



Canada Day 2021 Message from Mayor Wayne Redekop

I am a proud Canadian. There is much that Canada has accomplished since Confederation in 1867, and much that we can all be proud of. There are also some dark chapters in the history of our nation, none darker than the way our Indigenous peoples have been treated.

I am saddened and astonished by the news about the unmarked graves at residential school sites in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Our Indigenous peoples are devastated and bracing for more grim news to come. They are part of our larger family.

It is not adequate for us to say that the broken treaties, displacements, residential schools, undrinkable water are the responsibility of those who have come before us. We are equally responsible for our failure to insist that our upper levels of government address the inequities and injustices catalogued and the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report filed with Parliament 6 years ago.

Canada has been a land of opportunity for many people from all corners of the world. Many of us believe Canada to be a caring, welcoming country. We are a work in progress: not perfect, striving to be better. And we can only be better if we recognize all of our history, acknowledge our faults, commit to rectify the wrongs and dedicate ourselves to including everyone as we continue this experiment known as Canada.

I and other members of Council attended the sacred fire that burned at the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre on Friday and Saturday, to show our respect for the lives lost during the years of the residential schools, to grieve with our Indigenous sisters and brothers and to offer our support during a devastating time for all Indigenous people in our country.

I spoke with the elders. Their advice is clear: all Canadians need to learn the history of the Indigenous people, painful as it is. Broken promises, misguided policies, efforts to assimilate or eradicate, disrespect. Through understanding will come reconciliation.

If you fly the Canadian flag on July 1 – please fly it at half-mast and reflect on who we are as a nation. And as we do so, let us remember the context in which we mark this Canada Day. Let us commit to do better in this land we love.

- Mayor Wayne Redekop

