



News and Resources: March 2026 Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group



A Report on the TRC *Ten Years Forward* Events Kingston Feb. 20-24, 2026



Stephen Kakfwi, Amber Bryant-Peller (Manager Indigenous Initiatives, Kingston and tour organizer), Ruth Wilson (tour organizer), Marie Wilson

JTRAG partnered with the City of Kingston, The Spire, the Kingston Institute for Multi-Racial Integration and the Queens Women's Association to bring Marie Wilson, author, broadcaster and one of the three Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Stephen Kakfwi, Dené leader, author and former premier of the NWT, to Kingston for a series of events between February 20th and 24th.

More than 300 people had an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for reconciliation at this moment, ten years after the publication of the TRC report and its 94 Calls to Action. The visit included a public event at City Hall on February 22nd. Marie and Stephen also led in morning worship at Sydenham St. United Church on February 22nd. Watch the service at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VshuTz73HYo&t=22s>.

Read Kip Ip's reflection on the public event at City Hall below.



The Witness Blanket by Monika Holzschuh Sator

It has been a while that I wanted to write about my visit to **The Witness Blanket** - a powerful art installation by Indigenous master carver Carey Newman, honoring the resilience of Survivors of the Indian residential school system. The exhibit was in Napanee until mid-December of last year.

Inspired by a woven blanket, the installation incorporates hundreds of items from residential schools, churches, cultural sites, and communities across Canada. Each item represents an individual story. Without context, it is difficult to make sense of them, but iPads were provided to connect to the corresponding website, enabling me explore the meaning of the items and the stories carried by the *Witness Blanket*. I found it a very moving and powerful experience and why I am mostly writing today is that you, too, can listen watch Survivors tell their stories at any time from home by going to <https://witnessblanket.ca/stories> - one way to fulfill #37 of the 52 Ways to Reconcile: *Watch Survivor Video Testimony*.

I will give you an example - the item that touched me the most: braids. I am of German heritage, and in me, this evoked horrible memories of the hair that was shorn from Concentration camps detainees by the Nazis. We all know from photos from Residential schools, that staff there cut Indigenous children's hair in an attempt to strip away their personal and cultural identities. To honor their father Victor Newman, who had endured this fate at a Residential School, his daughters Ellen and Marion wanted to honour his experiences and did this by reclaiming the cultural practice of cutting hair to express mourning and respect. They grew their hair long, braided it, and cut it off in a traditional ceremony.

The braids honour their sadness and grief about the harmful legacy of Canada's Indian residential schools, but they also honour the enduring strength of Survivors and Indigenous cultures. [I used descriptions provided on the website in writing this text.] One of my items for #28 of 52 Ways to Reconcile (*Create your own action*) is to try to buy and give Indigenous books and art, which was too easily accomplished on the book table that the museum had as part of the exhibit! The beautiful drive to and from Napanee, across the snowy frozen Turtle Island on a beautiful sunny winter day, made the experience even more poignant.



2026 Pancake Supper in Support of All Our Relations Land Trust Exceeds Its Goal

JTRAG in partnership with Edith Rankin Memorial Church (4080 Bath Road) sponsored its annual Pancake Supper in support of All Our Relations Land Trust. The event offered a unique opportunity for fellowship among 150+ people who wanted 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 learn about All Our Relations Land Trust. Participants donated \$3325 (our goal was \$3,00) to All Our Relations Land Trust. See [\(https://www.facebook.com/allourrelationslandtrust/\)](https://www.facebook.com/allourrelationslandtrust/) Thank you to all who made this rich evening possible.



