

Witness Blanket

Education and Resources



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OVERVIEW:

The Witness Blanket is a large-scale installation made out of hundreds of pieces of fabric, each representing a Residential School, churches, traditional and cultural centres, band offices, universities, from across

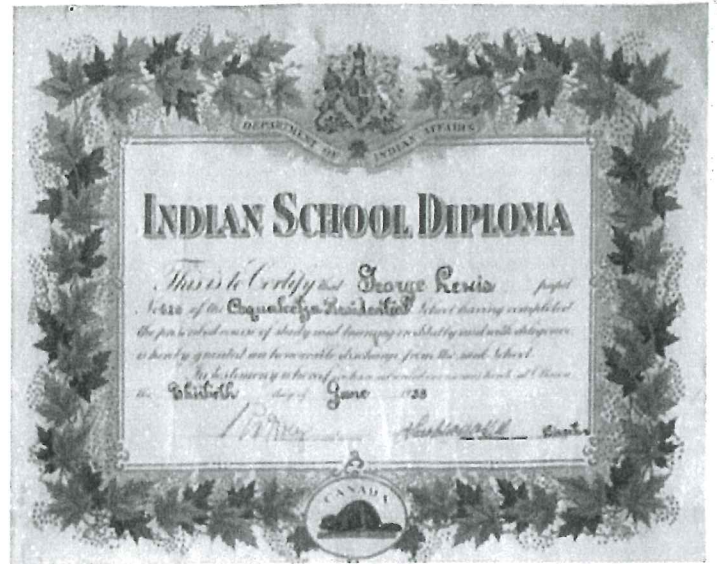
- The *Witness Blanket* is a large scale installation
- The blanket stands to honour the indigenous children through acknowledgment of the Indian Residential School era
- Newman and his team worked directly with Residential School survivors to help tell their stories
- A symbol of ongoing reconciliation

is to bear witness. The pieces themselves are witnesses. The pieces are witnesses, and at some level we all are - or are witnesses" - Carey Newman. Many of us didn't experience Residential Schools firsthand, but are able to witness through learning and education in the reconciliation process.

Newman, Hayalthkin'geme

How Can The Affects Be Shared?

The Witness Blanket was made from pieces of residential schools, churches, government buildings, and cultural structures. It was made with the sole purpose of standing in witness to the effects of the Indian Residential School era – the system created and run by churches and the Canadian government to “take the Indian out of the child”. Left alone, these pieces may be forgotten, lost, buried, or worse – be uncomfortable reminders that leave painful impressions on the minds and hearts of those who recognize what they represent. It is important to hold onto the histories and stories of Indian Residential Schools because together as witnesses we are strong and collectively able to recount for future generations the true story of loss, strength, reconciliation and pride.



Certificate of completion of Residential School from Coqualeetza Indian Residential School - Contributed by The Robertson Family

"The pieces on this blanket each represent a different story, a different person, a different place. Through the stories of a few we begin to visualize the stories of them all. The idea was that these everyday objects would communicate in a different language, connecting each of us through our own memories and experience" - Carey Newman.



The Significance of A Blanket

Inspired by a woven blanket, Carey Newman wanted to create an installation by assembling solid objects into something that moved and swayed like a blanket.

"The blanket is a universal symbol of protection." A blanket can represent legends, stories, events, and other perspectives. The giving and receiving of a blanket holds the tradition of generosity and blessings. Wearing a blanket is an almost spiritual practice, especially when worn as part of a dance. Therefore, blankets can take on a life of their own. They have a personality and spirit. For First Nations people, a blanket identifies who they are and where they are from.