



News and Resources: January 2026

Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group



Ten Years Forward Marie Wilson, TRC Commissioner and Stephen Kakfwi: Feb 22/2026 in Kingston

HOLD THE DATE! Join Marie Wilson, Canadian journalist and one of the three commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and Stephen Kakfwi, Dene leader and former premier of the Northwest Territories, for this one-of-a-kind event here in Kingston. A little over 10 years after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Marie and Stephen will reflect on the past decade and the opportunities and challenges ahead, each offering their unique perspectives. This event is on **Sunday, February 22, 2026, from 3:00-4:00 p.m.**, followed by a book signing from 4:00-4:30 p.m., in Memorial Hall at Kingston City Hall, [216 Ontario St](#). There will be lots of opportunities for questions and conversation, providing an interactive and educational experience with Marie and Stephen, who have both achieved national prominence. Registration is free, with a pay-what-you-can option available at the door to help cover event costs. Books will also be available for purchase. This tour is being organized by JTRAG in partnership with the City of Kingston, The Spire, Queens Women's Association and the Kingston Institute for Multi-Racial Inclusion. For more information on this event and the full tour program, which runs from Feb 20 to 23, 2026, contact Juliet Huntly at jhunty6@gmail.com



Pancake Supper in Support of All Our Relations Land Trust: February 17/26 at 5:00 PM

HOLD THE DATE! JTRAG in partnership with Edith Rankin Memorial Church (4080 Bath Road) will sponsor its annual Pancake Supper in support of All Our Relations Land Trust. This event offers a unique opportunity for fellowship among people who want to enjoy a warm community event on a cold evening, share stories about our efforts to be good allies, eat a hearty meal prepared by a team of committed volunteers and help us meet our goal of contributing \$3000 to All Our Relations Land Trust. See (<https://www.facebook.com/allourrelationslandtrust/>) Mark your calendars and share the invitation. The event is open to all. For additional information contact Bill Spencer at billspen27@gmail.com or Pat Roebuck at pattygailroebuck@gmail.com



Murray Sinclair Inaugural Lecture: January 14, 2026

Queen's is hosting the inaugural Chancellor Emeritus Murray Sinclair Commemorative Lecture on Jan. 14, inviting the community to honour the profound legacy of former Chancellor and Senator Mazina Giizhik Murray Sinclair. The event, hosted by Chancellor Shelagh Rogers, will feature the unveiling of Kent Monkman's painting of Chancellor Emeritus Sinclair and two keynote lectures exploring his enduring impact on truth and reconciliation, education, and justice. Admission is free, and all are welcome with advance registration. [Register Now](#)





JTRAG Launches New Online Reading and Audio Resource List

JTRAG is replacing its physical library with an annotated reading and audio resource list. The list will include a wide range of reading and audio resources to support your self-education efforts. Where available, it will include links that you can use to access the resources. The list has been created in a Google doc and will be updated monthly by JTRAG's volunteer Library Coordinator, Kip Ip. You can access the list here. We invite you to share this information in your networks so that it is available to a wide range of interested individuals and groups. If you want additional information or need any assistance finding any of the resources, please contact Kip at kip.ip@queensu.ca. Kip also welcomes your suggestions of other print or audio resources that should be added to the list.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/12yfmpZ3dDB6HAV2fznYHD1sIUo35LLPZ/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113385682337764066446&rtpof=true&sd=true>

(Where applicable, the list includes **clickable URLs** so that you can open the book links directly. You can also access the list and links directly through this Google Drive folder (convenient for sharing with other individuals and groups.)



JTRAG's Reading Recommendations of the Month

To assist you in your self-education work, Kip Ip, our Library Coordinator, will offer a couple of suggested resources for you each month. Here are the first two suggestions:

Listening to Indigenous Voices: About This Guide (Jesuit Forum learning guide)

Issuer: Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice

Editors: Victoria Blanco, Jayce Chiblow, Mark Hathaway, Anne Marie Jackson (Jesuit Forum)

Synopsis: A free online guide that introduces the purpose and structure of the Jesuit Forum Listening to Indigenous Voices series. It explains why listening is an ethical and practical starting point for reconciliation, and it outlines how each session combines short readings, reflection questions, and actions that can be used in a congregation or small group. The guide also describes the advisory and editorial process and encourages participants to approach the material with humility, care, and willingness to change. Use this entry when your group wants a clear pathway from learning to discussion and next steps.

