

Kamloops Response Report by Karli Fisher  
June 2021

Upon hearing about the discovery in Kamloops, I considered whether we should lower our flag half-mast, and then Jenny texted me to let me know the District was lowering their flags and she had requested they do the same for us. The next day, I went into the office and asked about the flags, as the District's had been lowered but ours was not, and was told since the flag could be lowered by hand (and did not require lowering the pole as the District's flags do), we could do it ourselves. Kyla did this for us, lowering the flag as much as it could be lowered without tangling in the tree at the base. The District had posted a response and changed their profile picture to an orange background. I discussed with Jenny whether we should do the same; she agreed that we should post a statement but not change our picture, and I agreed (I personally feel changing an icon in honour of something is both an empty gesture and can lead to the problem of when you should change your icon and for what holidays/memorials/causes/etc.). I researched a variety of posts on Kamloops, from the District, to libraries, schools, and government bodies. I picked out parts I felt were important, then wrote my own statement while including (in my own words) the parts I had chosen. I sent it out to Louise, who approved, then posted it on the Facebook page. I also printed a copy and posted it in the library. As June is Indigenous History Month, we already had a relevant display in place about the history of Indigenous people of Canada.

The next day, Jenny brought in buttons for the staff that her husband had made (he also made them for staff at the school). The buttons are large and feature the "Every Child Matters" logo encircled by hands. Staff were encouraged but not required to wear the buttons during their shifts. I shared a list of residential school books I found on Facebook. I noticed we had several in our collection, so I decided I'd make them more accessible for patrons. I went through our catalogue and found over 50 books on residential schools, which I put together in an online list, including call numbers and links to the books in our catalogues for patrons to put on hold should they wish to. I also looked into books we did not have in our collection concerning both residential schools and Indigenous history and added to them to my list for future purchases.

I also shared via Facebook information about the Emergency Crisis Line for residential school survivors, and a link from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation regarding Missing Children and Unmarked Burials (volume 4 from the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada).