

THE

FALL 2023 • Vol. 26

# BEECHWOOD

WAY

MAGAZINE



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By Erika Wagner

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by Guy Quenneville of CBC Ottawa



## Letter from the editor

AS WE PREPARED for our 150th Anniversary, looking at what projects, programs and events we wanted to undertake, we didn't factor in the tremendous support from each organization and community. We have spent the year connecting and sharing our history with others. And in turn they would share their history with us.

The 150th Anniversary was a celebration from January to December. Each month, we held a signature event, every week we highlighted an individual buried at Beechwood and their contribution to their community and each day we shared a themed photo to create a year-long photo gallery on social media platforms.

We also shared our stories with the local media who encouraged people to visit Beechwood, experience the history and discover their own heritage within the 160 acres that is their cemetery.

This issue is a celebration of the 150th with a full review of all the activities and events we undertook during the year. This list isn't the full list of our events.

Most important, we could never capture the conversations, the stories shared and the support we received from all of you during the year. At every turn, people would share their connection to the cemetery, their legacy or provide a special moment they had within our grounds.

We remain humbled to the fact that we have been lucky enough to service the city of Ottawa for 150 years and remain committed to provide the service that all of you expect from us.

150 times we can say thank you and it will never be enough. I say again, thank you for your support, friendship and most importantly your faith and trust in Beechwood.

Stay up to date with Beechwood by following us on social media.

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Thank you

**Nick McCarthy**

*Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach*

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French Translation and Proofed by Re:word Content Co.  
**Contributors:** Nicolas McCarthy, Erika Wagner.

All photos taken on behalf of Beechwood Cemetery Foundation by Staff, Richard Lawrence Photography, and Nathan Pigeon Photography.

ISSN 2368-545X, 2368-5468

The Beechwood Way Magazine is a free, independent publication and, unless otherwise clearly stated, its articles imply no endorsement of any product or service. The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation is a registered Canadian charity and will issue an income tax receipt for donations of \$20 or more. Registration number 88811 2018 RR0001.

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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada, and read back issues at: [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca)

We want your feedback on how we are doing!

**Contact:** Erika Wagner at [foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca](mailto:foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca)

Publications Agreement number 42640528 Please return undeliverable Canadian addresses to The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. 280 Beechwood Ave, Ottawa ON K1L 8A6.

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# Beechwood 150th Anniversary – A Year in Review

By Nicolas McCarthy,  
**Director of Marketing, Communications and Community  
Outreach planning committee for National Defence**

Beechwood's 150th Anniversary has been a year-long celebration of our history and legacy, our communities and our country. We have been supported by the community and looked to host significant events and undertake interesting projects throughout this year.

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## JANUARY

In partnership with the Canadian Ice Carvers' Society, Beechwood Cemetery **commissioned two large sculptures** that included the 150th Anniversary logo as well as Echo the Fox, Beechwood children's comfort stuffed animal that is regularly given to children at funeral services.



## FEBRUARY

As part of **Black History Month**, we welcomed Councillor Rawlson King who highlighted his experience as Ottawa's first black Councillor. We also shared biographical videos of prominent community members who have helped establish the vibrant black community in Ottawa.



## MARCH

We welcomed His Excellency, Dr. Eamonn McKee, Ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Jamaica and The Bahamas who shared his research on **It's Complicated: Colonial Ireland and the Making of Canada**, which was a historical review of early Irish Anglo-Irish figures, leading to Wellington and the foundation of Bytown, with then a survey of Irish heritage sites that combines to survey the Irish immigration story in the 19th century.



## MAY

We held several military ceremonies including our annual **Dutch Remembrance Day, Victory Europe Day, Ukrainian Remembrance Day as well as USA Memorial Day**. Each ceremony was a wreath laying and included speeches from each of the Embassies.

Beechwood also **unveiled a plaque for the Honourable Bertha Wilson** who was the first woman on the Supreme Court of Canada and interpreted the Charter regarding women's rights. The plaque was unveiled by The Right Honourable Beverly McLachlin and the Honourable James MacPherson with The Right Honourable Joe Clark present.