On Dismantling Settler Colonialism: An Insider's Perspective on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Author: John A. Olthuis

Synopsis: A clear and challenging book that argues reconciliation requires more than goodwill or symbolic gestures. Olthuis draws on decades of legal, policy, and community experience to explain how settler-colonial systems shape land, law, education, and public institutions. He invites readers to examine assumptions, recognize ongoing power imbalances, and support Indigenous self-determination in practical ways. The writing is suitable for thoughtful adult readers. It works well for guided discussion when a group wants to move from general support to concrete questions about responsibility, change, and next steps.



Protect the Land and the Environment: Join SCAN

The land and the environment are central to Indigenous economies, culture and spirituality. One way we can advance reconciliation is to support efforts to protect the land and the environment. **SCAN – Seniors for Climate Action Now**, has active groups here in Kingston, and across Canada. To learn more about SCAN see: <https://seniorsforclimateactionnow.org/>). They participate in a number of ongoing campaigns, and we meet monthly here in Kingston and other cities across Canada. At present, they are holding monthly rallies at MP offices to express concern with the abandonment of climate policies by the federal government and to urge them to take measures to address the climate crisis. If you're interested in learning more or would like to invite someone to speak to a group in your community, contact Nancy Nicol at nancyellennicol@gmail.com



Apaji-wla'matulinej/Wabanaki Boys and Men Gathering

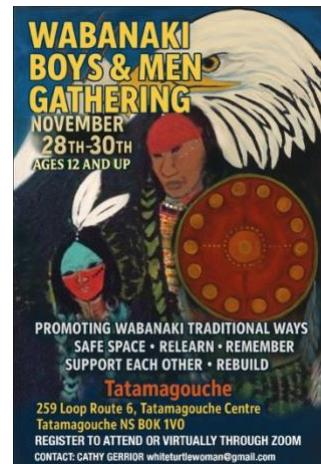
The East Hub of Righting Relations (<https://rightingrelations.org>) organized *The Strengthening Men and Boys Change Lab* November 28-30, 2025 at the Tatamagouche Centre in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). The gathering aimed to create a safe space where men and boys aged 12 and up could connect, promote Wabanaki traditional ways, relearn, remember, rebuild, and support each other. They shared songs and rare teachings, spent time on the land, and took part in ceremonies.



A Guide for Attending Pow Wows

We know from your feedback, that many of you have attended a Pow Wow or would like to do so. You may find *Your Complete Guide To Pow Wows* helpful in planning your next experience. Whether you're planning to attend your first pow wow or simply wish to deepen your understanding of Native American culture, this ebook will be a valuable resource. It covers:

- The Essence of Pow Wows
- Etiquette and Protocol
- Dance Styles and Regalia
- Music and Drumming
- Tips for Attendees



You can order it here: [Buy Now - 15% Off](#)



Land Acknowledgements in Question

Below find two recent articles by well-known writers, David Frum and Tom Flanagan/Mark Milke. These are two significant examples of the continual denial of the importance of land acknowledgments. When you hear or read these arguments, how can you respond?

Firstly, acknowledge the land itself. We are here only by the grace of the air, the water and the soil that surrounds us. Without pure air, and clean water and healthy soil, and without the astonishing web of beings, animate and inanimate - all our relations – that sustains us, we would not, we *will* not be here. And so before all else, we honour and give thanks for the land.

Secondly, we acknowledge that we were not here first. And the arguments about whether First Nations were here 12,000 or 10,000 years ago and where they migrated from, are irrelevant. For thousands of years, before the first waves of settlers, First nations lived in this land, cared for this land. And they were displaced from the lifeblood of their land.

Thirdly, we acknowledge the attempt to exterminate first peoples (an attempt that failed) but which has led to gross injustices and inequalities - politically, culturally, and economically. And we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to play our part in the hard work of remedy and repair. These things are not contestable.

<https://northernbeat.ca/opinion/good-intentions-gone-bad-how-reconciliation-went-wrong/>
<https://epaper.nationalpost.com/article/281689736169901>

We strongly encourage JTRAG readers to write to the National Post and the Atlantic to counter these views and to express some dismay that such reputable media outlets are giving space to these spurious arguments.



