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JUNE 2021 V1

# Syilx Nation

## Information and Updates

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## The Spirit of Syilx Unity Run Recognizes All "Survivors"

The 13th Annual Spirit of Syilx Unity Run starts today June 2, and goes to June 7, 2021. After a small opening circle and prayer to kick off the run, this virtual event will see Syilx youth and members running out on the land in their own pods and communities, aimed at reaching the Kamloops Indian Residential school (KIRS)— to raise awareness about the disproportionate rates of violence and suicide that our communities confront.

This year's Unity Run has a particular weight and importance as our Nation collectively grieves the recent uncovering of a mass grave of 215 children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Many syilx Indian Residential School Survivors are alive today, and were forcibly removed from their families and sent to KIRS. As the level of these atrocities and attempted genocide are made public, they shed light on deep wounds that our people have known about all along, as well as the intergenerational abuse, trauma and violence our Nation continues to endure.

Chief Chris Derickson opened the event, stating "We all know the violence that's been committed against our people for centuries, and now we have the memory of 215 children that never made it home, and it's our job to honor the memory of these children. It's our job to make sure that the next generation lives a better life than this one, and the one that never made it. And I'm asking our Nation, our people, to really take it seriously, when we say that we are running to raise awareness for suicide prevention and violence prevention. The most terrible of which is the violence we commit against each other as Indigenous people in our communities. How we talk to one another. How we interact with one another. There are behaviors that can no longer be tolerated. If we're going to honor the memory of these 215 children that never made it home, let's make our homes better, let's make our communities better, let's make our Nation better, by honoring one another and treating each other as Syilx people. Understanding that how we treat each other determines the lives that our children will live."

In the face of these traumas, Syilx people are gaining strength every day. As a Nation, we are working to reclaim and restore our traditional Syilx ways of being and knowing. We are the unconquered people of this land and have lived with our mother earth from the beginning of time. As runners lay their footprints down on the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>* (land) over the coming days they are affirming our inherent connection to the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>* and culture, while also connecting to ancestors. This Run not only raises awareness on these issues of violence, but also instills pride and the continuation of our Syilx culture and *nsyilxcen* language for generations to come.



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**For our ancestors**

**For the *tmix<sup>w</sup>* that missed our presence**

**For the *tmx<sup>w</sup>ulax<sup>w</sup>* that was calling us home**

**For the parents and grandparents who were robbed of their children**

**For the children who were taken away**

**For the families who bore their pain**

**For the generations of loss of language and culture**

**For those who never had a chance to speak**

**For those who choose not to speak**

**For those who have spoken and continue to speak**

**For all those effected by Indian residential school**

**For all our grandchildren, for all time.**