

Statement of Solidarity with Canada's Indigenous Communities

June 28, 2021 | Edited on July 1, 2021 to reflect findings near the former St. Eugene's Mission School

For the third time in over a month, we are deeply saddened to hear about the findings of hundreds of unmarked graves at former Indian residential schools in Canada: first, at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in BC; second, at the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan; and, third, near the former St. Eugene's Mission School in BC.

Residential schools were mostly church-run boarding schools adapted in the 19th century with the purpose of assimilating Indigenous children into Canadian society and separating them from their families and cultures. There were more than 130 residential schools across Canada, which were government-funded. Here, children were banned from practicing their traditions and languages, were the victims of cultural genocide, and faced unacceptable forms of abuse. We encourage you to read more from [The Canadian Encyclopedia](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools) [<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools>].

STEM Fellowship stands in solidarity with the Indigenous people in this profound grief, sending out this message in honor of residential school survivors and the recent discovery of the three unmarked grave sites. We send our heartfelt support to all Indigenous communities, knowing that the impact this intergenerational trauma has had on Indigenous communities cannot be fully expressed in words.

More and more unmarked graves will be uncovered as the Indigenous people have stated. Not only must we grieve and commemorate, but we must also be steadfast in working towards the calls for action outlined by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf) [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf] and hold the provincial, territorial, and federal governments accountable to take such action. This includes informing the public about the lives that were taken and sharing the history in depth as part of the curriculum, among many other necessary steps that must be taken on the path forward. STEM Fellowship encourages our members and the general public to educate themselves on this issue, in order to raise awareness amongst themselves and those around them.

If you are part of the Indigenous community and are seeking help, please reach out to:

- The [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](https://www.irsss.ca/faqs/how-do-i-reach-the-24-hour-crisis-line) at 1-866-925-4419 [<https://www.irsss.ca/faqs/how-do-i-reach-the-24-hour-crisis-line>]
- The [First Nations Health Authority](https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/residential-schools) at 1-877-477-0775 [<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/residential-schools>]

Sincerely,

STEM Fellowship



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