



QUAKERS

Canadian Friends Service Committee

Canadian Yearly Meeting Annual Report on Truth & Reconciliation Work
Periods covered: January 2021 to December 2022

Prepared by Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), February 2024

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[QuakerService.ca/
ReconciliationReports](https://QuakerService.ca/ReconciliationReports)

At their annual gathering in 2016, Canadian Quakers came to a collective decision to take six actions in support of Indigenous peoples' human rights and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. One of these actions was for local Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups to report back to Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) on the reconciliation work they do each year. (See the full 2016 position from Canadian Friends at <https://QuakerService.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CYM-2016-Minute-on-Reconciliation.pdf>)

This fifth report compiled by CFSC is a synthesis and summary based on reports sent by eight Monthly Meetings (Antigonish, Argenta, Coldstream, New Brunswick, Toronto, Yonge Street, Vancouver, and Yarmouth) about their activities in 2021- 2022.

Overall impressions and themes

- Meetings are continuing to regroup following pandemic years.
- Meetings remain very interested to learn about truth and reconciliation and how to be more engaged and participate locally and beyond.
- There are bumps in the road relationally at times in this process, to be expected and to learn from.
- It's all about relationships. Some Meetings and Friends have long-established relationships and/or have been very actively engaged in and with Indigenous communities, neighbours, and friends for many years. These Meetings and Friends can step up when a crisis or issue emerges or when they are asked for support. Some of these relationships transcend colonial set borders.
- Friends are at different places along the continuum of understanding, relationship, and engagement with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *94 Calls to Action*. Capacity is a factor.

This summary is broken down into three themes:

1. Learning together for truth and reconciliation
2. Supporting truth and reconciliation
3. Acting together for truth and reconciliation

Learning together for truth and reconciliation

Individually and as Meetings, Friends are very engaged in ongoing learning about truth and reconciliation. Some examples include:

- Friends book clubs focusing on Indigenous authors and interests.
- Hosting or attending workshops, Indigenous-led conferences, retreats, seminars, and speaker events.
 - Decolonizing workshops that Friends have engaged in have focused on: Indigenous law (processes by which Indigenous people govern their

relationships, manage resources, and resolve conflict), kinship (focusing on relationship and stewardship), and the Blanket Exercise.

- Collecting, sharing, and promoting resources on topics related to reconciliation or Indigenous peoples' human rights.
- Hosting Half-Yearly Meetings focused on truth and reconciliation.
- Inviting Elders to share their wisdom and insights with Meetings.
- Supporting Indigenous writers, artists, and musicians and attending powwows and ceremonies.
- Writing articles and furthering educational pursuits by focusing on the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' *94 Calls to Action*.
- Investigating the land base that Meeting houses are located on, to understand and determine the implications.
- Many meetings noted their appreciation of the ongoing support of CFSC in developing and practicing land acknowledgements for their meeting and area.

Supporting truth and reconciliation

Many Friends and Meetings support Indigenous-led organizations and communities through direct action. Some examples of this include:

- Meetings donate time, resources, or money to local or other Indigenous-led initiatives and organizations.
- Upon invitation, some individual Friends have sat on or participate in Indigenous-led committees or boards.
- Some Friends and Meetings support Indigenous communities in their pursuit of justice around concerns such as land and treaty titles; land and resource use and allocation; recognition of Nation status; and dismantling the racist doctrine of discovery.
- Many Friends have engaged in letter writing on local and national concerns related to reconciliation and the human rights of Indigenous peoples.
- Helping to secure resources through identifying or partnering on possibilities, fundraising, and bringing awareness of CFSC's Reconciliation Fund.

Acting Together for truth and reconciliation

Some Friends and Meetings are very actively engaged in advocacy as allies and settlers together with Indigenous-led communities and organizations. Examples include:

- Partnering with Georgina Island to bring awareness to the lack of free, prior, and informed consent with regard to resource extraction.
- Several other community partnerships with similar concerns about process (or lack thereof) around critical resource issues such as defending, protecting, and supporting land, water, and title.

- Some Meetings are partnering and sharing resources with Indigenous communities in response to requests from them, on critical issues such as mental health.
- One Meeting held a three-part public series titled What About the Water?, providing a platform for local Indigenous communities to advocate around the lack of drinkable water.

It is important to note that when engaging at any level as “allies” with Indigenous communities towards truth and reconciliation, we must always consider protocol (e.g. introducing or thanking a speaker or Elder) and arrangements for compensation such as honorariums, travel, food, childcare, helpers for Elders, etc. Protocols may vary from area to area and Nation to Nation. We learn about this by being in relationship. We’ll make mistakes, learn from them, be better “allies”, and deepen our understanding and relationships.