

## Have a Heart Day, 2024



This Valentine's Day, and throughout Lent, lend your heart to helping ensure First Nations children receive the care they need!

"Have a Heart Day" is an opportunity to use our actions and voice to speak out for equitable services for all children. Caring Canadians can help ensure First Nations children can grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of who they are.

February 14 each year, is a reminder to the government and to all of us to honour equal funding for Indigenous children and families. These children do not have equitable access to social support, education, medical access and in some cases, clean water.

The Human Rights Tribunal in 2017 ruled this to be so.

Over and above the right to essential services, there is a clear connection to the horrific treatment of Indigenous children at residential schools and the impact on generations of children and families.

By raising our voices and by our actions, all of us can make a difference. Here are some things you can do:

- Send a letter or valentine to the Prime Minister and your local MP demanding fair and equal service to Indigenous children in care. No stamp required!
- Learn the importance of culturally based education for First Nations children, and learn more about Indigenous Peoples in Canada
- Place red hearts on stakes in your garden and share with others why you are doing that.
- Donate to The Mission and Service Fund which provides funding through its Healing Fund and Justice and Reconciliation Fund for Indigenous led programs and for non-Indigenous education and actions.
- Read Spirit Bear's first book, ***Spirit Bear and Children Make History*** where he tells us all about the case at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the very first Have a Heart Day! The e-book is available for free on the Caring Society website! <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides>
- After learning about why we celebrate Have a Heart Day, go outside and build a snow bear! You can add signs or messages in support of equity for First Nations children.
- Bake some *Have a Heart Day* cookies with your group, or family and share with them why you baked them!
- Spread the word: Post your photos of your Have a Heart Day letter, cookies, snow bear or however you choose to celebrate on social media! Use the hashtag #HaveAHeartDay

We can all take peaceful and respectful actions to stand with all children.