This year, 2023, was also the anniversary of the RCMP, and we held two ceremonies including the **annual May 23 Vigil** and a larger ceremony as part of **the RCMP Veterans Annual General Meeting and Gala**. We welcomed RCMP Veterans from across the country as well as serving members and the RCMP Musical Ride. This ceremony was in partnership with the RCMP Veterans – Ottawa Division and honoured their dedication and pride in the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood.



## JUNE

In June, alongside the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society we planted **two cedar trees near Dr. P.H. Bryce's headstone**. These two cedars included 94 white lights to represent the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report. Thirteen lights were painted orange to represent the completed Calls to Action.

**Spies in the Cemetery Event**, our annual CSIS fundraiser where Dennis G. Molinaro (Editor of *The Bridge in the Parks*; *The Five Eyes and Cold War Counterintelligence*) will draw on newly declassified documents on a variety of topics, including civil liberties, agent handling, wiretapping, and international relations to explore the longest-lasting Intelligence Alliance. Five Eyes: Established in the 1940s, the Five Eyes intelligence network consists of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

For the first time since 1938, family, friends and fellow Freemasons came together to honour those in the **Freemason's Burial Plot (Section 37)**. It began with a short walk past former Grand Masters; the ceremony took place in front of the monument honouring Masons who have passed.

The month of June finished with a **Guinness World Record** attempt of bringing children, families and friends to draw chalk art on the roads in a historic section of the cemetery. The rain the next day washed everything away, however, we are waiting to know if we held a record.



## JULY

**150 Pictures - A Visual Walkthrough 150 Years of Beechwood Cemetery** - Our 150 curated images provide a visual history from the very first mention of Beechwood Cemetery in 1863 on the MacKay Estate Map to the unveiling of the military's Indigenous sacred symbols in 2022 to milestones in the development of the National Cemetery of Canada. Spanning over 600 feet (182 meters), this walk highlights events, people and moments throughout Beechwood's History, which are directly linked with the development of the city, the province and the country. The display consists of 150 curated images printed on aluminum panels (2 feet tall by 3 feet long) installed on Section 112 in a single row spanning over 600 feet or 182 meters. Each image has a brief bilingual description. Beechwood invites everyone to come and visit this unique and meaningful display that celebrates our relationship with the communities we serve.



## AUGUST

**Amiens Day** holds a special place in both the hearts of the Canadian Intelligence Corps (C Int C) and with the nation. This battle, which began on 8 August 1918, is regarded as the beginning of the end of the war and marked the start of "Canada's Hundred Days," a period that saw the Canadian Corps score several key victories that contributed significantly to the Allied victory. The C Int C is historically linked to the CCCB. Some of the founding members of the CCCB were soldiers in the Corps of Guides, considered the first dedicated military intelligence unit of the modern Canadian Army. On August 8, the C Int C proudly perpetuates the memory of the CCCB, a unit integral to the success of Amiens, and remember their valiant efforts through our Amiens Day ceremonies.

Beechwood also welcomed 150 guests for a **formal gala dinner inside the Beechwood National Memorial Centre**. This dinner included board members, management, staff and representatives of all our partner organizations and others we have the honour to work with.



## SEPTEMBER

As the City of Ottawa declared September 2023 **Beechwood Cemetery Month**, Beechwood buried a time capsule in the Botanical Gardens. The time capsule will not be opened for another 150 years and includes historical items, 150th items and pieces from our partner organizations.

**The Annual Historical Tour** honoured five people who have not only impacted the world around them but also the landscape of Beechwood Cemetery. Starting with Beechwood's founder and moving through history to modern-day heroes, attendees can talk and interact with the actors bringing these stories to life. For the first time in over 25 years, Beechwood presents the Annual Historical Tour as a living library. Learn firsthand about incredible people and how they shaped history.

