

NISOONAG PARTNERSHIP

Newsletter

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Nisoonag Partnership

The Bringing Home Our Children Initiative will be undertaken by the Nisoonag Partnership, representing Serpent River First Nation, Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, and Mississauga First Nation.

Message from the Nisoonag Chiefs

Message from the Chiefs

"It's time to bring accountability to the forefront. Our Survivors, our people, our children have suffered enough. We can't continue to ignore the horrifying history in our colonial history in Canada. It's time to give our children a voice. It's time to amplify the voice of our Survivors. It's time for truth, for the entire truth. Our communities are coming together in shared hope, to find the truth, and start a process of healing and understanding.

Together, we will bring our children home, taking our time to ensure our Elders, Survivors, and communities are cared for. I am grateful to Sagamok Anishnawbek and Mississauga First Nation for sharing this responsibility. There is lots of work ahead, but we are committed to taking our time, ensuring no one is left behind and all voices are heard."

- Serpent River First Nation
Chief Brent Bissaillon



Initiative Overview

Overview of the Initiative including funding sources and overall scope

The key purposes of Nisoonag's Bringing Home Our Children are to identify unmarked remains and to uncover the truth. The Initiative will be led by the Elders who went to the Boys' and Girls' Spanish Indian Residential Schools and through this Initiative, Survivors will:

- Bring together customary Indigenous and western ways of seeking and uncovering the truth;
- Continue the journey of individual, family, and community healing;
- Seek and gain closure for families of missing children;

- Protect future generations of children; and
- Bring their children home.

For the Initiative's first year (2021-2022), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) has committed to \$699,574 and Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) has committed to \$200,000 for research on the Spanish IRS and \$200,00 for mental health supports. The funding supports local research, engagement, and knowledge gathering, and memorialization and commemoration activities.



Initiative Updates

Community Coordinator Feature

Your community will have a Community Coordinator that you can reach out regarding the Initiative. They are here to keep you informed, answer any questions, and to help you where needed! Stay tuned for contact information for your Community Coordinator.

Nisoonag Logo Contest

The Nisoonag Partnership is inviting submissions for a logo design! The judges will be looking for a design that embodies the Partnership and the goals of the Initiative. Send submissions to political.asst@serpentriverfn.com or contact your Community Coordinator for more information!

Brief History of the Operation of the Spanish Indian Residential Schools

The Spanish Indian Residential School (Spanish IRS) was made up of a Girls' School and a Boy's School. The Spanish IRS was a Roman Catholic Residential School, the Girls' School operated from August 1913 to June 1962 and the Boys' School from August 1913 to June 1948. Collectively, it was the largest Indian Residential School in Ontario.

The Girls' School was managed by the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and the Boys' by the Jesuits. The Spanish IRS was located on the north shore of the North Channel, at the mouth of the Spanish

River on Manitoulin Island, about 100 miles east of Sault Ste. Marie.

The majority of the students were from communities on Manitoulin Island and along the north shore of Lake Huron and Lake Superior. Others were from Parry Sound in the southeast and the Ottawa Valley in the East, to Marathon in the west and to Chapleau, Temagami and New Liskeard in the north. And a smaller number of students came from communities in Quebec, Walpole Island, Akwesasne, Kahnawake, Kanosatake, and from Nelson House in Manitoba, and from western James Bay.

Upcoming Activities

01

Onboarding Community Coordinators

02

Designing a **Initiative** Logo

03

Leadership Planning and Meetings

