

CONNECTION AWARENESS EDUCATION



ANNUAL REPORT
2018



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INTRODUCTION

Mission

Inspired by Chanie's story and Gord's call to build a better Canada, the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) aims to build cultural understanding and create a path toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Vision

Improving the lives of Indigenous people by building awareness, education, and connections between all Canadians.

Land Acknowledgement

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund operates programs all across Turtle Island. The DWF office is located on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.



"As Canadians we all have a responsibility to understand our true history; Gord recognized this and took action in his final years to try and build a more complete Canada, one that is fair and equitable to all its citizens. By sharing Chanie's story through events, Legacy Spaces, and Legacy Schools, DWF is bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to raise awareness, to educate, and to inspire action towards reconciliation."

Mike Downie, DWF Co-Founder and DWF Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE FAMILIES



Chi miigwetch, thank you, to everyone who has supported the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund.

When our families embarked upon this journey, we never imagined the potential for Gord's telling of Chanie's story to create a national movement that could further reconciliation and help to build a better Canada.

We truly believe it's so important for all Canadians to understand the true history of Indigenous people in Canada; including the horrific truths of what happened in the residential school system, and the strength and resilience of Indigenous culture and peoples.

It's incredible to reflect upon the beautiful gifts both Chanie & Gord were able to leave us with.

On behalf of both the Downie & Wenjack families -- Chi miigwetch, thank you for joining us on this path. We are stronger together.

In Unity,

MIKE DOWNIE & HARRIET VISITOR
Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



To our partners, supporters, and all who have joined the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund on the path towards reconciliation - thank you, miigwetch!

DWF had an incredible year in 2018. The organization obtained charitable status in March and embarked upon a vigorous strategic plan that resulted in the full roll out of our national programs: Legacy Schools and Legacy Spaces. We are excited and inspired by this work – a visionary approach that ensures Canadians engage in reconciliation through the key pillars of education, awareness, and connection.

EDUCATION

The Legacy Schools program is an opportunity to create awareness around the history and impact of the residential school system on Indigenous peoples. The Legacy Schools toolkits includes educational resources to help engage students, staff, and the school community. The Legacy Schools pilot launched in September 2018, with the goal of reaching 200 schools. By the end of March 2019 there were over 450 Legacy Schools in each province and territory in Canada. This speaks to the incredible need and importance of supporting educators and classrooms on their reconciliation journeys and we look forward to reaching even more schools in 2019.

AWARENESS

Legacy Spaces provide organizations with a place to reflect and educate employees and the general public on our country's past. Participating organizations demonstrate a willingness to engage and encourage difficult conversations to better understand the history of residential schools and the impact it has had on Indigenous communities today. DWF launched 10 new Legacy Spaces in 2018 and continues to expand the program with future reconciliation partners in 2019.

CONNECTION

The first ever Secret Path Week took place in 2018 with over 15 events happening nationally, including the Walk for Wenjack which took place in Toronto and is planned to expand across Canada in 2019. DWF encourages each Legacy School and Space to engage in ReconciliACTIONS during Secret Path Week. Taking action is a way for students and the community to actively engage in reconciliation. ReconciliACTIONS are unique and can incorporate anything from fundraising to cultural activities. Where possible, we encourage our Legacy partners to include land-based and "in community" learning to support awareness and appreciation of Indigenous culture and traditions. This provides honest reconciliation opportunities, where Canadians are interacting and building positive relationships with Indigenous people through greater learning and cultural understanding.

Positive social change can happen through continued education and action. By engaging in and committing to this important work, together, we can continue to build a better Canada.

Miigwetch (Thank you),

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Midanik". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

SARAH MIDANIK
CEO & President
Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund

BACKGROUND



Chanie Wenjack

In 1963, at the age of nine, Chanie Wenjack was sent to the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School in Kenora, Ontario. At the age of 12, Chanie ran away from Cecilia Jeffrey, attempting to reunite with his family who were 600 kilometers away in Ogoki Post. He would never make it home. Chanie's body was found on October 22, 1966, a week after he fled. In his pocket was nothing but a little glass jar with seven wooden matches. Chanie fell victim to Canada's legacy of colonization of Indigenous Peoples.