The 2026 Moose Hide Campaign

Consider joining the ceremony on May 14 for Moose Hide Campaign Day. This day brings people together across the country to take part in ceremony, reflection, and action with a shared commitment to end gender-based violence and to honour and protect women, children, and all those along the gender continuum. Whether you gather in your community, participate with your school or workplace, fast in ceremony, or join learning opportunities throughout the day, your presence is meaningful. Each act of participation strengthens the collective call for safety, respect, and accountability. Join us in ceremony and be part of this growing movement. Register today at www.mooshidecampaign.ca/campaignday and see this FaceBook link: [pteSorodsn 3ay383laa 3t6Fui9brcl1uur:tic 8mM1079uPu 02gie1g1](https://www.facebook.com/pteSorodsn3ay383laa3t6Fui9brcl1uur:tic8mM1079uPu02gie1g1) ·



JTRAG's Online Reading and Audio Resource List

JTRAG has replaced its physical library with an annotated reading and audio resource list. The list includes a wide range of reading and audio resources to support your self-education efforts. Where available, it includes links that you can use to access the resources. The list has been created in a Google doc and is updated monthly by JTRAG's volunteer Library Coordinator, Kip Ip.

This month's theme explores moving from intention to action. It is shaped by the kinds of actions often associated with *52 Ways to Reconcile*, such as hosting a movie night, learning everyday words in Indigenous languages, learning the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation, checking idioms, supporting the renaming of colonial memorializing, learning the history of the potlatch ceremony, recognizing Indigenous innovation, visiting a local cultural centre, visiting a local Indigenous restaurant, learning through Indigenous humour, and embracing accountability. This month also highlights John A. Olthuis. A recorded launch conversation with John is available online and can support a group watch and discussion. You can access the list here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fjFreN3KioLPEJQuD-HE2C8gg2hBlzA3/view>¹

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.



"I'd like to attend a PowWow": New 2026 Pow Wow Guides

If you've ever thought, "I want to go, but I don't want to show up clueless," See this guide at PowWows.com. The **2026 Pow Wow Guide** covers: (1) What a pow wow is, (2) what to expect at your first one, (3) Dance styles, (4) history, (5) what they mean, (6) what to bring and what not to bring, and (7) Pow Wow etiquette. And here's a link to another listing of PowWows : <https://windspeaker.com/powwows?page=1>

¹ 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).



The conversation, moderated by Lawrence Scanlan, brought together Dr. Marie Wilson and Stephen Kakfwi for a public reflection on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls to Action, and the continuing work of reconciliation in Canada.

The event was connected to public discussion around Dr. Wilson's book *North of Nowhere*, but the afternoon itself centered on shared learning, witness, and responsibility. It began by inviting participants to introduce themselves and to share whether they identified as intergenerational survivors. This set the tone immediately. The opening centered identity, presence, and acknowledgement. It created a reflective and relational beginning rather than only a formal lecture. It also signaled that listening itself carried responsibility.

Dr. Wilson reflected on how often people speak about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while many are still hearing parts of it, and sometimes all of it, for the first time. She asked the audience to pause and think about "remembering forward," but first to "remember backwards" for a moment, and to recall how we walk here. She tied this to the context of the story, her book, the conversation, and the students' personal reflections in the book. This framing was central to the event. It placed memory and context before future action. It also offered a clear ethical direction for how to listen and respond.

She then shared a personal moment from that morning. She said she had thought a great deal about what she wanted to say, but woke up with a surprising feeling that seemed to come from dreams. She said she woke up speaking about two people who were not in the room and could not be there "in that earthly sense." She clearly named the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair. She also spoke of

waking up with “total clarity” about how much those people had in common. This gave the event a strong emotional and spiritual opening. It also linked memory, loss, and public responsibility. The conversation then moved into a major reflection on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission itself. Dr. Wilson gave what she described as a “big fast forward” account of the Commission’s work. She referred to work that became six and a half years. She described the Commission travelling “coast to coast to coast.” She said they were in over 300 communities and held seven major national events. These details served as central factual anchors and underscored the scale of the work.

She also emphasized that the Commission’s purpose was not only to gather and document the history and legacy of residential schools. It was also to educate people in Canada and to help inspire ongoing reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians. In this framing, remembering and acting were presented as connected responsibilities.

