



# Write to Read BC

October 2024 Update

## Sept. 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2024, marked the fourth **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**.

The day honours the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

### **Wearing orange**

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30.

**Orange Shirt Day** is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of “Every Child Matters”. The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

Also, Canada developed an image to honour this day. Among the various visual elements illustrating Indigenous cultures, the circle is at the centre, which represents being together in spirit of reconciliation. The orange colour represents truth-telling and healing. The pathway represents the road to reconciliation. First Nations, Inuit and Métis are represented by the eagle, narwhal and beaded flower in the image. The stars represent the children who never made it home from residential schools.



*Image credit: Orange Shirt Society, 2024*



*Image credit: Government of Canada*

## New Centre in Gitanmaax / Hazelton

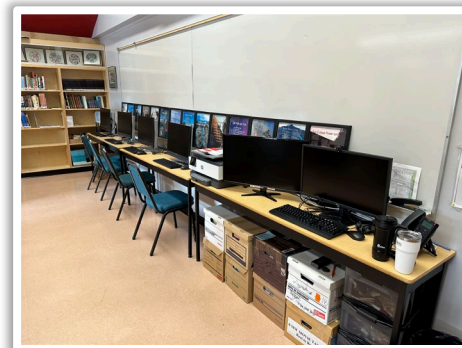
In August a long-held vision for a Learning Centre in this community was realized. This was planned and undertaken in partnership with W2R Community Champion and Principal of Hazelton Secondary School **Louise Ormerod**. This vision for a community centred learning space was brought to her attention by the education leaders in Gitanmaax. Bob Blacker, Judy Blacker, the Library Response Team, Shirley-Pat Gale and school staff undertook the installation over the week of August 26th. Louise ensured the installation was grounded in the community, was the bridge to the school district that enabled the installation in a public school that will also be accessible to the community, and wove in the voices and needs of the students from the surrounding seven Gitxsan communities, educators, elders and knowledge keepers. This is a hybrid model and tailored to both the needs of the space and place it is situated. Funding support came largely from the National American Youth Exchange Network (NAYEN). This year the international group held its annual conference in Vancouver. Here are some photos of the learning centre installation and the team who collaborated to put it all together in August.



*Learning Centre Reading and Meeting Area*



*Library Response Team, Louise Ormerod, Bob & Judy Blacker, Shirley-Pat Gale*



*Computer and IT Area in the Learning Centre*

## W2R at the Rotary District Conference, 2024

The Steveston Rotary Club's contributions to the Rotary District Conference in April 2024 were strong. Its booth and its presentations highlighted the Write To Read Project. The Hon. Steven L. Point spoke passionately about literacy and W2R in a keynote address. It wasn't planned, but this led to generous donations to support the Project.



*At the District 5040 Conference, left to right: Dean Hsieh – District Governor Nominee, Todd Jenkins, NAYEN Board Member, Shirley-Pat Gale, then District Governor and Margaret Fletcher, Lead for the W2R Library Response Team.*

The National American Youth Exchange Network (NAYEN) generously supported the new learning centre in Hazelton/Gitanmaax.



*The Hon. Steven L. Point and Rotary District Governor, 2023-24, Shirley-Pat Gale*



*Steveston Rotary Club Membership Chair, Bill McEwen and the Hon. Steven L. Point*

*Update Editor: Gordon Yusko: [gyusko@telus.net](mailto:gyusko@telus.net)  
Currently, Gordon is the Program Administrator at SFU's Indigenous Student Centre  
<https://www.sfu.ca/students/indigenous.html>*