



WELCOME TO THE FIFTH EDITION OF *KCI-NIWESQ*,
THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (NWAC).

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE SURVIVORS OF
CANADA'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS,

a program of assimilation that ran in this country from the early 1800s to 1996. It is also dedicated to those children who did not come home and to the parents who waited for a beloved son or daughter who never returned.

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which spent years uncovering the horrors that happened behind the walls of the infamous institutions, said thousands of children died at the schools. The report also said many of their bodies remain in unmarked graves on school sites.

We know that the federal government was aware, at various points in its history, that the mortality rate at some of the schools was as high as 50 per cent—a loss that was deemed acceptable by bureaucrats and politicians.

In this issue, you will read an interview with Murray Sinclair, the former chief commissioner of the TRC. He talks about the survivors who reached out to him in the days after unmarked graves were found at the site of the residential school in Kamloops, B.C., and at other sites, and how the former students need us to listen to them.

You will also read about Michelle Good, the retired Cree lawyer who was profoundly affected by her mother's story of the residential school she attended and whose award-winning book *Five Little Indians* brings the experience of students, and its aftermath, to life in gut-wrenching fashion.

You will learn about the legal steps that NWAC is considering to force accountability on the part of the government and the churches that ran the schools for genocide—a crime that has most surely been committed here in Canada through various means of assimilation and annihilation.

We will tell you the stories of three residential school survivors. They are profoundly horrible tales, and I warn you that they do not make easy reading. But the resilience of each of the women who agreed to share their experiences with us shines through.

We will introduce you to a new generation of Indigenous female leaders who are taking over as the country staggers from the shock of the irrefutable evidence of the deaths of more than a thousand children.

And finally, there are some words about healing from an Elder who is helping to develop NWAC's next Resiliency Lodge.

So thank you once again for opening the pages that follow. Thank you for reading the fifth edition of *Kci-Niwesq*. Please drop us a line and let us know what you think at reception@nwac.ca.

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LYNNE GROULX LL.L., J.D. | CEO

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
L'ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA