

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens Canada
Actualité**

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IRS Coverage

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The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo)

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Residential school survivors deserve apology

Phil Fontaine

I am writing to clarify the Canadian Press article, Residential School Victims Want Apology, which was published in the July 26 Record about the final agreement on residential schools resolution.

Contrary to the view expressed that survivors were not adequately consulted, **the fact is that First Nations residential school survivors were directly involved in shaping the final agreement, and had input throughout all stages of the process that led to that agreement.**

This is an agreement **by survivors, for survivors**. The overwhelming consensus is that this **settlement is fair**, just and far better than anything that has gone before.

We realize no agreement will take away the pain and damage to survivors, their families and communities. This is why the **agreement is not only about money, but also about truth-telling, commemoration and education.**

We **continue to pursue a national apology** from the government of Canada to all survivors of the residential schools. There are, however, **legal reasons why this apology cannot be court-ordered and, as such, cannot be included in the text of the final agreement.**

We are **confident an apology will be forthcoming**. We will settle for nothing less. This government recently apologized to Chinese-Canadians who were subjected to a racist head tax. This was the right thing to do. **Survivors of residential schools deserve no less.**

The **residential schools final agreement is fair, just and comprehensive**, and notable as the largest settlement of its kind in Canadian history.

Phil Fontaine

National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

Ottawa

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The Hamilton Spectator
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Here, the learning's fun - Aboriginal centre great for families

Sharon Boase

Loretta Gulton's grandmother taught her to never give up.

The 61-year-old Hamilton woman credits the Metis elder, who had just a Grade 5 education, with instilling the strength and resilience it's taken for her to bury three of her five children and to raise three grandchildren.

"I was raised by my grandmother," Gulton says. "I guess that's why I'm like that."

Gulton lost her only daughter to cancer, a son to heart disease and a second son to liver failure. They were all in their 30s.

She was one of about 50 people who braved yesterday's sweltering heat to attend the grand opening of the Niwasa Early Learning Centre at the Norman Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre on Wentworth Street North.

Over the last few weeks, Gulton and her granddaughter Lyssa, 4, have become regulars at Niwasa. They go to take advantage of the toys and puzzles Lyssa can play with and the support Gulton gets as a second-time mom.

While it is open to neighbourhood residents of all cultural backgrounds, the Niwasa Early Learning Centre is governed by aboriginal overseers and has an aboriginal focus, explained Taunya Laslo, executive director of the Niwasa Headstart Preschool on Main Street East.

It serves as a drop-in centre where families can bring their youngsters for help with literacy, overall learning, and a visit with a public health nurse.

The opening was presided over by aboriginal community elder Walter Cooke and included traditional drumming, dancing and refreshments.

The learning that takes place from birth to age six lays the foundation for all future development, Laslo said. So Niwasa offers strategies and materials to help families help their youngsters to learn and develop, she said.

"It has to be tailored for every family and that's especially important for at-risk children," she added. "You've got to appreciate what families have and build on that. It's not about what they don't have."

With cutbacks to public health nurses working with elementary schools, basic hearing and vision problems can go undiagnosed for a year or more, further delaying a youngster's development, said Faye Lee, a nurse practitioner at Hamilton's Aboriginal Health Centre.

"Often, aboriginal kids get into kindergarten and Grade 1 and they can't read and everyone just assumes it's because they're aboriginal and really, it's because they need glasses," said Bruce Peterkin, Aboriginal Health Centre executive director.

"It happens all the time."

Peterkin said it is crucial that aboriginal children learn about their culture in order to cultivate a sense of belonging, pride and identity. And being educated in their own language -- something that was denied to their parents and grandparents by Canada's residential school system -- is critical, he added.

"With an empowered person, someone who feels good about themselves, it makes such an impact on a child's learning, training and job prospects," he said.

"If we don't start when they're young, we're almost streaming those children into a dead end."