This year Beechwood will be highlighting:

- Joseph Currier - a lumber baron of Bytown and one of the Founders of Beechwood Cemetery.
- James Mather - One of the finest architects in early Bytown, he also designed all the buildings currently on the Beechwood property.
- John Macoun - Canada's foremost field naturalist, the Macoun Marsh is named in honour of his work.
- Mauril Bélanger - An incredible politician who fought for duelist rights, protection of equality and more; he was the reason Beechwood Cemetery became the National Cemetery of Canada.
- Grete Hale - A successful businesswoman and philanthropist, she is one of the reasons Beechwood still exists to this day and helped bring Beechwood to National status.



**The Battle of Britain** honoured the sacrifice of the RCAF and looked to commemorate the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which saw Canada become the “aerodrome of Democracy” according to then President Harry Truman.

### **Beechwood was honoured in the House of Commons with a Private Member's Statement from the Honourable Mona Fortier.**

*Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa—Vanier as it celebrates its 150th anniversary. Beechwood Cemetery is the National Cemetery of Canada, the National Military Cemetery and the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery. It is entrusted with the duty of honouring the memory of those who have gone before us and commemorating our heritage for future generations.*

*Since 1873, Beechwood Cemetery has been an important landmark for both Canada and the city of Ottawa, with a long-standing focus on community, dignity, and remembrance.*

*In addition, with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, Beechwood Cemetery has highlighted the true nature of the impact that individuals buried in the cemetery have had on indigenous peoples in Canada.*

*Beechwood Cemetery is the final resting place of many distinguished Canadians, including Robert Borden, Tommy Douglas, Ray Hnatyshyn, and my predecessor Mauril Bélanger.*

*I invite all members of the House to visit the Beechwood Cemetery, an important and symbolic place, to join me in celebrating its 150th anniversary. (September 21st, 2023 / 2 p.m.)*

### **MPP Lucille Collard rose in the Ontario Legislature for a Private Members Statement**

Beechwood Cemetery / Cimetière Beechwood

Mme Lucille Collard: Located in my riding, Beechwood Cemetery is Canada's national cemetery and has been serving Canadians since 1873. It is my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Beechwood Cemetery on its 150th anniversary. I had the privilege to participate in two great events to commemorate this anniversary. One was an appreciation gala with 150 special guests, and the burial of a time capsule to be opened in 150 years—of course, I won't be there for that one.

Beechwood has been a feature of Ottawa and continues to be the final resting place for many Canadians, members of the Armed Forces, veterans, RCMP, and Ottawa police, as well as countless cultural and religious communities.

Mais ce qui rend le cimetière Beechwood encore plus spécial est son volet communautaire, car le cimetière accueille la communauté à travers différents événements d'intérêt. Que ce soit une visite guidée historique du site, un souper-bénéfice pour la banque alimentaire ou l'accueil de toute la communauté pour la journée de réflexion sur la vérité et la réconciliation, le cimetière est définitivement un endroit à découvrir.

Since 1873, Beechwood Cemetery has been an important landmark for both Canada and the city of Ottawa, with a long-standing focus on community, dignity, and remembrance. Beechwood has seen Canada become the country it is. I am proud that Beechwood is part of my riding of Ottawa–Vanier, and I'll be there this weekend for the Truth and Reconciliation Day.

*(September 28, 2023)*

### The Unveiling of the Children's Sacred Forest

The trilingual plaque reads: This sacred forest, and the stone commemorating it, are as enduring as our love for thousands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children who never made it home from Canada's 'Indian Residential Schools' between the 1870s and the 1990s.

On September 30, 2023, Beechwood Cemetery Foundation alongside our partners, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society and the Assembly of 7 Generations, unveiled a new Sacred Forest. This monument features three large boulders, with a central plaque.



Designed by Beechwood Chief Horticulturist Trevor Davidson, this feature includes 7 dwarf pines, supplied by Trees for Life. This contribution provides the ability to secure these unique trees, which will only grow to the height of a child.

3 *Pinus strobus* Ground Hugger White Pine

2 *Pinus strobus* Niagara Falls white Pine

2 *Pinus strobus* Mini Twists White Pine

This Children's Sacred Forest will be a focal point to reconciliation and the long journey we still have ahead of us.