She then described what formed the basis of the Commission’s thinking and conclusions. She referred to “all of those horrible statements” received from survivors, along with material from churches and government departments, and commissioned research. She explained that this body of witness, records, and research formed the basis of the Commission’s thinking, conclusions, and the Calls to Action now widely known as the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action. This point was especially important because it highlighted the evidentiary depth behind the Commission’s public work. It also linked survivor testimony directly to national responsibility.

Her remarks also reinforced a central moral point. Once survivor testimony, records, and public findings were brought forward, denial could no longer be defended by saying people did not know. This sharpened the call to responsibility and challenged institutions and communities that still prefer comfort over truth. The implication was direct. When the record is public, the central question is how people choose to respond.

Dr. Wilson also explained two key decisions made by the Commission. First, although the mandate required recommendations to the government, the Commission decided its work should go beyond the government. As she explained it, the mandate did not say they could not write recommendations to others as well. If the goal was societal change, the work had to reach across sectors. Second, they decided not to call them recommendations. They called them “Calls to Action.” She emphasized that this was intentional. They did not want language that sounded optional. They wanted wording that carried urgency. In her phrasing, it required something actually to happen, and “a whole lot of things” to actually happen. This was one of the clearest explanations of the afternoon and one of the strongest statements about the Commission’s public intent.

From there, the conversation shifted from institutional history to personal aftermath. Dr. Wilson reflected on life after 2015 and after the Commission’s formal work ended. She described spending much time writing and speaking, including during the tenth anniversary period. She also spoke about trying to “reclaim” herself, “re-enter” her own body, “re-enter” her own home, and reconnect with family. This described the personal cost of carrying the work. It also showed the difficulty of returning to ordinary life while continuing to carry what had been heard. □

Throughout these reflections, she also emphasized the importance of sustaining oneself while doing difficult work. Themes of spiritual grounding, humility, and wellness support helped explain the tone

of her remarks. These were not presented as distractions from public responsibility. They were presented as part of what makes long-term responsibility possible.

She then named the personal question that followed from the Commission’s own conclusion that reconciliation involves everybody. That included her as well. What did that mean for her? What did she have to offer? She said she came to see that the most valuable thing she uniquely held was the story of her work as a commissioner, and how that work had marked her, enriched her, challenged her, and left her hopeful and inspired. She linked that hope to the thousands of residential school survivors for whom the Commission held space, and to many others across Canadian society who showed up, cared, and tried to walk with them “in a good way.” This joined personal responsibility, public witness, and hope without minimizing the difficulty of the work.

She also publicly acknowledged specific contributors, including Reverend Stephen Kendall of the Presbyterian Church tradition, and noted his long service and ongoing commitment. For a JTRAG audience, this highlighted long-term institutional commitment rather than mere symbolic presence. The conversation also returned to survivors and to the need to remember their stories and contributions, while warning against the return of old rigidities that cause harm. Stephen Kakfwi then made the next major contribution. He introduced himself as an author and as a residential school survivor. He spoke about the importance of the book, its reception in Canada and elsewhere, and ongoing invitations to conferences and speaking opportunities. His presence added a powerful survivor voice and deepened the event beyond institutional history.

One of his most memorable contributions was his reflection on reading, poetry, history, and song lyrics as long-standing passions. He described reading song lyrics in the late 1960s, including “Mr. Tambourine Man,” and shared a humorous memory of first thinking the title was a commercial. He contrasted songs that sounded good but said little with what he experienced when Bob Dylan came along with “incredible lyrics.”

He then connected those reflections to his own life and his years in residential school. He described loneliness, sadness, and wanting to be home. He said certain lines stayed with him all his life. In this way, his remarks linked music, language, memory, and survivor experience. They also showed how words can become part of survival, reflection, and identity.

As the conversation moved toward its close, the tone returned to encouragement. There were reflections on “good stories,” on humility and humour, and on people who found ways to move beyond doubt.

