

Reconciliation is all of us.

No matter who you are or where you're from, you can take peaceful and respectful actions to help make a better Canada for Aboriginal children and their families. Here are a few ways you can help.



On February 14, have a heart for First Nations children.

First Nations children on reserve receive less funding from the federal government for education, child welfare and health services than all other children receive from the provinces and territories.

Have a Heart Day brings together caring Canadians to help ensure First Nations children living on reserve have the services they need to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of who they are.



There are many ways you can celebrate Have a Heart Day:

- Join the celebration on Parliament Hill on February 10. Last year, more than 400 students gathered on the Hill to deliver 495 letters!
- Send a Valentine's Day card or letter supporting Have a Heart Day to the Prime Minister and your Member of Parliament. In 2015, the Aboriginal Student Centre at the University of

Regina who collected over 2,500 Valentine's cards and letters!

- Host a party to raise awareness in your school or community. Choose a day leading up to Valentine's Day that makes sense for your class or community.
- Spread the word through social media like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Use the hashtag #HaveaHeartDay.

Last year, more than 400 students from Ontario and Quebec gathered on the hill to deliver 495 letters to the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament.

Explore the HaveaHeartDay.ca to send a letter, download resources, and order bookmarks and buttons!



Have a Heart Day was inspired by the First Nations child welfare case and the "I am a witness" campaign.

The Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations are currently awaiting a historic ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal regarding the federal government's flawed and inequitable child welfare funding on reserves.

The original complaint was filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 2007. It alleges that federal government's inequitable funding for child welfare on reserves amounts to discrimination.

After more than seven years and three failed attempts by Canada to argue that the complaint should not be heard, final arguments were heard at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in October 2014. A ruling is expected by early 2016.

If favourable, this would mark the first time in Canadian history that the federal government is held to account for discrimination against First Nations children. Although the focus of this case is on child welfare, it will set an important legal precedent in areas such as education, health, housing, and clean



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drinking water.

Sign up to **be a witness** to the First Nations child welfare human rights case and decide for yourself whether the federal government is treating First Nations children fairly. Visit fnwitness.ca.



Support **Shannen's Dream** for safe and comfy schools and equitable education for First Nations children living on reserve.

Shannen Koostachin, a youth education advocate from of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth.

Many First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial and territorial schools, and zero dollars for things like libraries, computers, languages or extracurricular activities. Many schools do not provide a safe and appropriate learning environment, and may pose serious health concerns, including mold contamination, high carbon dioxide levels, rodent infestations, sewage, and inadequate or lack of heating.

Shannen worked tirelessly to try to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education. Unfortunately, she passed away in a car accident at the age of 15 before her dream could come true. But it did. On June 22, 2012—the day Shannen would have graduated—construction started for a new school in Attawapiskat.

Shannen remains an important role model for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and young people who continue to carry her dream for safe and comfy schools for all First Nations children in Canada.

Learn more and support Shannen's Dream at shannensdream.ca.



Put kids first—support **Jordan's Principle** to ensure equitable access to government services.

Jordan River Anderson was a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while the province of Manitoba and the federal government argued over who should pay for his at home care. Jordan died in hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in a family home.

Payment disputes within and between federal and provincial governments over services for First Nations children are not uncommon. First Nations children are frequently left waiting for services they desperately need, or denied services that are available to other children. This includes services in education, health, child care, recreation, and culture and language.

Jordan's Principle makes sure First Nations children receive the care and services they need, when they need them.

The principle was unanimously passed in the House of Commons in 2007. A landmark report released by the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Paediatric Society and UNICEF Canada in 2015 shows that the current governmental response falls short of realizing the vision of Jordan's Principle advanced by First Nations and endorsed in the House of Commons.

Ongoing advocacy is needed to make sure the implementation of Jordan's Principle is a government priority, and that the federal and provincial/territorial governments work with First Nations communities and provinces to fully implement child-first protections.

Learn more at jordansprinciple.ca.