### OCTOBER

Third reinterment service for Barrack Hill Cemetery to be held at Beechwood Cemetery - In September 2014, remains of the Barrack Hill Cemetery were uncovered in downtown Ottawa during construction excavation. This cemetery was a multi-faith place of burial used mainly by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Presbyterians from the late 1820s until the mid-1840s. Since the remains were uncovered, extensive archaeological research has been done to learn more about those who lived and worked in Bytown nearly 200 years ago.

On Thursday, October 12, the City of Ottawa will hold the third and final reinterment service honouring the individuals buried at Barrack Hill Cemetery, following two previous ceremonies that were held in October 2017 and October 2019. This multi-faith service will follow 19th-century funerary practices.

2nd Annual Remembrance Ceremony for the Latin-American Community in Canada - October is Latin American Heritage Month

(LAHM) in Canada and we are proud to showcase the richness and vitality of Latin American cultures and heritage and to highlight their contributions to Canada.

As the National Military Cemetery, we want to honour the contributions of Latin Americans to the defence of our country dating back to the First World War. This was a challenging time for many Latin Americans. Many spoke Spanish as a first language, which wasn't widely spoken by other military members.

Each year, the co-hosting Embassy provides a poem of remembrance from a local poet. This year, the Argentinian Poem was 'Bombardment' by Gustavo Caso Rosendi translated by Pedro Xavier Alchourron, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Argentina to Canada, for the Annual Remembrance Ceremony for the Latin American Community in Canada.



## BOMBARDEO

de Gustavo Caso Rosendi

Caían los barriletes  
regresaban todos juntos  
envueltos en llamas  
con sus colas de trapo  
de sábanas del cielo  
desde donde alguna vez  
abrazados a un oso  
nos besaron la frente  
y susurraron al oído  
buenas noches  
hijo  
que descanses.

Caía la noche vidrio roto  
desde una muy alta claraboya  
y caía el sol de mayo  
entre la sangrienta melena  
de ese roble  
también la lombriz  
en el territorio de aquel bagre  
y la espera en vano  
el vano regreso  
la tarde colgando del anzuelo  
y entre las manos un tazón  
con leche hirviendo y miel  
sobre una tostada casi negra  
y ese tufo entre las uñas

a lata a tierra a humo  
a pez ausente  
y aparecían de pronto  
los perros de la infancia  
para echarse al lado nuestro  
y nos olían el miedo y nos lamían  
y luego por fin el silencio  
al fin el silencio poder dormir  
dormir un poco o para siempre  
(Buenas noches  
compañeros  
buenas noches)

Ese soldado nunca supo de qué  
mordisqueada manzana se había  
asomado como gusano al mundo.

Debió ser esa la causa por la que  
paseaba su garbo de sauce  
en la llovizna ocultando un poco  
esos ojos de pescado reseco  
y parecía rebotar en el paisaje  
con la insistencia del bicho  
que choca contra un farol.

Debió ser esa la causa por la que  
se retiraba a buscarse para no  
encontrarse cuando regresara  
y no verse y esas cosas  
que se piensan.

Debió haber sido así  
Así nomás debió haber sido  
que no oyó la voz de alerta ni el silbido  
y cuando el viento negro  
se le metió por los agujeros  
ese soldado gritó  
"mamá".

Lo único que gritó fue esa palabra.

## BOMBARDMENT

by Gustavo Caso Rosendi

The kites came back  
all together wrapped in flames  
with their rag tails of sheets from the sky  
whence once hugging a bear  
they kissed our foreheads and  
whispered in our ears  
good night son  
may you rest.

The night fell,  
broken glass from an overly high skylight  
and the sun of May fell  
among the bloody mane of an oak  
also the worm fell in the territory of that catfish  
and the wait in vain  
the vain return  
the afternoon hanging from the hook  
and between the hands oo  
a bowl half-filled with boiling milk  
and honey on an almost black toast  
and that smell between the nails

Scent of tin, scent of earth, scent of smoke,  
scent of absent fish  
and suddenly the dogs of childhood  
would appear to lie next to us  
and they would smell our fear and lick us  
and then at last the silence  
at last the silence to sleep  
for a little while...or forever  
(Good night comrades good night).

