Wear your Orange

Wednesday, Sept. 30th

Students and staff at MJ Shannon are encour­aged to pull out their pumpkin-coloured clothing later this month for Orange Shirt Day.

The day – Wednesday, Sept. 30 – is meant to honour those who survived Indian Residential Schools and remember those who did not survive. The motto of the day is Every Child Matters and serves not only as a reminder that every child, regardless of background, is import­ant, but as a commitment that we will do all we can to ensure students’ self-esteem and well-being.

***The story behind Orange Shirt Day:***

*“I went to the Mission for one year. I had just turned 6 years old. We never had very much money, and there was no welfare, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission School in. I remember going to Robinson’s store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had eyelets and lace, and I felt so pretty in that shirt and excited to be going to school! Of course, when I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt. I never saw it again, except on other kids. I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t give it back to me, it was mine! Since then the colour orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years...I want my orange shirt back!” - Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, Dog Creek, B.C.*

The shirt taken from one child is a symbol of the many losses experienced by thousands of aboriginal students and their families over several generations and the pain­ful experiences of abuse and neglect.

Wearing an orange article of clothing allows participants to take a stand against those things that undermine chil­dren’s self-esteem and to make a commitment to anti-racism and anti-bullying.