



September 30, 2022

## **Statement on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

### **Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C., Tribal Chair**

“This day is about remembering and honouring our families that went to residential schools - some made it home – and some did not. Today is the day survivors and their families get to share their stories that have been silenced for so many generations. Not until the remains of 215 bodies were found in Tk'emlups did we begin to have minds open and our stories listened to.”

“Today is about healing. We have a lot of healing to do among our people. The graves found will never equal the number of deaths that happened or the amount of spirits that were broken. All of these Residential School sites should be turned over to Indigenous peoples and recognized as memorial sites. These schools had Indigenous peoples attending from many different Nations – this should be recognized and the sites should be managed by all first nations.”

“Reconciliation is very different than truth. This term is something that will shift as time passes. Today, to reconcile is to teach society what we have gone through and for society to understand the intergenerational impacts of these prolonged experiences.”

### **Nits'il?in Otis Guichon, Vice-Chair**

“Our focus today is on remembering the past and supporting the survivors. We encourage everyone to reach out and support one another. Many emotions will come up thinking about those we lost, both in body and spirit. We are building our strength up everyday and working to improve the lives of Indigenous people. I hold my hands up to all of you that take part in this work and those that find strength in themselves to move forward with a heavy past.”