

# NEWS

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## School much different now: Chief Joseph

Herald photo by Kristina Jarvis

KRISTINA JARVIS

When Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Lawrence Joseph looked around the Senator Allen Bird Memorial Centre Monday, he can still remember what it looked like when he was a student at the residential school that used to exist there.

"It was all grey in here, and a cement floor," he said. "We weren't allowed to have our ceremonies, our language."

But seeing the colour in the building, as the Young Eagle Cree drummers finish up their prayer song, Joseph smiles.

"This is amazing," he said. "These young guys are beating a drum as part of the ceremony ... I never thought I would see the day."

Joseph was on hand to help celebrate the Prince Albert Grand Council's Day of Reconciliation. As one of the many speakers at the event, Joseph spoke about the effect the apologies from both the federal government and the various churches involved in the residential school era are now helping the First Nations people of Saskatchewan to start moving forward.

As one of the regional chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations, Joseph went to Rome in April to hear the Pope express regret about the role the Catholic Church played in the residential school system in Canada.

"We were expected as leaders to get the apologies from those responsible," he said. "Now this is an opportunity for each person to find reconciliation with what happened."

During his time in Rome, he went with two elders to St. Peter's Basilica, where each one was able to reconcile what happened to them.

Although the First Nations people of Saskatchewan and Canada have received apologies from all those involved in the residential schools, Joseph said the work for him and everyone else is far from over.

"The government has to do their part to put their best effort to facilitate healing, facilitate reconciliation, facilitate economic and social conditions," he said. "We need the world to walk with us."

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