



SMOKER MARCHAND SELECTED TO DESIGN ART PIECE FOR INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL MONUMENT

Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) is pleased to announce that the Syilx Indian Residential Committee have officially selected artist 'Smoker' Virgil Marchand to procure the art for the monument. 'Smoker', himself a survivor of the Indian Residential School system at St. Mary's Mission boarding school, will create the art, which will be an essential part of the monument. Marchand is a member of the Colville Confederated Tribes, and is a self-taught artist whose practice is based on bronze and steel works.

As Marchand has stated "I will always embrace the natural elements of my culture and heritage and share my art talents with others whenever I can. I know how much it helped me, and how it took a troubled youth and made him a person others respect and admire. If my experiences, trials and errors can contribute to bringing out the talents of others, than I have truly appreciated the spirit of the gift art has given me".

The Syilx Indian Residential School Committee (SIRSC) has been working for over a year to develop a collective Nation monument to recognize Syilx attendees of Indian Residential Schools. This substantial monument will honour the resilience of Syilx residential school survivors and recognize a time in our history. It will also provide a significant opportunity to educate and create awareness with the general public in regards to this often-unrecognized part of colonial history.

On September 27, 2017, construction began on the monument located on just outside of the Okanagan Nation's *k̓ cp'əlK' stim'* Hatchery. The site was chosen as an important historical place marker where Syilx children were gathered and displaced to residential schools using trains and cattle trucks.

The unveiling of the Okanagan Nation's Indian Residential School Monument will take place on November 28, 2017 at 11:00 am. It will include a formal unveiling of the monument with key contributors and dignitaries, followed by a feast. This event is open to the public.

For More Information on the project please contact Jennifer Houde, ONA Wellness Manager at wellness.manager@syilx.org or go to www.okanagannation.com