



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Colville Tribal Chairman Announces Effort to Reach Out To Tribal Members Victimized by Abuse at St. Mary's Mission School

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For Immediate Release**

(Nespelem, WA)---The Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation today announced that the Colville Business Council has approved an effort to reach out to Tribal members victimized by sexual, physical or emotional abuse at the former St. Mary's Mission School as part of its investigation into claims against the Federal Government.

"The Business Council has retained the nationally-known firm of James, Vernon, and Weeks to begin preparations for litigation against responsible federal agencies for childhood trauma and abuse suffered by our members as children at the Mission School," Chairman Rodney Cawston said today. "Leander James, a partner in the firm, has successfully represented hundreds of Tribal members victimized by abuse, and we are confident that we ultimately will prevail in this righteous cause."

Cawston said that Tribal members over that age of 40 will receive a letter from the Council asking that they call the law firm's confidential hotline if they wish to provide information for this litigation. The firm will also establish a special Facebook page, where messages can be received as well for purposes of this outreach.

Leander James previously has represented Colville and other Tribal members in suits against the Northwest Jesuits and Catholic Dioceses for damages caused by abuse in a number of Catholic schools in the Pacific Northwest. He is currently representing Tribal members throughout the country in similar suits.

"The abuse at St. Mary's and other mission schools was horrific and its damage generational," James said. "We have good scientific evidence that this abuse results in profound psychological and physical damage to the victims, their families and tribal communities. Decades of historic trauma have destroyed the stability of families and entire communities. The Federal Government supported the establishment and operation of boarding schools where these abuses occurred, failing in its responsibility to assure the health, safety and education of Indian children. The Government must be held accountable for its role in this tragedy."

Cawston urged Tribal members who wish to provide information to the Firm to call the hotline number at **888-667-0683** and ask for the “Colville Tribal Justice Team.”

“We have known for decades that our relatives were horribly mistreated as very young children in these schools, and we have seen the widespread negative impacts on individuals, their families, their children and grandchildren,” Cawston said. “The Colville Tribes intends to do everything in its power to stop the multi-generational trauma that has done so much harm to our members, and to the Tribes as a whole.”

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Today, more than 9,540 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlámxəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǎ^wyʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snǎáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx^w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənpǎ^wilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.