Dr. Wilson’s remarks also offered practical direction. The emphasis was not only on governments and institutions in the abstract. It also pointed to the work of individuals and communities in everyday life, including respectful listening, attention to what children are taught, vigilance when harmful patterns return, and everyday kindness and care. These themes did not replace the Calls to Action. They showed how people can live in response to them.

They also suggested a ripple effect from national truth-telling into daily conduct.



With special thanks to Kip for his regular contributions and his role as our Library Coordinator

The event was a rich mix of truth-telling, grief, memory, witness, and encouragement for continued action. Dr. Wilson’s remarks emphasized the scale of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the depth of survivor testimony and research behind its work, and the deliberate urgency of the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action. She also spoke personally about the cost of carrying that work and the responsibility to keep offering what one can offer. Stephen Kakfwi’s remarks brought a powerful survivor voice rooted in reading, poetry, song lyrics, and lived experience. They also showed how memory and language remain central to reconciliation.

Together, the conversation affirmed that truth and reconciliation are lived responsibilities. They are carried in institutions, communities, and people. The event provided a public space for witness, reflection, shared learning, and renewed responsibility.



Lighting the Sacred Fire Honouring the Children

**LIGHTING THE SACRED FIRE
HONOURING THE CHILDREN**

CONFEDERATION PARK, KINGSTON ON,
Sunrise to Sunset

A Sacred Fire is lit each month in the spirit of healing for all the children that remain missing, the ones who survived, and their families, and communities that have been impacted by the continued effects of residential schools.

All are welcome at the fire to offer prayers

In respectful remembrance of Le Estcwicwéy (The Missing), Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

Gentle reminder that no photographs are to be take of the fire

**2026 Dates
(Subject to Change)**

February 8
March 1
March 29
May 3
May 31
June 21
June 28
July 26
August 30
September 27
September 30
October 25
November 22
December 20



'It was a horrible thing': Claims process opens for survivors of Canada's 'Indian Hospitals'

By Alex Karpa, CTV News February 1, 2026



Brandon Sanatorium. Credit: Manitoba Indigenous Tuberculosis History Project

The claims process for a landmark federal settlement involving survivors of Canada's so-called "Indian Hospitals" has officially opened, nearly a year after the agreement was reached. Mary Florence Genaille spent several years inside a Manitoba federally-operated Indian Hospital.

"It was not a good time," she said.

Genaille was just seven-years-old when she was taken to the Brandon Sanatorium in 1953. Submitted photo of Mary Florence Genaille, who spent several years inside a Manitoba federally-operated Indian Hospital. "It was a horrible thing to go through," she said. "When I went in there, into the Sanatorium, they didn't even let my mother know. They just took me, put me in there, and without my mother's knowledge. What kind of people do these things?"

During her time at the institution, Genaille says she was confined to her bed and subjected to shock treatments. "You see these things, they stay with you for your lifetime," she said. "I was hooked up to these machines, and I used to remember how much power went into my system. It was so powerful that my fingers started twisting sideways. There were doctors all around me, watching."

"It has affected my life; it has affected how I raised my children; it affected how to behave as a neighbour, a friend," she said. Genaille is one of more than 100,000 Indigenous people who were forced to go to 33 federally operated Indian Hospitals between 1936 and 1981. Six of them were in Manitoba.

The institutions were created to address high rates of tuberculosis among Indigenous Peoples.

“These were federally-run, racially segregated Indian Hospitals,” said Sean Carleton, a historian and Indigenous studies scholar at the University of Manitoba.

“There were a lot of problematic aspects of these institutions. Many survivors felt it wasn’t care they were receiving, but rather another prong of the federal government’s attempts to assimilate Indigenous people,” he said.

Mary Jane McCallum is a history professor at the University of Winnipeg, and has been studying these facilities for well over a decade. She says these hospitals are significant to the history of Manitoba and Canada.