That soldier never knew  
from which nibbled apple  
he had peeked out like a worm into the world

It must have been the reason why  
he walked his willowy jaunt in the drizzle  
hiding a little those parched fish eyes  
and seemed to bounce across the landscape  
with the insistence of the bug  
that bumps into a lamppost.

That must have been the reason why  
he went off to look for himself  
so as not to find himself  
when he came back  
and not to see himself  
and all those things you think of.

It must have been like that.  
So it must have been  
that he didn't hear the warning voice or the hiss  
and when the black wind blew through his holes  
that soldier shouted  
"mum".

The only thing he yelled was that word.

*(Translation: Pedro Xavier Alchourron, for the Annual Remembrance Ceremony  
for the Latin American Community in Canada - Ottawa, 15 October, 2023)*

**The Forgotten Battle Series** is a new educational program offered by Beechwood and a dedicated partner. The series looks to celebrate a moment in Canadian Military History and how that moment impacted our reputation, the direction of a conflict/war or a definitive moment in Canadian History and the relationship with other nations or groups in society.

Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are inviting you to an evening of education, history and the opportunity to see artifacts from the Bevrijdingsmuseum Zeeland: (Liberation Museum Zeeland). This is the first time these artifacts have been viewed in Ottawa.



## NOVEMBER

November is one of the busiest times of the year at Beechwood with numerous ceremonies including **No Stone Left Alone, The National Day of Tribute – Service Day, Girl Guide of Ottawa No Stone Left Alone, Remembrance Ceremony for the RCMP, CSIS, Remembrance Ceremony for the People of France, Australia Sunrise remembrance Ceremony and the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the National Military Cemetery.**

As we undertook all these events, Beechwood Cemetery Foundation held dozens and dozens of tours for everyone from Vice-Admiral Angus Ian TOPSHEE, CMM (OMM), MSM, CD. Commander – Royal Canadian Navy and his staff, to students from across the country, to the 40th Anniversary of The Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference and our local community.

We also hosted our regular events including the Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Division Annual Butterfly Release, to A Company of Fools Summer Series, to Capital Pop-Up Cinema and Chamberfest Music concerts in the Sacred Space including a new adaptive series for children and their families.

The year will end with the publishing of the Beechwood 150th History book that will serve as the crown of this most important year.





# Sustainability of the Urban Macoun Marsh and Environmental Restoration - SUMMER

By Erika Wagner

**THE MACOUN MARSH** is an urban wetland situated on the southeast corner of the Beechwood Cemetery property and is named in honour of John Macoun, a Canadian explorer and naturalist, interred at Beechwood. Macoun has been recognized as a person of National Historic Significance by Parks Canada.

The Marsh provides a valuable and safe space for local school children to study the over 1300 different species that reside there. Located along the shores of the Marsh is a small outdoor classroom with hand-drawn images of some of the beautiful nature visitors can find. The St-Laurent Academy visits the Macoun Marsh three times a week from September to November. The Ottawa Field Naturalists club will be using the marsh on a regular basis on Saturdays in the warm months, and the Cornwall-based Environmental Centre comes to investigate bat populations at night.

Over the past seven years, the Marsh has been draining slowly and allowing for the cattail population to overtake the Marsh, almost eradicating the habitable areas for turtles. Also, the height of the cattails have grown to the point where there is little water visible from any safe point from the wooden classroom — both stripping

the students of a unique learning opportunity while jeopardizing the habitat of local wildlife.

Every few years, Beechwood Staff have gone into the Marsh to remove the cattails in order to save the marsh from being completely overtaken. The cattails require so much water, and the marsh was dangerously close to disappearing without Beechwood intervention. Unfortunately, Beechwood does not have the equipment necessary to continue doing this work.

A plan was created in partnership with the Rideau Conservation Authority and ASL Agrodrain Limited to help save the Marsh. Sustainability of the Urban Macoun Marsh and Environmental Restoration -SUMMER was created in two parts.

1) First and foremost, great care must be taken with the environmental impact. Surveys need to be done and consults with local environmentalists to prevent any damage being done to the Macoun Marsh habitat.