Residential schools were government-operated institutions aimed at separating Indigenous children from their families and traditions in order to assimilate them into a colonized Canada. In all, about 150,000 First Nation, Inuit and Métis children were removed from their communities and forced to attend the schools. While attending, many children were subjected to significant emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. The last school closed in 1996. This is Canadian history, yet many Canadians remain unaware of this part of our shared past.

33% of non-Indigenous Canadians have no awareness or knowledge of the residential school system



48% of non-Indigenous Canadians aged 18-29 have no awareness of the residential school system.¹



Gord Downie

Gord Downie was the lead singer, songwriter and driving creative force behind The Tragically Hip, who brought their energetic live performances to audiences around the world for over three decades.

In August of 2016, Gord asked all Canadians to look at the state of Indigenous-settler relations in this country and to "Do Something" to change them for the better. In October of 2017, Gord passed away with his children and family close by. His legacy, messages of hope, and powerful calls to action live on. Gord has dedicated his legacy to creating lasting, positive change in Canada; we are committed to

making Gord proud as his legacy continues to guide our work every day.

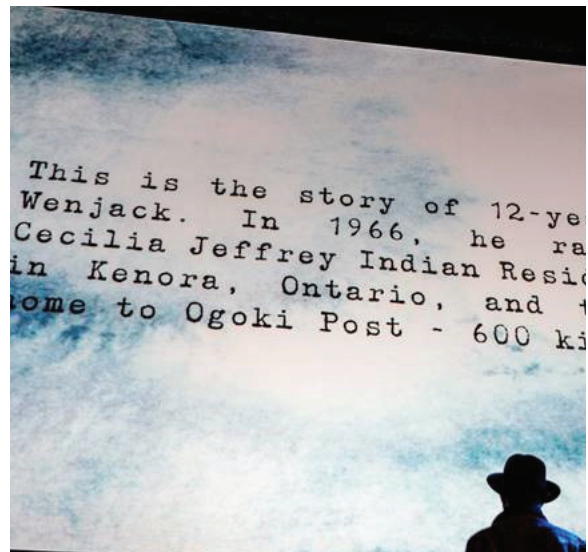
¹ Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples, Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2016

Our History

After hearing about Chanie's life and death, Gord began a personal project to tell his story and share it with other Canadians. The project began as ten poems written by Gord as he imagined what it would be like to be Chanie. These poems later became the lyrics to the Juno award-winning album *Secret Path*, which would form the basis of the graphic novel, concert series, and numerous documentaries.

Secret Path acknowledges a dark part of Canada's history—the long-suppressed mistreatment of Indigenous children and families by the residential school system—with the hope of starting our country on a road to reconciliation.

Using *Secret Path* as a catalyst, the Wenjack and Downie families officially founded the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) in 2016 to support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. DWF operated as a fund through the Toronto Foundation and Tides Canada until receiving charitable status in March 2018.



Secret Path acknowledges a dark part of Canada's history—the long-suppressed mistreatment of Indigenous children and families by the residential school system.

LEADERSHIP

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack team is Indigenous-led and is governed by a Board of Directors made up of outstanding Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders.

Our Board of Directors

MIKE DOWNIE

Downie Family member

HARRIET VISITOR

Wenjack Family member

BOB WATTS**KORY WILSON****HILLARY THATCHER****LAURA ARNGNA'NAAQ****STUART COXE****BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE****DR. ALIKA LAFONTAINE****SARAH MIDANIK**

President & CEO of DWF

*Full biographies can be found on downiewenjack.ca.

Pearl Achneepineskum, Chanie's sister with Gord Downie backstage at Secret Path Live in Toronto, ON.



OUR PROGRAMS

DWF has developed programs and initiatives based on our three guiding pillars of **awareness**, **education**, and **connection** which contribute to a national movement where all people in Canada are participating in reconciliation.

ReconciliACTIONS

A reconciliACTION is a meaningful action that **moves reconciliation forward**. ReconciliACTIONS aim to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in the spirit of reconciliation to create awareness, share, and learn. Encouraging Canadians to engage in these events is one of the key ways DWF hopes to effect social change. Community engagement leads to improved and in-depth knowledge of issues, empowerment for the groups represented and involved, increased trust in organizations and governance, creates local networks, and improves communication and understanding.²

Throughout the year DWF helps to facilitate a number of reconciliACTIONS across Canada such as community-led events, school initiatives, National Indigenous Day celebrations, and our annual awareness campaign, Secret Path Week.

