

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**This National Indigenous Peoples Day, Family Services of Greater Vancouver recommits to its Statement on Reconciliation**

**90-year old social service agency reaffirms its pledge to deliver trauma-informed care in reconciliation**

**VANCOUVER, BC (June 21, 2021)** – Now, more than ever, a trauma-informed approach to social service is needed in our country’s reconciliation journey. This National Indigenous Peoples Day, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) reaffirms its commitment to recognizing, listening, and learning as it supports its Indigenous clients.

Today is the national 25th anniversary of celebrating the heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. However, these past weeks have brought to light yet another heartbreaking example of the atrocities committed in the colonization of Turtle Island, overshadowing these celebrations and significant achievements. The discovery of the hidden remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School has hit Canadians with a wave of grief. Indigenous experiences in Residential Schools were captured through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s efforts, but no doubt this recent discovery brings additional clarity to our collective understanding of the trauma experienced by Indigenous people by our governments and institutions.

As a result of these historic traumas and coupled with ongoing discrimination and harms, FSGV’s Indigenous clients access services with recent traumas as well as with the effects of intergenerational trauma.

Staff see this trauma in the complex needs of the clients served by FSGV, with a disproportionate number of Indigenous clients seen at Directions Youth Services, in victim services and in our specialized trauma counselling programs. FSGV clients are former youth in care, those experiencing homelessness, and survivors of trauma – among other significant crises.

Supporting people in crisis and with trauma and working with them towards healing and resilience – for themselves, their families and communities – is what FSGV has always done. The agency’s client care is about showing compassion, commitment, and understanding clients’ needs. FSGV continues to learn the truth about colonization so that we can best serve our Indigenous clients. This humility and learning aligns with the agency’s approach to reconciliation and decolonization.

Maria Howard, CEO of FSGV, contemplates this alignment:

*“In our service, FSGV acknowledges the past, and what our clients and their communities have experienced. It is essential to never dismiss a client’s lived or vicarious experiences, and to meet them where they are. While we are not directly responsible for the historic trauma imposed on Indigenous Peoples, we are responsible for acting now, and going forward. This is a responsibility that we as an organization are committed to, and that I know my staff wholeheartedly embrace.*”

*“Around the globe, Canada is known to embody openness, caring, and inclusivity. While Indigenous Peoples have not been treated with this same respect, I believe that as we move forward, these same values can be a part of reconciliation in action.”*

As outlined in FSGV’s Statement on Reconciliation and Commitment to Indigenous Communities and Peoples, FSGV promises to Recognize, Listen, Learn, Share, and Promote the needs of its Indigenous clients and their communities, delivering trauma-informed and compassionate care in their most urgent moments of crisis.

**END**

### **About Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV)**

Founded in 1928, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) is a registered charity that supports thousands of families and individuals across the Lower Mainland living in need, in crisis or with trauma. Our over fifty programs, services, workshops and groups help people build resiliency, develop skills and knowledge, and gain the confidence to make positive changes in their lives.

### **From FSGV’s Statement on Reconciliation and Commitment to Indigenous Communities and Peoples:**

FSGV values the history and the meaningful contributions of Aboriginal peoples throughout the Lower Mainland and across British Columbia and Canada. FSGV recognizes and acknowledges the historic injustices inflicted upon indigenous people, including the attempt to destroy culture and families, and the inter-generational trauma that it caused and the contemporary injustices, racism and trauma that continues to have profound impacts on most, if not all, aspect of life for indigenous people.

FSGV understands the importance of reflecting and celebrating indigenous cultures and life are important elements in the vision of reconciliation, inclusion, and collaboration. FSGV acknowledges that learning and understanding the history of indigenous communities and peoples who live throughout the Lower Mainland is an essential element to creating a strong working relationship with indigenous communities and the collaborative development of programs and services offered by FSGV.

FSGV acknowledges that indigenous approaches to healing, growth, and mutual understanding are often holistic in nature and that these approaches may differ from non-indigenous methods. FSGV is committed to learning how to listen differently and incorporating its learnings into the goals and operations of FSGV.

To learn more about FSGV, visit [www.fsgv.ca](http://www.fsgv.ca).

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