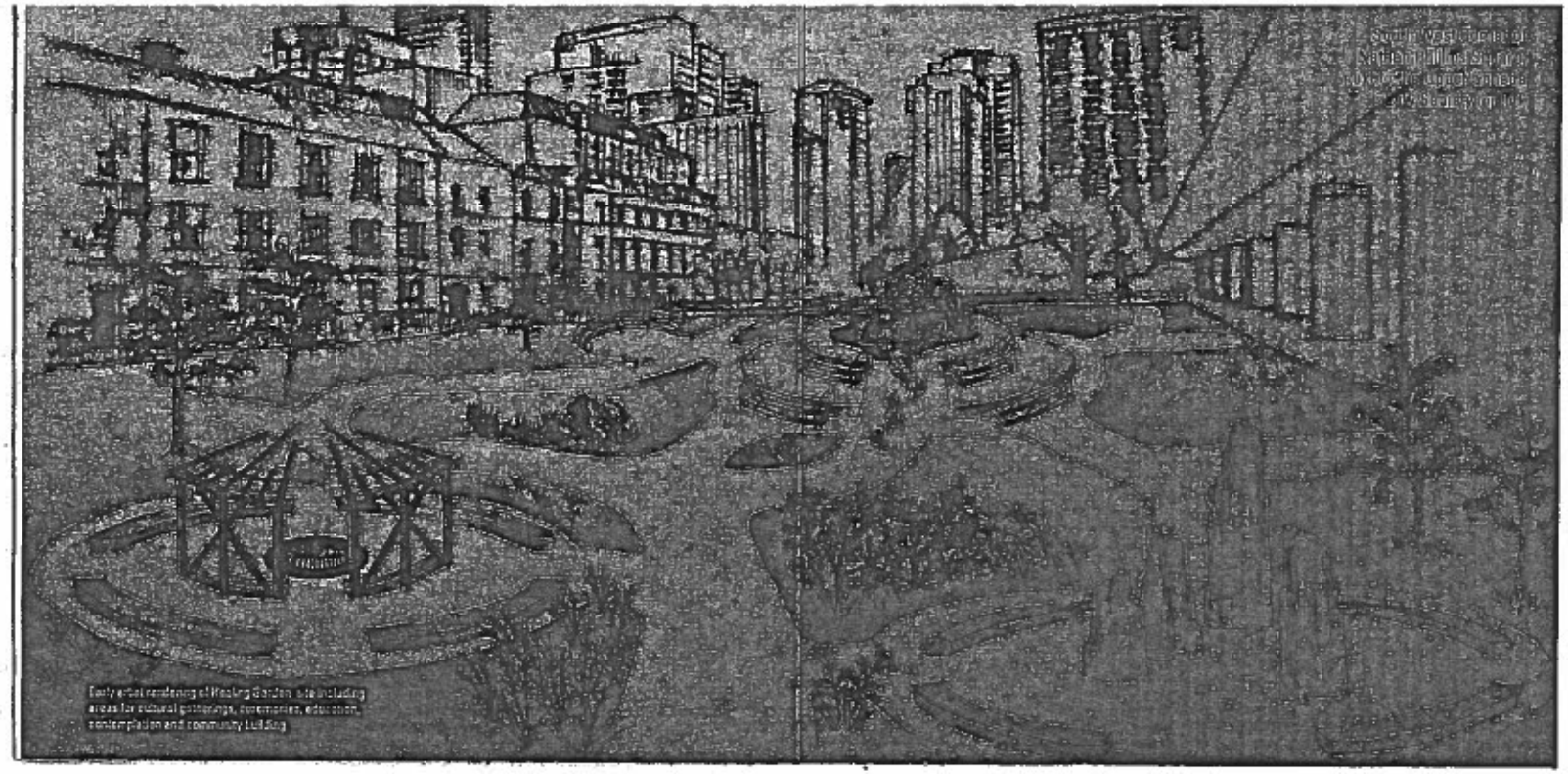

Early artist's rendering of Woolorg Garden site including areas for cultural gatherings, ceremonies, education, contemplation and community building