



# A CALL TO PLANT A HEART GARDEN

TO HONOUR CHILDREN LOST TO THE INDIAN  
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM and  
TO GROW A FUTURE IN RECONCILIATION

May –June 2015

## *HONOURING MEMORIES, PLANTING DREAMS*

The formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process comes to a close in Ottawa from May 31 to June 3, 2015. As a legacy to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, former students of Indian Residential Schools and their families, KAIROS is joining with the TRC, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and Project of Heart and inviting children and youth across the country to create **Heart Gardens**.

### [Inspiration for the Heart Garden](#)

On June 3, 2015 children from the Ottawa-Gatineau area will gather at Rideau Hall, the Governor General's residence, to greet survivors, the Commissioners of the TRC, and those with the responsibility of continuing the important work of reconciliation started by the TRC. Each child will carry two hearts attached to wooden gardening stakes. They will plant one heart in a Heart Garden at Rideau Hall and they will share the other with an adult attending the formal closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Following a brief ceremony, a rendition of "Sing", and the planting of the hearts, the children will lead a procession away from Rideau Hall to symbolize that children will lead us towards a future of reconciliation.

The hearts will be on public display on the grounds of Rideau Hall from June 4-7, 2015. The goal is to honour children lost to the Indian Residential School system and mark new possibilities in reconciliation.

### [Join the Reconciliation Movement by Planting a Heart Garden in your Community](#)

KAIROS is asking its constituency across the country to honour this important moment by joining in this activity wherever you are in Canada. We invite children and youth in parishes and congregations to make hearts, send one symbolic heart to Ottawa, and plant a Heart Garden in your community to recognize our shared commitment to reconciliation.



Ideally you will set aside two moments for this - one for making the hearts so that one will reach us in Ottawa by May 22, 2015 in time to be part of the Rideau Hall ceremonies, and another for planting in a solidarity event in the period between May 31 and June 3, 2015. Your hearts could be made of different materials - laminated to withstand the weather or of organic materials that might be absorbed into a natural garden. And your gardens could range from symbolic to actual plots.

Consider inviting Indigenous neighbours to join you in creating the hearts and planting the Heart Garden. If you are thinking of planting sacred medicines - in addition to the hearts - to create a more permanent recognition of residential school students and the shared commitment to reconciliation, we recommend consulting with an Indigenous Elder. Examples of sacred medicines are tobacco, sage, cedar, and sweetgrass. If you decide to plant sacred medicines, be sure to ask the Elder(s) how to care for the plants so that they can grow healthy and proud over the years.

### Heart Garden Instructions:

1. Choose a time to work on your hearts. While this is a recommended activity for children and youth and therefore appropriate to Sunday school or Youth groups, it can also be done inter-generationally after church or at a community event.
2. Whenever you choose to hold this activity and whatever kind of hearts you choose to make, use the opportunity to reflect on the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) with the group. As well as the many excellent resources at [www.TRC.ca](http://www.TRC.ca), many denominations have resources that speak to the particular history of their church's involvement. Project of Heart also has helpful resources suitable for children and youth at: <http://projectofheart.ca/resources/>
3. The heart destined for planting in the Heart Garden at Rideau Hall needs to be between 12 to 18 inches. A simple template is provided at: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/?p=17296>. The pattern should be printed on legal size paper (8.5"x14") to ensure the hearts are large enough to attach to the gardening stakes after being decorated by the children.
4. Ask each child to decorate both sides of the hearts (either the template heart or the design of your choice) that honour the life of a child who attended or was lost to residential schools. The children can decorate with any combination of images, colors, words, etc. that they feel would be appropriate to honour a child who attended the Indian Residential School system. Decide which heart will travel to Ottawa. Perhaps it can be a heart that every child had a part in decorating.



*Remind the children that each heart will be unique just as each child who attended IRS was unique and precious.*

5. Consider having your hearts blessed or presented in the offertory of a worship service.
6. Mail one heart to KAIROS' Ottawa office so it can be part of the Heart Garden at Rideau Hall. Please do not attach a gardening stake to this heart. Make sure you send it to **arrive by May 22, 2015** at:
 

KAIROS  
211 Bronson Avenue, Room 211,  
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5  
Attn: Ed Bianchi

Clearly indicate the name and address of your church or community inside the package, as well as a contact name and email address. Tell us a little about your plans for planting.
7. For your community garden, attach the hearts to stakes long and sturdy enough to be planted securely in the ground. If using the template heart, attach the stake to one side of the heart, fold the other side over, seal both sides together and secure the heart to the stake. (How you attach the heart will vary depending on the materials you are using).
8. If you are planting a permanent Heart Garden, one suggestion is to put seeds at the bottom of each stick. Be sure to have a plan to ensure the plants are well cared for.
9. If possible, set a date between May 31 - June 3 (the time of the closing ceremonies of the TRC) to hold your symbolic procession to honour former students of Indian Residential Schools and to plant your Heart Garden to honour children lost to the IRS system. KAIROS is preparing worship resources for use in congregations on May 31, 2015 ([www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)) some of which might also be useful to you in this moment.
10. You may want to consider including "Sing," words and music by Gary Barlow and Andrew Lloyd Weber, the song chosen for the ceremony at Rideau Hall, in your ceremony or service. You'll find a link to purchase the sheet music here: <http://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtdFPE.asp?ppn=MN0104953>
11. Please register your garden by sending us an email at [events@kairoscanada.org](mailto:events@kairoscanada.org) with the subject heading "Heart Garden". In the email, please include details such as place, time, church/group, and contact person and we will add your information on the KAIROS website events calendar.

**For questions or further information, please contact:**

**Ed Bianchi**  
[ebianchi@kairoscanada.org](mailto:ebianchi@kairoscanada.org)  
**(613) 235-9956 x 235**

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