Hockey Cares visits Constance Lake First Nation

Hockey Cares and True North Aid worked with the community of Constance Lake First Nation to welcome 15 Oakville youth during the recent Hockey Cares exchange. Youth participants from Oakville and Constance Lake connected for hockey, land-based activities, fun at the movies, bowling and more. True North Aid acknowledges the support of Experiences Canada and many generous donors who make the Hockey Cares exchange possible each year. Learn more about Hockey Cares [here](#).



Northern Reads Chooses 15 Communities for 2025!

We're so happy to announce that 15 northern communities across Canada have been chosen as this year's recipients of [Northern Reads](#)!

Northern Reads connects communities with culturally relevant and Indigenous-authored books that are tailored to the community's identity and language, with a focus on elementary and high school classes.

We're proud to work with [Strong Nations Publishing](#) again this year, an Indigenous-owned company from Nanaimo, BC.



Expanding Chicken Coops - AKRC

In 2024, we collaborated with the Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council (AKRC) to construct chicken coops in Animakee Wa Zhing 37 and Northwest Angle 33, Ontario.

True North Aid has committed to another year of support for the coops' sustainability, including feed, honorariums, and supplies for the year. We're excited to continue the relationship with AKRC and expand the program in the future!



Relaunching the Fiddle Program in Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan

We're excited to announce that the Buffalo Narrows Fiddle Program is back, and we're happy to play a part and contribute, as one of True North Aid's [Community Initiatives Programs](#). The fiddle program aims to support music education and to further connect the community and students with Metis culture through music.



Supporting Culture in Kuujjuarapik

Grade 3 students at Asimauttaq School in Kuujjuarapik, Nunavik, QC, are engaging in language and cultural revitalization right in their classroom! Each month, students take part in activities that bring their culture to life by connecting with Elders, preparing traditional foods, and creating arts and crafts that reflect Inuit traditions. We're proud to help provide opportunities for students to learn, celebrate, and strengthen their culture.



Moon Time Connections Updates

The team at Moon Time Connections is as busy as ever!

MTC has just launched the second edition of its *Survey of Menstrual Related Needs in Northern Remote Communities* in partnership with Douglas College. The survey aims to amplify the voices of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals in the Period Equity conversation in Canada. There have been numerous reports about what period equity looks like in Canada, but none that include the voice of the Community or take into account the unique factors affecting kin in northern and remote areas of the country. The results of this survey will provide valuable data insights into the experiences of northern menstruators, helping MTC continue to advocate for funding and resources to improve access to menstrual products and culturally relevant Moon Time education for individuals in the north.



MTC Saskatchewan just completed another successful annual product donation drive. CBC Indigenous spoke with MTC Founder Nicole White about this year's Drive and the impact of MTC's work - read the article [here](#).



Report on Truth and Reconciliation Work from Canadian Quakers.

See the link below to read the 2025 report on the truth and reconciliation work of Canadian Quakers. Since 2016, local Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups have reported back to Canadian Friends Service Committee on the reconciliation work they've done. This sixth report compiled by CFSC synthesizes and summarizes reports from 14 Worship Groups, Monthly Meetings, and individuals about their activities. Friends across the country continue in their commitment to learn and to pursue reconciliation. They note that this work is not always easy, but it is essential. Indigenous Peoples face historic and ongoing harms from colonialism. This reality requires non-Indigenous Canadians to act in solidarity.

https://quakerservice.ca/news/new-report-from-canadian-quakers-about-involvement-in-truth-and-reconciliation/?blm_aid=23553



From Rome Back Home: How the Vatican's Return of Indigenous Artefacts Can Help Healing in Canada by Kip Ip¹

On 15 November 2025, the Vatican returned 62 cultural artefacts connected to Indigenous peoples in Canada. Pope Leo XIV handed these items to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Vatican City. The Vatican described this as “a concrete sign of dialogue, respect and fraternity” with Indigenous peoples. The bishops announced that the artefacts will come to Canada and will then be transferred to National Indigenous Organizations, which will work to reunite them with the original communities. This reflection grows out of that single news story and explores what it can mean for healing in Canada.

Catholic missionaries sent these objects to Rome about a century ago for a large exhibition organised by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Many items later became part of a missionary museum and then part of the Vatican Museums. The artefacts include pieces such as an Inuit kayak and other ceremonial and everyday objects. They left their home communities during a time when church and state were trying to control or erase Indigenous cultures in Canada. That history gives this return real weight.

