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For Immediate Release

Former Nain boarding school being demolished

A dark chapter in the history of Labrador Inuit will close on Monday, November 14, with the demolition of the former boarding school in Nain.

Built by the Hudson's Bay Company, the building was used as a cottage hospital before being turned over to the Moravian Church in 1936 and converted to a boarding school, which operated until 1973., before being used by the OKalaKatiget Society and later for storage. The building has been abandoned for more than 30 years.

The Residential School Survivor Committee in Nain submitted a request to the community's church group to have the building demolished as part of reconciliation between the Moravian Church and Labrador Inuit. The church group, which had been discussing what to do with the building for years, approached the Nain Inuit Community Government to have the building torn down.

"While this will be a very emotional day for many people, it is also a day of empowerment," says Nunatsiavut's Minister of Language, Culture and Tourism, Roxanne Barbour. "It is an opportunity for those who are residential school survivors, and their descendants, to see a building be torn down that holds so many bad memories. Today is a day to stand up and be proud to be Inuit and to be proud of who we are, our culture, language and history."

The Nunatsiavut Government, through the Department of Language, Culture and Tourism and Health and Social Development, will host an event for community members while the building is being demolished. A heated tent will be set up in the parking lot of the nearby Illusuak Cultural Centre for those wanting to see the building come down. Staff from the Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development will be available to provide support during the event.

"For a long time, this building has been a heinous reminder of all the traumas experienced by our people," adds Minister Barbour. "I encourage those who will be in community to come and celebrate as the building is demolished."

Minister Barbour also recognized her predecessor and former Nunatsiavut President Jim Lyall, and other survivors of the boarding school who have passed away.

“I’m sure Jim and many others would be very proud to watch this building come down.”

Minister Barbour is reminding Labrador Inuit that despite all of the hardship and trauma experienced over the years, “we are still here, we are still Inuit, and we are resilient. This event celebrates our resilience as Inuit and promotes closure and healing.”

Those interested in witnessing this historical event are asked to gather at the Illusuak Cultural Centre parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Parking in the area of the boarding school or Illusuak is prohibited while the demolition and clean-up is under way.

Supports for Survivors and Descendants

- A mental health worker from the Department of Health and Social Development will be onsite, and also available during the afternoon for those needing supports
- Additional emotional supports are available by contacting the *Residential School Survivor Support Line* at 1-866-925-4419 (24 hours a day, seven days a week).
- Those experiencing emotional distress and want to talk, can contact the toll-free *Hope for Wellness Help Line* at 1-855-242-3310 or the online chat at hopeforwellness.ca open (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

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