“In my experience almost every Indigenous family in Manitoba has a harrowing story about at least one family member sent to an Indian hospital,” she said. “Moreover, Indian hospitals play a central role in the development of our health systems, persistent health disparities, and systemic racism in health care today.”



In 2018, former patients launched a class-action lawsuit against the federal government, alleging abuse and unfair treatment. The case ultimately led to a settlement that makes survivors eligible for compensation ranging from \$10,000 to as much as \$200,000, depending on the severity of their experiences. The claim process for survivors to apply for the compensation is now open.

“It will vary with the experience what any claimant suffered,” said Doug Lennox, a lawyer involved in the settlement. “Claimants will need to provide some evidence and testimony as to what happened to them so the claims administrator can assess it.” Class members have until July 2028 to submit a claim. The estates of class members who died after January 2016 are also eligible.

For Genaille, the compensation is welcome news, and a step in the right direction, but doesn’t take away the pain she endured at the facility in Brandon. “It’s just such a painful thing to have lived through,” she said. “And I know there are a lot of people who have lived through it.”



Indigenous superheroes take on colonialism and saving the planet in new graphic novel

KABOOM! flips the script on Indiana Jones narrative, says creator Jay Odjick. Article by Candace Maracle, CBC News, January 23, 2026.

Imagine a network of Indigenous superhero operatives who battle colonialism, threats to the environment and reclaim stolen Indigenous artifacts around the world.



That's the premise of the upcoming graphic novel *KABOOM! Volume 1: Blast Off!* by Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg writer and artist Jay Odjick. "We're building a whole world of interconnected Indigenous people working together and trying to present heroic depictions," he said. *KABOOM! Volume 1: Blast Off!* is the first of a three-part series from Scholastic Canada, set to be released Feb 3.

Odjick, whose Algonquin community is in Quebec about 150 kilometres north of Ottawa, said he and illustrator KC Oster are just two rez kids who love comics, telling stories today's youth can identify with. He describes the graphic novel as a "sci-fi infused/high action/comedy/summer blockbuster-style book." Odjick said he grew up with comic books and learned to read by looking at them. He says Indigenous storytelling has always been more than an oral culture.

Jay Odjick describes *KABOOM!* as a 'sci-fi infused/high action/comedy/summer blockbuster-style book.' He said comics are "just stories being told with pictures in a sequence" not unlike petroglyphs or wampum belts, which use symbols to tell a story. He said the stories he watched growing up, like the Indiana Jones movies, resonate differently for him now as an adult.

"As a kid I was like, 'I love Indiana Jones. This is fun,'" he said. "As an adult I'm like, 'He's kind of a thief.'" In *KABOOM! Volume 1: Blast Off!*, Odjick said, the narrative is flipped. The antagonist is an archaeologist named Montana Johnson who believes he's discovered an artifact but from the perspective of the local Indigenous people, it's always belonged to them. The main character and his parents, who are superheroes, are Anishinabe and part of a group called FUSION (First Universal Secret Indigenous Operatives Network) — a global network of Indigenous operatives.

KC Oster says *KABOOM!* is one of the biggest projects they've illustrated. (Submitted by KC Oster) Oster, who is Ojibway Anishinaabe from Rainy River First Nation in northwestern Ontario, said it was an easy novel to illustrate, bringing characters to life based on the manuscript. "A lot of these characters are people that I know," Oster said. "Like, these are my cousins and my aunties and my uncles — the kind of humour, the way that they talk, the way that they kind of navigate the world."



One of the pages from KABOOM! Volume One: Blast Off!, by Jay Odjick and illustrated by KC Oster. (Scholastic Canada) So far, *Kaboom! Volume One: Blast Off!* will be released in English and French in Canada, and in Denmark, India and Israel. “We’re going to have these Indigenous heroes available on a mass-market scale, which I think is pretty unprecedented,” Odjick said.

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.