



Williams Lake
FIRST NATION

St. Joseph's Mission Investigation

Activity Summary for the period of October 09 to October 15, 2021

Survivor interviews for former students of St. Joseph's Mission (SJM) are continuing. Recently, the investigation team conducted an interview with Lashway Alec from Nazko First Nation, who currently lives on the Trout Lake Reservation.



Caption: Lashway Alec, his wife and daughter Ellie Alec, with members of the SJM investigation team Charlene Belleau and Nancy Sandy

Lashway attended St. Joseph's Mission at the age of 16 and is now 94. Lashway attended St. Joseph's Mission during the 1930's, during the time that SJM was an Industrial School, and is part of the small group that is still alive to tell their stories today.

Chief Willie Sellars and Title & Rights Manager, Whitney Spearing, attended the Caretaker Community Symposium which was held in Tk'emlups. Alongside representatives from Williams Lake First Nation and Tl'emlups First Nation, Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, Penelakut First Nation, Ulgatcho First Nation, Songhees First Nation, Sto:lo Nation, and Daylu Dena Nation were also in attendance, with many more nations that chose to attend virtually.

The symposium was hosted to give First Nation leaders a chance to talk about all the considerations surrounding the residential school investigations. It was a chance for those involved to be able to debrief and share information with their fellow Nations, pertaining to their own investigations.

Many of the Nations, including WLFN, gave presentations to outline their current position in the ongoing investigation. WLFN's presentation detailed:

- Historic and modern property overview of the St. Joseph's Mission site and Onward Ranch;
- Preliminary and geophysical investigation area;
- Archival and photographic research;
- St. Joseph's Mission database creation;
- Survivor interviews; and
- Cultural health and wellness resources available to those involved in the investigation.

Our documentary team was able to attend the Caretaker Community Symposium, and we are excited that it will be featured in the upcoming documentary.



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During the Caretaker Symposium, it was also announced that Prime Minister Trudeau would attend Tk'emlúps Residential School, and meet with Kukpi7 Casamir on issues related to residential schools in Canada, and reconciliation.

During this event, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement that Canada was ready to partner on reconciliation and that the federal government will compensate survivors. He also stated that Ottawa aims for ensure Indigenous children are no longer removed from their cultures and communities. The ceremony was followed up by a Q&A, which was primarily around Canada's residential school system and actions by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (example: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).