



Flags flew at half mast at Manitoulin Secondary School on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. All Rainbow Schools lowered their flags on Monday, September 30, 2024 to honour the Survivors of residential schools and the children who never made it home.



Manitoulin Secondary School hosted a Sunrise Ceremony at 6:45 am. The early morning stillness greeted participants as they gathered on the grounds of the secondary school to begin the day with retrospection and reflection through ceremony.



Participants gathered around the Sacred Fire, one of the four elements of life along with water, air and land.



Manitoulin Secondary School Grade 11 students Cameron Meawasige, left, and Taylor Goodfellow held up the gifts of water and strawberries to the Creator as Indigenous Support - System Level Hazel Fox-Recollet guided them along the cardinal directions of the Medicine Wheel Teachings.



Cameron Meawasige, left, and Taylor Goodfellow participated in the Sunrise Ceremony.



Trustee Bob Clement joined Trustee Lisa Corbiere-Addison at the Sunrise Ceremony. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day honoured the residential school survivors, acknowledged those that did not make it home, and acknowledged the strength and resilience of First Nations and Indigenous communities.



Participants get ready for the Sunrise Ceremony to begin. The ceremony was conducted by Mr. Gerard Sagassige, Traditional Medicine Advisor from the Curve Lake First Nation.



The strawberry has a special significance in Indigenous "Anishinaabe" culture. The "Odemin" heartberry is a reminder to live a good life "mino bimaadziwin" .... to be kind to self and to others.



As the students from Manitoulin Secondary School arrived on their buses, each student was provided an opportunity to take a tobacco tie to offer into the Sacred Fire "Kitchitwaa Shkode".



One by one, students from Manitoulin Secondary School placed their tobacco tie in the Sacred Fire for good intentions and in remembrance of the survivors who are no longer with us and for the children who never made it home from residential schools.



Manitoulin Secondary School Ojibwe Language Teacher, Jean Debassige, right, shared her story as a day school Survivor and her husband's story as a residential school Survivor. Daughter Kimberley Debassige, Director of Education of M'Chigeeng First Nation, talked about the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.



A blanket is draped over the tipi on the grounds of Manitoulin Secondary School. In Indigenous culture, blankets hold deep meaning and connection to culture and traditions.



Rainbow District School Board thanked Mr. Gerard Sagassige for conducting the ceremony and sharing his experiences and story with the community members, staff and students. From left are, Superintendent Lesley Fisher, Indigenous Support - System Level Hazel Fox-Recollet, Manitoulin Secondary School Principal Dave Wiwchar, Director of Education Bruce Bourget, and Principal of Indigenous Education Nicole Nicolas-Bayer.

