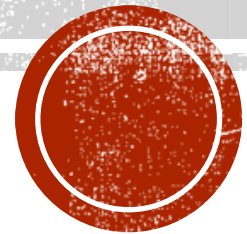


**OUR ANCESTORS PREDICTED OUR  
TIME WITH THE QELMUCW (THE  
PEOPLE)**

**A GLIMPSE INTO OUR SACRED JOURNEY....**

Charlene Belleau – Esk’etemc (Alkali Lake)

January 17, 2023

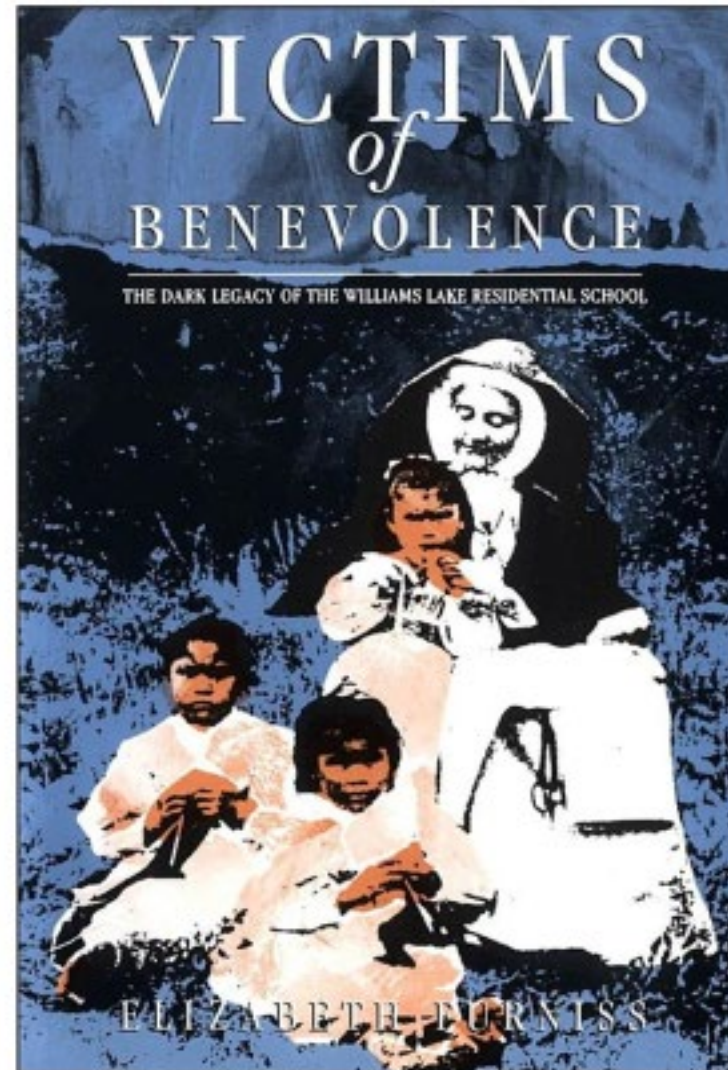


Attended St. Joseph's Mission IRS for 4 years. My parents, grandparents and attended SJM. We have researched to understand the history of SJM and to heal.

My grandpa committed suicide there and is buried somewhere at SJM.

Details of grandpa's death articulated in *Victims of Benevolence* book by Elizabeth Furniss.

As a former IRS student and advocate for 30 years plus, we always knew our families and children died there and never came home, no one believed us.





# ST. JOSEPH'S MISSION BACKGROUND



- In 1989, the Cariboo Tribal Council conducted research on SJM and held the 1st National Conference on IRS in Vancouver.
- Criminal Prosecutions including former Bishop O'Conner.
- In 1994, we developed a protocol and established the RCMP Task Force that investigated 14 BC IRS that included missing children.
- In 1996, we established the Provincial Indian Residential School Project, now known as IRSSS. As early as 1997, I received records from the RDG INAC on missing children in BC.
- 1997 Alkali held our own IRS Inquiry.
- 2004 & 2010 AFN National IRS Coordinator
- 2021 Williams Lake First Nation conducting investigation into missing children at St. Joseph's Mission





