

Inspiring Stories

Quarter 3: July - September 2023

Inspiring Stories from this quarter at NVDPL

Inspiring Story: Reconciliation in Action

In honor of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, North Shore Libraries presented an event with Sam George, a Squamish Elder, residential school survivor, and the author of the *The Fire Still Burns: Life In and After Residential School*. The program was a powerful example of Reconciliation in action, fostering understanding, empathy, and healing.

80 community members attended the event to hear from Sam, as well as co-authors Jill Goldberg and contributing students Liam Belson, Dylan MacPhee, and Tanis Wilson.

The event started with a Traditional Welcome by Chepximiya Siyam'/Chief Janice George, a Squamish hereditary chief and also Sam's niece. Chief Janice spoke of local landmarks and their relationship with Squamish peoples and shared gratitude to the ancestors for caring for the lands.

The memoir is an unflinching look at the horrors of a childhood in the Indian Residential School system and the long-term effects on survivors. It illustrates the healing power of one's culture and the resilience that allows someone to rebuild a life and a future.

Despite the sometimes painful subject matter, the atmosphere was strengthening, and attendees appreciated wisdom and truth shared by Elder George.

By providing a platform for the voices of survivors and facilitating open dialogue, library events like these contribute to the ongoing process of acknowledging historical injustices and working towards a more just and inclusive society.

At the end of the evening, Chief Janice's husband, Skwetsimeltxw Willard 'Buddy' Joseph, remarked that **"libraries, with events like this, are really unwinding colonialism."**

Staffer and event committee collaborator, Sara Oremland, said this is one of the most moving and meaningful events she has been a part of at NVDPL.

