



## Residential school survivor waiting for apology

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Lantzville's Charlie Thompson has been waiting for an apology from the prime minister for years. And next month, he'll finally get one.

Last week, Stephen Harper set June 11 as the date he will formerly apologize to residential school survivors. Thompson, who attended the residential school in Port Alberni from 1955 to 1965, starting at the age of nine, said the apology will be "huge" for him as he continues to heal mental scars left by the abuse he suffered at the school.

"It will be very, very significant," said Thompson, who works with Indian Residential School Survivors Society, giving emotional and spiritual support to people who have filed court claims because of physical or sexual abuse in residential schools.

Thompson is happy that Harper has now set a specific date for the apology.

"It's one step towards healing," he said. "You cannot erase the memory of being in a residential school. It's ingrained in your brain and your heart."

The Conservative government said in its throne speech it would issue an apology this year. It will follow the June 1 launch of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which will explore the legacy of abuse in Indian residential schools.

Thompson said that for First Nations people to accept the apology is has to be "heart-felt" and done in the House of Commons.

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