# 2007 UNITY RIDE, TSIHLQOT'IN, SECWEPENC, DAKEHL

**All Nations came together to heal our spirits and work together on SJM.**



**Riderless horse to remember the children that never came home.**

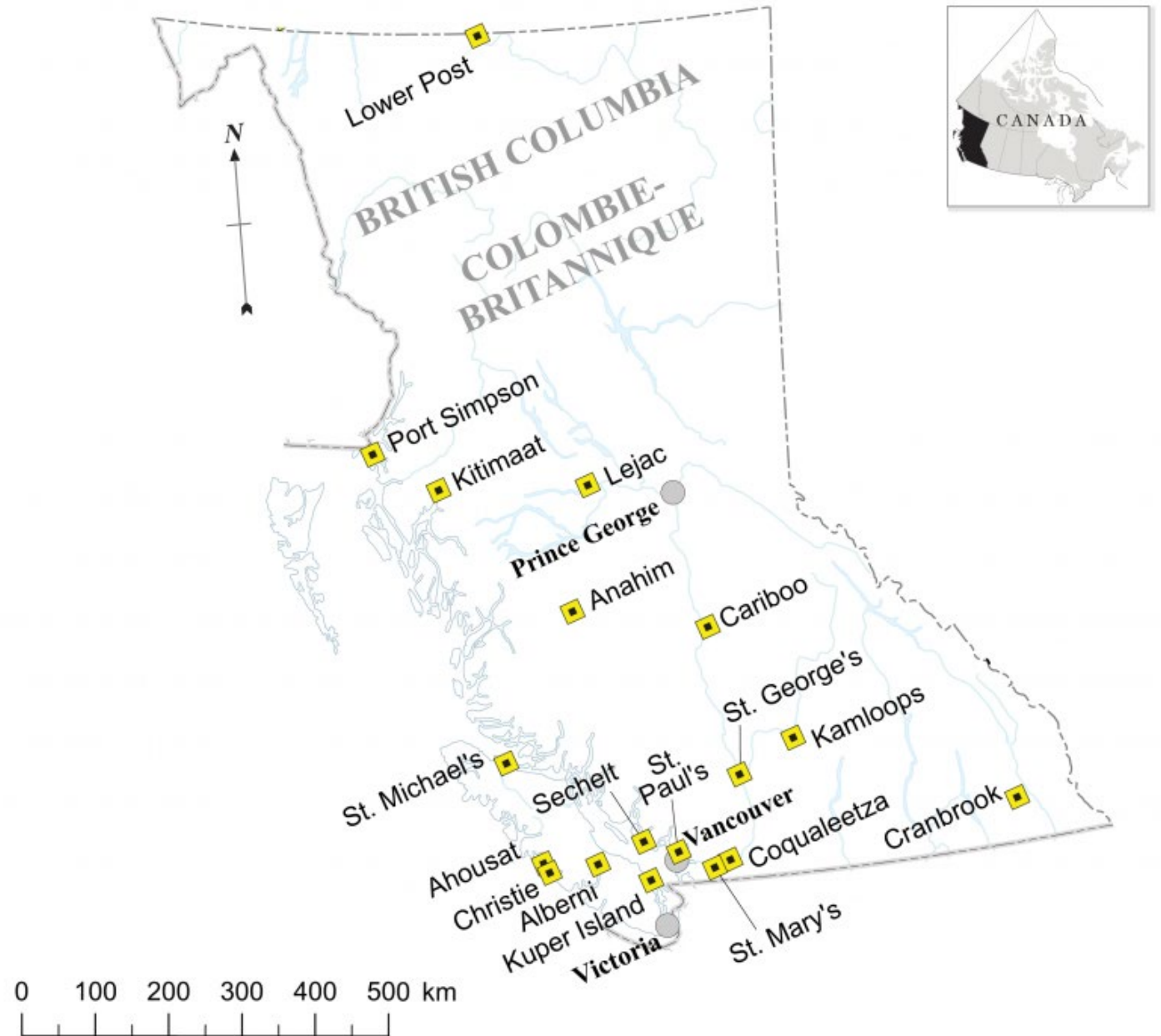


# BC Indian Residential & Indian Hospitals

Many BC children attended more than one institution.

Some were sent from IRS to Indian Hospitals and never came home.

18 BC and 3 Indian Hospitals  
Lead communities are working together for missing children.





# Our children and grandchildren are our future



A respected spiritual leader from Alkali Lake was given this vision by our ancestors while Fasting.

Our ancestors predicted our time with the Qelmucw (the people.) They gave us the Sekani7 ceremony to let go of the past so our children can have a stronger future. It is done at the beginning of Gatherings to show our intentions to move forward, not to be victims of government or churches and no longer inferior to Seme7's.

Our ancestors Fasted and prayed on the mountains for the challenges we would face and gave us the Sekani7 ceremony to heal.

The Sekani7 ceremony is for our children, that, regardless of colonization or IRS, we are loving and forgiving Secwepemc people.

Our resiliency is strengthened through the Sekani7 ceremony so our children will stand with the rest of the world!

Our missing children are our ancestors too, they are with us every step of the way as we search and bring their spirits home!

# Our ceremonies and traditions will continue to be our strength and guide our search for our missing loved ones!

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Our ancestors saw what our relationship would be with the Quelmucw (the people) and gave us medicine to continue to thrive.

Your ancestors gave all of you and your nations medicines to heal during these challenging times.

Our ancestors walked for Fasting, there have been many walks, they gave us the healing spirit of the horses, many have rode horses. Our ancestors gave us the healing spirit of the waters, and all animals and plants, continue to go to the mountains and to the water for strength.

These medicines bring us together to work together and hold on another up.