Oneida Nation of the Thames hosts first Residential School Information Session to review initial research and discuss future plans to honour Survivors

April 8, 2024

Oneida Nation --- Over 75 people attended a Residential School Information Session on Saturday April 6 in Oneida Nation of the Thames where they had the opportunity to review recent research, hear from Survivors and discuss future events.

“This is an important part of acknowledging our past and honouring those who survived the residential school system,” said Chief Todd Cornelius. “With the input and direction of the community, we can keep this important work moving forward and continue to honour the Survivors both past and present.”

It’s a historic and significant event for the community. While work has started on researching and gathering existing data, the gathering provided valuable input in that we need to do more work. The information gathered on the residential school era which includes statistics on the numbers of children who attended, where and for how many years, calls for a deeper dive in correcting the existing data on the documents gathered.

“We have the opportunity to take ownership of our voice and information to create databases that will be maintained within our community to ensure it reflects the oral history of those who attended residential schools.” said Councillor Rosalind Antone, Oneida Nation of the Thames.

The Oneida Residential School Initiative has started documenting Survivors through interviews which will be invaluable in creating education and awareness programs around this important subject for future generations.

Saturday’s gathering opened with good words from Knowledge Keeper Lotunt Honyust and an honour song by Gavin Summers. AIAI Grand Chief Joel Abram emceed the event, Jessica Hill facilitated discussion and Councillors Rosalind Antone and Charity Doxtator presented some of the findings.

“This is only the preliminary phase of the project and we are working towards submitting funding for a multi-year project that we hope will be successful, so that we can focus on more initiatives for the community and continue to build the databases, the research and record the stories of our Survivors,” said Chief Cornelius.

Community feedback is a vital step to moving this project forward. If you have any information you would like to include in the database and/or correct current data, please email at irsinfo@oneida.on.ca.

Please visit our Residential School Page on the Oneida Website for videos, photos and documents shared at the information session.