**A Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

*François Laporte is the president of Teamsters Canada*

Sisters, Brothers,

Today marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day we set aside every year to honour both residential school survivors and those who never made it home. The day is especially important for their families and communities – publicly remembering this painful past and its ongoing effects is key to healing.

Canada’s residential school system caused incredible harm to indigenous peoples. It saw children snatched from their families and forced to attend institutions designed to erase their identity. At the time, one federal official called it the process of “killing the Indian in the child.” More recently, officials have taken to calling it cultural genocide.

We all have a duty to recognize our history, reflect on it objectively, and repair historic injustice. Gestures small and large can, over the years, make a significant difference.

As Teamsters, we are committed to ensuring that indigenous peoples have opportunities in the job market. We also strive to ensure indigenous peoples can make a dignified living by negotiating strong collective agreements and offering help when needed to our indigenous members. Finally, we fight all forms of racism and abuse in the workplace, especially against indigenous peoples.

While federally regulated workers have the day off, I hope that all Canadians take time to learn, listen, and work for reconciliation.

In solidarity,

François Laporte

President

Teamsters Canada

**Mental health supports available**

Former residential school students can call 1-866-925-4419 for emotional crisis referral services and information on other health supports from the Government of Canada.

Indigenous peoples across Canada can also go to The Hope for Wellness Help Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for counselling and crisis intervention.

Call the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to [the online chat](https://hopeforwellness.ca/home.html) (Please use Google Chrome).