

March 31,2022

Press Release For immediate release

Law Society of Nunavut, Tukisigiarvik Society and Nunavut Legal Aid to Facilitate the Fillings of Power of Attorney and Wills & Estates for the Families Victims of Abuse in the Indian Day Schools in Nunavut

March 31, 2022 – In March 2019, the Government of Canada announced a nationwide class action settlement agreement to compensate people who attended federally run Indian Day Schools (IDS) where many experienced abuses. The legal action McLean vs. Canada was then brought to recover compensation for harms suffered. The claim is due by July 13, 2022, and former students and their families have until July 2022 to apply for compensation. Free, one-on-one help, and community support sessions that take a trauma-informed approach are available for filling out or checking the status of their claim.

Class Action Counsel Gowling WLG and Argyle are facilitating the filling of the Claim Forms and the Law Society of Nunavut will be offering support specifically for the Family Class Members who need help with Wills & Estates, or Power of Attorney (document giving one or more individuals the authority to manage a donor's money and property) to bridge the gap for which no current mandated support is available. The Tukisigiarvik Society and Inuit court workers from Nunavut Legal Aid will also support Nunavummiut in this process. A Family Class Member means a person who is a spouse or former spouse, child, grandchild, or sibling of a Survivor Class Member (former student) and the spouse of a child, grandchild, or sibling of a Survivor Class.

Community Support Sessions

Four (4) public sessions will be organized in Nunavut where plaintiffs can receive support to fill for Wills & Estates, or Power of Attorney. They can drop in or make an appointment. Three (3) sessions will be held in Iqaluit, and one (1) in Rankin Inlet. Translation and interpretation will be available on site and throughout the entire process, as well as health support. Plaintiffs will need to bring with them the identification of the deceased as well as a death certificate. Full requirement checklists and a flow chart to better navigate the procedures are also available through the Law Society (shorturl.at/oEGOU), Tukisigiarvik Society or Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services.

Three (3) sessions in Iqaluit - Tukisigiarvik, building 674
Saturday, April 2, 2022 10:30 am to 7 pm
Tuesday, April 12, 2022 10:30 am to 7 pm
Saturday, May 14, 2022 10:30 am to 7 pm

One (1) sessions in Rankin Inlet
Early May 2022
In collaboration with Kivalliq Legal Services
Date and time to be confirmed

A guarantor and an interpreter will be present at the sessions. Health support is available throughout the process. Appointments are required for the upcoming in-person support sessions. (Walk-ins will be accepted, but people might have to wait then).

Please make an appointment at: support@lawsociety.nu.ca

Point of Contact for Support Requests:

The Law Society of Nunavut is the point of contact for requests in English, and the Tukisigiarvik Society, for requests in Inuktitut.

Law Society of Nunavut

Cell Phone (call or text): 867-222-5345 Email:support@lawsociety.nu.ca

In person: Building 917, 3rd Floor, Unit B

Tukisigiarvik Society

Cell Phone (call or text): 867-223-2200

Email: elisapi@tukisigiarvik.ca

In person: Building 674

Additional information is also available on the main class action website: www.indiandayschools.com.

Background

In March 2019, the Government of Canada announced a nationwide class action settlement agreement to compensate an estimated 140,000 people who attended federally run Indian Day Schools (IDS) from the late 1800s to the year 2000, where many experienced physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. In some cases, the abuse was severe. These abuses were in addition to the mocking, denigration and humiliation of students by reason of their culture and language. Through McLean v Canada, the Plaintiffs have sought the recognition of and justice for the harms inflicted on former students of Day Schools and their family members.

The Court has appointed Roger Augustine and Claudette Commanda as Representative Plaintiffs for the Survivor Class and Mariette Buckshot as Representative Plaintiff for the Family Class. Former students have until July 2022 to apply for compensation, and they must fill out a complex 15-page claim form with a detailed description of the harms they experienced. After community feedback expressed the need for greater support and access to the process, the Court appointed Argyle to providing claimants with culturally appropriate, trauma-informed assistance.

Claims Assistance in Nunavut

The Tukisigiarvik Society is supporting Argyle for this process in Nunavut. However, since Argyle's mandate does not include support for the Family Class Members who need help with Wills & Estates or Power of Attorney, the Law Society of Nunavut has taken steps to bridge the gap. Many victims of the IDS passed away and their family also suffer the consequences of the abuses. Providing direct support to the families who need assistance to navigate the complex legal world regarding wills and estates is facilitating access to justice for the Family Class Member's claims.

The Bridging the Gap Initiative is made possible thanks to the engagement of the Tukisigiarvik Society and the financial support of the Nunavut Law Foundation and Nunavut Legal Aid.

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Law Society of Nunavut:

Established in 1999, the Law Society of Nunavut is a self-governing Society which derives its authority from the Legal Profession Act of Nunavut. It is our responsibility to ensure that the people of Nunavut are served by lawyers who meet high standards of competence, learning and professional conduct; and, to uphold the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession. We believe that the Public is well served by a legal profession that is independent, responsible, and responsive to the needs of the public it serves.

For more information, contact:

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