

Yukoners cover childcare costs for Indigenous workers on Sept. 30^[1]

Public service workers will get time off for the new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

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EXCERPTS

Some Yukoners are deciding to go one step further for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation this week by sending money to Indigenous people who do not get the day off.

The Yukon Helpers Network is asking for donations of \$150, enough to cover a day's worth of childcare or allow someone to take an unpaid day off on Thursday to participate in local events.

The new federal statutory holiday on Sept. 30 only applies to workers in the public service and some businesses who decide to observe it. According to the legislation, the holiday will honour residential school survivors and their families because public commemoration of these atrocities "remains a vital component of the reconciliation process."

Elena Joss, a Yukon government employee, started the local fundraising campaign by posting on the Yukon Helpers Network's Facebook page.

Joss didn't always work for the public service. For many years, her jobs in the private sector meant she didn't always have statutory holidays off, though her children in school did — so Joss would be stuck finding childcare for the day.

She said she imagines many Indigenous people who don't work for the public service are doing the same thing this week.

"It's not just about the child care, it's about First Nations people in general," Joss said. "If we're getting the day off, they should get the day off. If that means giving up a day off, we should. This day is for them."

Joss approached Ashley Fewer, the founder of the Yukon Helpers Network, to see if the group would support her fundraising idea.

Fewer said the initiative, along with talking about reconciliation in general, is "very near and dear to her heart."

"It's a really tricky holiday that they're offering, that people who work for the government, who are non-Indigenous are getting a stat holiday," Fewer said. "When [Joss] brought the idea to us, it was definitely something we wanted to support."

Fewer said she's received a dozen donations in the last few days from Yukoners — and she was hoping to see more before Thursday.

People who want to request funding are asked to contact the Yukon Helpers Network through Facebook, with a message explaining their situation on the federal holiday. Money would then be sent through an online payment, cash, or direct deposit.

The Yukon Helpers Network will accept donations until Thursday. Anything received after that will go to Indigenous-led organizations, Fewer said.

Next year, Fewer said the Yukon government could consider other ways of honouring survivors and their families, such as redirecting employee wages for that day off to Indigenous-run charities.

Region: Yukon Territory^[3]

Tags: indigenous^[4]

Truth and Reconciliation^[5]

affordability^[6]

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<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9172> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability>