



United Way of the Lower Mainland Statement of Reconciliation

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United Way of the Lower Mainland recognizes the significance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the release of the TRC's Final Report and its Calls to Action. It took many decades of advocacy by residential school survivors to establish the Commission, and the years of gathering testimony, evidence and developing recommendations have been a long and involved process for survivors.

We recognize the deep and lasting impact that Canada's Indian Residential Schools System has had on individuals, their families, and communities. Many Aboriginal people continue to grapple with the consequences of the intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools. The history of these schools is one of pain and injustice that requires us all to make a concerted effort to learn the truth about residential schools, acknowledge this history and its modern legacies and begin a shared journey of reconciliation.

We recognize the rich diversity that exists within Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people are First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. We understand that the term Aboriginal includes diverse indigenous communities and cultures from across Canada.

We acknowledge that an understanding of the Aboriginal history of this region is an important element in creating the foundation for a strong working relationship with Aboriginal communities and in the collaborative development of successful culturally appropriate programs, policies and resources.

Today, June 21, National Aboriginal Day, we declare that the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) is committed to learning from the lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and we are taking action to ensure the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people are fully acknowledged in our work here at UWLM. We stand together today in partnership with Aboriginal people in Canada – a partnership based on truth, dignity, and mutual respect. Building on this foundation will allow us to better understand issues facing Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia and ultimately improve our relationships as we make this journey together.

In the words of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Justice Murray Sinclair: "Education is what got us here and education is what will get us out". The United Way of the Lower Mainland recognizes education as the cornerstone of change, and commits to education in the spirit of reconciliation.

Internal commitments:

- UWLM commits to providing ongoing cultural awareness training to educate staff and volunteers to learn about and appreciate Aboriginal people's history and its current day impacts from Aboriginal Elders, educators and Aboriginal partner agencies.
- UWLM commits to engaging Aboriginal communities in decision making processes and planning, and to explore other ways to increase the participation of Aboriginal people within the organization. This will build upon the existing UWLM Success By 6 Aboriginal Engagement Framework and support organizational transformation.

External commitments:

- UWLM commits to developing a protocol and continue the practice of acknowledging First Nations territory during public events and meetings.
- UWLM commits to continue working with Aboriginal partners to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal organizations and associations to plan, lead and deliver local initiatives in keeping with the "right to self-determination" as identified by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- UWLM also commits to continue supporting Aboriginal communities to increase public understanding of Aboriginal life, cultural awareness, and cultural safety within the Lower Mainland and across British Columbia.

UWLM will evaluate these commitments and report progress annually at the UWLM Annual General Meeting, including monitoring Aboriginal community investment.

June 21, 2016