



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 31, 2021

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The YMCA of Saskatoon's Promise to Continue Reconciliation Education

The YMCA of Saskatoon is saddened to learn of the remains of 215 children found in Kamloops last week. Our thoughts are with all of those who are mourning and grieving. Though heartbreaking and devastating, we realize that this may not come as a surprise for the Indigenous community. What is often mislabeled as a dark part of Canadian history is still happening today with Indigenous Canadians' continued oppression and mistreatment across the country.

We at the Y have occupied space on Treaty 6 land since 1908. However, despite all of our time here, we haven't done enough to educate ourselves on the pain colonizers have caused for those who were here before us. We strive to serve as an inclusive and diverse space for everyone in Saskatoon. Still, we know we cannot fulfil that goal without understanding the intergenerational trauma many in our city face.

The YMCA of Saskatoon is committing to a year of learning to become better leaders in our community. We will start on June 1st, with all staff and volunteers invited to complete a 30-day training and education program on Reconciliation developed by the First Nations University of Canada. This training was initially developed for BMO staff across Canada and we are thankful to have the opportunity to use it as well. Over the last two years we have partnered with the First Nations University on meeting community needs and it is our hope that we will continue to work with the First Nations University to engage with more learning and programs specifically for the YMCA.

This internal education program will serve as an important step in a long journey where we will continue to learn about issues and barriers faced by all. We are renewing our promise to create a collective sense of community, and we are making a new promise to use our position as leaders in the community to speak up against injustice.

Thank you for allowing us time to develop and grow in Saskatoon. We look forward to serving you better.

A 24-hour national Indian Residential School hotline has been established to provide support for those affected. By calling **1-866 925-4419** you can receive emotional and crisis support at any time.