



Aboriginal Neighbours



MEDIA ADVISORY

MONDAY MAY 30, 2016

94 Calls for Justice! *The Journey to Reconciliation starts here.*
An event to mark the one-year anniversary of the TRC's Calls to Action

VICTORIA, BC- On **Thursday, June 2nd, 2016 from 11:30am to 1:00pm on the lower steps of the BC Provincial Legislative Building**, aboriginal and non-aboriginal community leaders will gather to read the *94 Calls to Action*, released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission exactly one year ago in Ottawa.

The actions specified in these calls are viewed as steps Canadians can make to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. The Canadian government funded the church-run residential schools for 130 years. Former students, their families, and communities continue to suffer inter-generational trauma from the numerous abuses that Indigenous children experienced during this national project of assimilation.

Events are being planned across Canada in provincial capital cities, marking this anniversary and demonstrating that Canadians are paying attention to these Calls to Action and expecting all parties named to respond and take action. As the TRC Commissioners observed, only then will indigenous and non-indigenous citizens be able to move forward together in a new spirit of reconciliation and respect.

Members of the organizations, **BC-Yukon KAIROS** and **Aboriginal Neighbours**, are working together to support the event here in Victoria. Residential school survivors have been invited to witness these Calls for Justice, as have the Chiefs from Southern Vancouver Island. This event is viewed as a way to honour their contributions to the TRC process, as well as to encourage all Canadians to make these calls a priority.

The public is invited to attend this event and show their support for the recognition of the inherent rights of Canada's Original People. There will be opportunities to take action including signing a "witness" book, acknowledging their presence on this occasion and the steps they are willing to take as individuals to bring these 94 calls to life.

At noon, downtown churches will ring their bells 94 times to signal the importance of these calls.

As Janet Gray, BC-Yukon KAIROS regional representative, explains "*For whom do the bells toll? They toll for all who have a dream of right relationship with the aboriginal people of Canada. And that's most of us. So we're going to keep calling for justice and ringing church bells until that dream comes true.*"

Media are invited to attend the event and interview spokespeople.

EVENT: 94 Calls for Justice!

LOCATION: Legislature front steps

DATE & TIME: June 2nd, 2016 11:30am -1pm

(PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES)

WHAT: Community leaders will read the TRC's 94 Calls to Action on its one-year release anniversary.

WHO: Janet Gray (KAIROS) and Ruth D'Hollander (Aboriginal Neighbours) will be available to be interviewed at the event. Community leaders may or may not choose to be interviewed, depending on their schedules.

About KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

KAIROS is a faith-based social justice organization of eleven Canadian churches and religious organizations. It focuses on Indigenous rights, international human rights and ecological justice. We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social change and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation. www.kairoscanada.org

About Aboriginal Neighbours

Aboriginal Neighbours was started by the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia and is now in ecumenical coalition with the United Church of Canada (Victoria Presbytery) and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The organization formed out of its members' concerns for the First Peoples and the future of aboriginal children. Open to everyone who shares its concerns, membership is drawn from Vancouver Island and includes Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It undertakes to:
build bridges of respect and understanding between cultures through education and interaction;
initiate and facilitate outreach with First Peoples in their traditional lands and in cities;
support the First Peoples of British Columbia and Canada in their efforts to obtain justice through recognition of their aboriginal and treaty rights. www.aboriginalneighbours.org

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Facebook event page: 94 Calls for Justice!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1725408397703467/>