More than museum pieces

For many Indigenous families, cultural objects are not just museum pieces. They carry stories about ancestors, land, law, and spiritual life. When they are gone, it is not only a loss of “art” or “craft.” It is a break in memory. The return of these 62 artefacts can help repair some of that break. When items come home, communities can decide where they belong and how they are used. They may be kept in a local cultural centre, placed in a national museum with Indigenous direction, or brought into ceremony and teaching. The key point is that the power to decide returns to Indigenous hands. That shift in control itself is part of healing.

[article continues on page 8]

¹ References: Amante, A. (2025, November 15). *Vatican returns to Canada artefacts connected to Indigenous people*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/vatican-returns-canada-artefacts-connected-indigenous-people-2025-11-15/>

Healing after residential schools

The news from the Vatican comes only a few years after Pope Francis travelled to Canada in 2022 to apologise for the Catholic Church's role in residential schools. Many survivors and families said that an apology was necessary, but they also asked for actions that show real change.

The return of the artefacts is one clear action. It sends the message that what was taken should not have stayed in Rome forever and that Indigenous cultures have deep value. Survivors of residential schools and their descendants live with grief and anger that reach across generations. They also work hard to revive languages, songs, and ceremonies that schools tried to destroy.

These artefacts can support that work. In the right settings, they can be part of healing circles, school lessons, and community gatherings. They can help people talk concretely about loss, survival, and hope. The objects will not erase the pain of the children who never came home. However, they can stand as proof that the Church is beginning to give back, rather than only taking. For some families, that may bring a small but real sense of relief and respect.

Rights, responsibility, and the role of the Church

This decision also touches on questions of rights and responsibility. For a long time, powerful institutions such as churches and museums decided what would happen to Indigenous belongings, often without consent. The Reuters report notes that this return is organised as a transfer from the Vatican to Canadian bishops, with the promise that the bishops will work with National Indigenous Organizations and communities.

On one level, this structure shows that the Church still holds formal control. On another level, it opens space for Indigenous leaders to take the lead once the items arrive in Canada. If that promise is honoured, it will show respect for Indigenous authority over their own heritage.

For the Catholic Church, this return sits beside other recent steps, such as the rejection of the Doctrine of Discovery and the earlier apology for residential schools. Many Indigenous people will watch to see whether these are isolated gestures or signs of more profound change. If the Church continues to return more items, supports language and cultural programs, and fully cooperates with searches for unmarked graves, trust may slowly grow. If these further actions do not follow, some will see the return of the artefacts as mainly symbolic.

Why this news matters for Canada

This single story has meaning beyond the walls of the Vatican Museums. In Canada, it can support public learning about how colonial collections were built and why repatriation matters. Non-Indigenous readers may begin to see that museum objects are not neutral. They come with histories of power, loss, and sometimes force.

For Indigenous communities, the return can strengthen cultural pride and identity. Children and youth can see proof that their ancestors designed complex tools, clothing, and ceremonial items that demanded skill and deep knowledge. That kind of recognition is important in a society where Indigenous knowledge has often been dismissed or ignored. This event may also add momentum to efforts to return Indigenous belongings from other museums, universities, and church collections in Canada and abroad. Each successful return makes it easier for communities to ask for more items,

and for governments and institutions to say yes. Over time, this can support a broader healing process in which Indigenous peoples regain complete control over their own cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The return of 62 artefacts from the Vatican to Canada is not a complete answer to the harms of colonialism and residential schools. No single action will be enough, but this is still a meaningful effort. It brings real objects home after a century away. It gives Indigenous communities a new chance to decide how these pieces of their history will live again.

If more honest returns follow this step, along with more sharing of records and more support for language and culture, this can help many generations of Indigenous peoples move forward with greater strength. It can also help non-Indigenous Canadians understand that reconciliation is not only about words. It is about giving back what was taken, listening more than speaking, and making space for Indigenous leadership in shaping the future.

Let us know what you think

We invite/need your comments and suggestions. We welcome material from our readers and are pleased to include comments and reflection pieces here as catalysts for more reflection and dialogue. The submissions we include do not represent any official position by JTRAG members or our readers.