

Orange Shirt Day in Bancroft



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By Kristena Schutt-Moore

Orange Shirt Day, Oct.2, is a day to honour the survivors of Residential Schools and to remember those who never returned from those schools.

The North Hastings Children's Services and the Algonquin Inodesiwin Child and Family Centre celebrated by hosting a smudging and drumming ceremony in the centre of the Town of Bancroft at the Scotiabank parking lot. It was their way of supporting all children and letting them know that they matter.

Orange Shirt Day was started in response to a story of one residential school survivor. Her grandmother had saved up money to purchase her a special shirt for her first day of school. The shirt was orange, and she was stripped of it along with her other belongings when she got to her school. This made her feel worthless. She never saw her grandmother's shirt again.

During the ceremony in Bancroft the main street was smudged by members of the local Indigenous community. The smudging was done to help send prayers and blessings to residential school survivors and their families.

Marsha Larosso, Dianne Martin and Trevor Pearce performed several healing songs on their drums, both in honour of Orange Shirt Day and for the COVID-19 pandemic. These songs included: the "Butterfly Song," the "Strong Woman Song," the "Woman Warrior Song," the "Eagle Honour Song," the "Creator Smile Song" and the "Travelling Song."

Several organizations and groups were involved in the event's festivities including North Hastings Children's Services, Algonquin Inodesiwin Child and Family Centre, Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nations.