

## 94 CALLS TO ACTION – TRUTH and RECONCILIATION AT ÉCOLE SACRÉ-COEUR

Students in Grades 4-6 and in Grades 7-8 took part in a presentation on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

Our presenters, Wes Nelson and Desiree, spoke to students about the history of Canada's residential schools and the impact on generations of Aboriginal families. Students watched a five minute video depicting artistically residential schools (google: YouTube Allan Parry Residential Schools). Then Wes shared his own personal stories about his grandfather, his mother and his brother; all residential school survivors. He told us how his grandfather would cry at night but Wes never understood why. He told the students that his mother was given a number at residential school and no one ever used her name. He shared how his brother was afraid of the dark because he was once put in a dark room and the people from the school threw snakes in the room to scare him. These acts of mistreatment and cruelty had an impact on his family members. It was a sad time in history for Canada.

Then Wes spoke about the Aboriginal Adoption Ceremony whereby community members pledge to care for, to protect and to love members who have lost family members and/or who are in need of support. Together with the teachers' help we re-enacted adoption pledges and wrapped Desiree up in a blanket. We hope his teaching will be shared with other families. We encourage staff and students to take care of each other because **we are a family** at École Sacré-Coeur. The stories were honest and the teaching was powerful. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, many ESC students wore orange T-shirts to honour and to acknowledge the survivors and those who have lost family members or been impacted by the residential school system.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its 94 Calls to Action asks that each Canadian learn more about Indigenous ways, that we deepen our understanding and that we acknowledge our past history. Throughout the school year teachers will be integrating Indigenous Education in the curriculum. We hope to have Wes back again to share more stories.

