



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL MUSEUM

“From a place of hurting to a place of healing”



For immediate release

Building a Place of Memory: NIRSM Announces Expanded Vision with Support from The Asper Foundation

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At the site of the former Portage Indian Residential School, the National Indigenous Residential School Museum (NIRSM) is advancing a vision shaped by Survivors to preserve truth and honour the memories carried by generations of Indigenous families.

This milestone was made possible through a significant contribution from The Asper Foundation in support of the museum’s expansion planning process.

“Partnership with The Asper Foundation was instrumental in enabling the development of the museum’s conceptual plan — a process grounded in meaningful engagement with Residential School Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members,” said Lorraine Daniels, Executive Director of NIRSM.

The expansion vision seeks to ensure that the museum continues to serve as a place where the truths of the residential school system are preserved and honoured. While NIRSM functions as a museum, its approach is rooted in Indigenous ways of remembering and carrying history — holding the stories of those who experienced profound harm while also recognizing the strength of Survivors who have committed themselves to ensuring future generations do not endure the same injustices.

The support from The Asper Foundation helped ensure that Indigenous perspectives and cultural frameworks guided the planning process from the beginning. This approach allows the museum to shape how these histories are held and shared, rather than fitting Indigenous experiences into conventional museum models.

“The Asper Foundation is deeply moved by the profound significance of NIRSM’s mission: to establish a safe, respectful, and inclusive space that inspires healing, learning, and understanding for Survivors, their families, and all Canadians,” said Anita Wortzman, President of The Asper Foundation.

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The Foundation recognizes the important role that education and awareness play in advancing truth and reconciliation. Its support for NIRSM reflects a commitment to addressing key societal issues and strengthening public understanding of the impacts of the residential school system.

This early investment also helped NIRSM leverage additional support required to complete the conceptual vision for the museum's expansion.

The conceptual plan will reflect the voices and guidance of Survivors and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. The expanded space will continue to honour memory while supporting education, reflection, and healing for generations to come.

"The stories carried here are not only about the past," said Lorraine Daniels, "They are about responsibility — ensuring that the experiences of Survivors continue to guide how we teach, learn, and move forward together."

NIRSM will publicly share the conceptual expansion plan in the coming weeks.

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About The Asper Foundation

The Asper Foundation is a Winnipeg-based philanthropic organization that develops major initiatives and supports projects in culture, education, community development and human rights at the local, national and international levels. With a strong commitment to improving quality of life in Winnipeg and Manitoba, much of its giving is directed toward the local community. For more information, visit asperfoundation.com.