ReconciliACTIONS are the answer to Gord's call to 'Do Something'; do something to raise further awareness, do something that improves the lives of Indigenous People, do something that improves the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

² Bassler, A. et al., Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders, Center for Rural America, 2008



Secret Path Week

Secret Path Week is an annual campaign taking place from October 17-22. The week raises awareness of the history and legacy of residential schools to create a national movement of awareness and understanding. This is a special week as October 17th and 22nd respectively mark the anniversaries of Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack's return to the spirit world.

During Secret Path Week, DWF invites all people throughout Canada - Legacy Spaces, Legacy Schools, organizations and individuals - to host and/or celebrate their own reconciliATIONS or fundraising event, such as 'Walk for Wenjack'.



“Hosting a Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Legacy Space at Dalhousie University in Mi’kma’ki, the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq provides us with an opportunity to incorporate Indigenous education, research, and support into the life of our institution.”

*Donna Bourne-Tyson,
University Librarian of Dalhousie*



Legacy Spaces

The Legacy Spaces program is an opportunity for corporations, government, organizations and educational institutions to play an important role in their communities. Legacy Spaces are designated physical spaces that provide accurate information regarding Indigenous history and our journey of reconciliation. The spaces are meant to be safe and welcoming places where conversations about the past, present, and future are facilitated and encouraged. They also serve as symbols and reminders for employees, clients, students, and guests of the important work each of us needs to do if the promises of this country are to be fulfilled. As of March 31, 2019, there are **24 active Legacy Spaces across Canada**.

Legacy Spaces also provide a starting point for businesses to answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call-to-action #92:

“We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous Peoples and their lands and resources.”



Legacy Schools

Many Canadians (80%) strongly believe that Indigenous history and residential schools should be added to the Canadian curriculum for all students.³ DWF believes that early learning and understanding will help today's youth to lead future generations toward reconciliation.

The Legacy Schools program is an opportunity for classrooms/schools and youth to lead the movement in awareness of the history and impact of the residential school system on Indigenous Peoples. The Legacy Schools program answers the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls-to-action #62 - #65. Legacy School toolkits provide educational support and resources to engage students, staff, and the school community to help ensure that the unique interests, rights, and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples are recognized and implemented in schools and communities throughout Canada. Legacy Schools are encouraged to create reconciliACTIONS throughout the school year, within their school and community.

By 2020, our goal is to reach over 1.5 million students across Canada.

Legacy Schools
supported by:



The T.R. Meighen
Family Foundation

High School Artist Ambassador
Program supported by:



Foundation

"Downie's greatest legacy to us, his music, is best utilized by inviting students across the country to learn, explore, wonder and strive for a reconciled Canada. Only by being truthful about our shared past can my students, and our children, create Canada the way it is meant to be."

Andrea Eby, St. Bonaventure Catholic School and Legacy School Educator

Legacy Schools has expanded to include the High School Artist Ambassador program which brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists into high schools to forward the reconciliation journey of school communities. Through the sharing of music, stories, and conversation, the Legacy Schools High School Artist Ambassador program empowers student leadership and reconciliACTIONS. This program was piloted in February-April 2019 with a full program scheduled to roll out in the 2019/20 school year.

"Northland Power was honoured to be the lead sponsor of the Legacy Schools program this year. We feel our support for the program has helped to honour the Indigenous communities with whom we maintain equitable partnerships at many of our onshore wind and solar sites across Ontario and look forward to seeing the program grow in the coming years."

Mike Crawley, President and CEO

³ Truth and Reconciliation: Canadians see value in process, skeptical about government action, Angus Reid, 2015

OUR IMPACT

As of March 31, 2019

24 Legacy Spaces across Canada in **5** provinces



2 pilot projects complete: Legacy Schools and High School Artist Ambassador programs

Legacy Schools engaged in every province and territory



561 registered Legacy Schools, **880** toolkits distributed, and **176,000** students reached

7 Artist Ambassador visits to high schools across Canada



One free, family-friendly event at Yonge-Dundas Square - **12,000** attended, **45,000** tuned in via Periscope livestream



February reconciliACTION month with Steam Whistle reaching over **19,000** people

+38 third-party events and initiatives reaching over **7,000** people



Social Media/newsletter – **10,000+** followers on Facebook, **9,000+** on Twitter, **2,400+** on Instagram, and **5,000+** newsletter subscribers

Why is Reconciliation Important?

