

My father, Albert Lightning, and his younger brother, David, from Samson First Nation, went to the Red Deer Industrial School, which was operated by the Methodist Church from 1893 to 1919. Albert Lightning survived this school experience, but David died of Spanish flu in 1918. In 1986, Albert visited the Red Deer and District Museum and Archives, saying to the staff person, Lyle Keewatin-Richards, "Oh, there you are. You're the one who is going to find my little brother." Lyle learned that along with three other students who had died at the same time, David was buried in the Red Deer City Cemetery. Lyle also became aware of the existence of the school cemetery beside Sylvan Creek.

Rev. Cecile Fausak¹⁶⁴ explained,

Around 2004 ... people at Sunnybrook United Church began to ask themselves, "Is there anything we can do to build better relations with First Nations peoples in this area?" And Lyle, remembering back, suggested then, "There is this little project. The children who were buried at the long-neglected [residential] school cemetery and in this city need to be remembered." So the church formed a committee ... and over the next few years, we researched the site and the school records, personally visited the seven Cree and Stony communities and the Métis nation from which all the students had come. In September 2009, over thirty people from those concerned First Nations and Métis communities travelled to Red Deer, had stew and bannock at Sunnybrook United Church, and visited the school cemetery for the first time, where we were welcomed by the [current] landowner.

Muriel Stanley Venne, from the Sunnybrook United Church, continued,

A working group was formed to organize the first [commemoration] feast, which was held at Fort Normandeau, on June 30, 2010. As the more than 325 names of students were read, a hush fell over the crowd.... Since then the collaboration [has] continued, with First Nations Treaty 6 and 7, Métis Nation of Alberta, United Church members, the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery, the City and County [of Red Deer], the [Indian] Friendship Centre, and school boards. This led to the formation of the Remembering the Children Society in 2011.... Our society's objectives include: continued support for recovering Indian residential school cemeteries and histories in Alberta; educating the public about the same; honouring the Survivors, and those who died in the schools; as well as identifying the unmarked graves. Each year for the next three years, a commemorative feast was held. At the third gathering, many descendants shared stories of the impact on them, their parents, and grandparents, because they attended the Red Deer Industrial School.

Charles Wood then said,

The Society has worked with the museum in developing a new standing exhibit and with the Waskasoo Park administration in the preparation of new interpretive signage at Fort Normandeau regarding the school history. We are grateful for the truth spoken of a painful shared history, the friendships we have formed, and the