2) Build a culvert to control the water flow in and out of the Marsh. Cattails hate deep water, so adding an extra inch in a dry year can fight off their infestation.



3) The bottom of the Marsh is solid bed rock, meaning we need to not only remove the current infestation but dig down deeper to prevent the cattails from regrowing in the shallow area.

4) Before construction can begin, the fish, turtles and frogs will need to be moved into a safe corner of the Macoun Marsh. Beechwood has a plan to have a community day where people can come out and help catch the wildlife in order to save their home.

5) Our largest project will be community fundraising. At present, the Marsh is at an impasse. Beechwood provides basic ongoing maintenance to try and remove the cattails every few years, but there is no budget for lasting improvements to the Marsh, so external funding is required to help save it.

The SUMMER will involve cleaning out the eastern half of the Macoun Marsh, eliminating the cattails from the area closest to the classroom and the walking paths thus leaving the Marsh with plenty of water to encourage the return of local biodiversity. These environmental efforts will help prevent the Marsh from further damage and help keep the Marsh for future generations to enjoy the wildlife.

*Should you wish to donate to Summer, you can do so here:  
<https://beechwoodottawa.ca/en/donation>*

# Poignant memorial to residential school children unveiled at Beechwood Cemetery

by Guy Quenneville

**Article originally written and published by CBC Ottawa**



**A NEW MONUMENT AT OTTAWA'S** Beechwood Cemetery now stands as a sobering memorial to the Indigenous children who never made it back to their families after attending Canada's oppressive residential schools.

It's called the Children's Sacred Forest and consists of a circle of rocks, about 10 metres wide, at the crest of a small hill overlooking the headstone of Dr. Peter Bryce.

Bryce was the former chief medical health inspector of what was then known as Canada's Indian Affairs department who blew the whistle on the horrors of the residential school system.

Inside the circle, under a mat of cedar mulch, modest boulders share space with seven small dwarf pine trees.

"They'll never grow higher than the height of children," said Cindy Blackstock, an Indigenous advocate and the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

The society unveiled the sacred forest on Saturday, Canada's third annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, for a crowd of about 200 people.

The goal is to add other tree varieties representing distinct Indigenous groups to the memorial over time, Blackstock added.

## A long, painful history

Beginning in the late 19th century, major Christian denominations operated federally funded residential schools in Canada.

They separated Indigenous children from their communities and families, children who were then subjected to various forms of neglect and abuse.

## 1 family, 3 generations' views on the impacts of residential schools

How this garden is helping Indigenous children rediscover their roots  
Many suffered even worse fates. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation estimates at least 4,100 children died at residential schools. The true number is likely much higher, according to Murray Sinclair, who served as the commission's chair.

Stephen Kakfwi, the former premier of the Northwest Territories — and a residential school survivor — spoke on behalf of his wife Marie Wilson at Saturday's unveiling.





Wilson was one of the three Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) heads who travelled across the country to hear the accounts of former students.

Kakfwi recalled Wilson reading back some of the testimony and her crying a few years after the work was completed.

"It's the voices, she said, of the little children," Kakfwi recalled Wilson saying of what left her shaken.

A trail of placards outlining the commission's 94 calls to action snaked its way down the hill to Bryce's grave.

Before the ceremony, Laura Shugart made her way up the line, reading the signs. She'd decided to mark the day by visiting the memorial site and was struck in particular by the height of the trees inside the circle.

"I mean, it's devastating that children were ripped away from their families," she said.

Though the sacred forest site is somber, Blackstock welcomed some light on Saturday. She encouraged bubble blowing, describing it as an apt callback to the TRC's closing ceremonies.

"There were children and survivors blowing bubbles to represent the dreams of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children," Blackstock said.

"And the reason those dreams are important is: each one of us, by implementing those TRC calls to action, can make them real."

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which recognizes the legacy of Canada's residential school system and its harms to Indigenous peoples, was introduced in response to one of the 94 calls to action.

Joanna Bernard, interim national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, used the day to urge the government to implement the rest of them.

The assembly says only 13 calls to action have been completed so far. Ottawa or anywhere across Canada.