The ongoing impact of colonization on today's Indigenous communities is evident. Indigenous people are more likely to face poverty, child welfare intervention, legal issues, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide.⁴ Yet, more than half of Canadians feel that we spend too much time apologizing for residential schools.⁵

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action for all Canadians to guide us in repairing the relationship between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous. However, 67% of non-Indigenous Canadians have no knowledge of what this report includes or what the calls-to-action are.⁶

So how do we empower Canadians to create real, actionable change?

DWF believes that education and awareness is the first step towards reconciliation in Canada, and as the Hon. Senator Murray Sinclair stated, "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem - it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us." Through our programs, DWF provides an opportunity for Canadians to actively participate in reconciliation, contributing to a national movement that will in turn positively impact Indigenous Peoples.

What Can I Do?

DWF relies on generous contributions from the public to ensure we can continue the work we do. There are many ways to donate to DWF and other ways to get involved such as volunteering or leading your own reconciliACTION.

To learn more please visit downiewenjack.ca

@downiewenjack
#DoSomething #ReconciliACTION



Where Do the Funds Go?

Every dollar raised directly supports the development of resources for DWF programming such as Legacy Schools, Legacy Spaces, and events that will improve awareness, and increase education and connection throughout Canada.

Our Future

From his last performance in Kingston, Gord Downie pointed out that it's going to take us 100 years to fix the problems that stemmed from residential schools. As the people of Canada, each of us has a responsibility to acknowledge and understand our shared history and the impact it continues to have on the original inhabitants of this land. The Indigenous population is growing rapidly, and over the next two decades is expected to exceed 2.5 million.⁷ We owe it to the future generations to ensure that our past and the lessons learned from it are imbedded into our collective consciousness so we can reach true reconciliation. Through DWF programs, our goal is to create a Canada we can **all be proud of**.

**Gord asked us all to
'Do Something' – will you?**



**Visit DOWNIEWENJACK.CA to learn more
DONATE TODAY**

⁴ Why Reconciliation? Understanding the ugly legacy of residential schools, Globe and Mail, November 2017

⁵ Truths of reconciliation: Canadians are deeply divided on how best to address Indigenous issues, Angus Reid, 2018

⁶ Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples, Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2016

⁷ Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census, 2017, Statistics Canada, 2017

OUR PARTNERS

We are so grateful to each and every one of our partners, donors and friends. Thank you, miigwetch to all of our supporters!

As of March 31, 2019

FOUNDING SUPPORTERS



Leah and Paul Atkinson Family Foundation



THE JOYCE FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Kiessling-Isaak Family Foundation



Foundation

The T.R. Meighen Family Foundation

The Donald R. Sobey Family Foundation

SPECIAL THANKS TO



The Read Elliott Family Foundation



LEGACY SPACE PARTNERS

Abbotsford Arts Council



B's Breakfast and Gourment Burgers



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31	2019	2018
	ASSETS	
Current		
Cash	\$ 5,611,536	\$ 425,999
Accounts Receivable	61,165	7,262
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	3,267	-
	<u>5,675,968</u>	<u>433,261</u>
Capital Assets	<u>35,302</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>\$ 5,711,270</u>	<u>\$ 433,261</u>
	LIABILITIES	
Current		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$ 49,779	\$ 28,551
Current Portion of Deferred Contributions	10,000	73,710
	<u>59,779</u>	<u>102,261</u>
Deferred Contributions	<u>20,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>
	79,779	132,261
	NET ASSETS	
	<u>5,631,491</u>	<u>301,000</u>
	<u>\$ 5,711,270</u>	<u>\$ 433,261</u>

The complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

Charitable Registration Number: 7840 55915 RR0001

RECONCILIATION
LEADERSHIP
CULTURE



INSPIRATION
LEGACY



GORD CHANIE
DOWNIE & WENJACK
FUND

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