



Chief <<first name>> <<last name>>  
<<address>>

September 1st, 2021

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Dear Chief <<last name>>,

My name is Irene Barbeau from Fort Albany First Nation, and I - like some members of your community - am a survivor of the Shingwauk Indian Residential School (IRS).

I write to you today as acting President of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA). The CSAA is a non-political group composed of Shingwauk survivors that was created 40 + years ago to support survivors in their healing and reconciliation. The Shingwauk IRS operated in Sault Ste Marie from 1874 through 1970. The Shingwauk IRS site cemetery contains 109 known graves, including 72 students who died between 1875 and 1956. According to our records, there are many communities who were impacted by the Shingwauk IRS, including yours.

As you know, recently, the gravesites of thousands of Indigenous people, believed to be mainly children, were identified near the former sites of Indian Residential Schools in the provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. As a result, site searches have either - or will soon - commence on many previous Indian Residential School sites.

In order to honour the communities, survivors, families of survivors, as well as those who did not make it home from the Shingwauk IRS, the CSAA has partnered with Algoma University, who is the landowner of 34 acres of the 100 acre Shingwauk site to commence a site search. The CSAA has prioritized sections of the site and will begin the site search using ground penetrating radar technology (as was used at other sites across the country) as early as the end of September. We anticipate that the search will take 18 months or more to complete . More detailed information on the site search can be found on the Children of Shingwauk website: <https://childrenofshingwauk.ca/site-search/>.

The CSAA will lead the site search work to ensure the search is done in a good way. Our elders have asked Jay Jones from Walpole Island (the son of two Shingwauk survivors as well as an active member of the CSAA and the Shingwauk Education Trust) to lead the process. The goal of the site search is to determine if there are any unmarked graves anywhere on the site.

We are in the process of developing a culturally respectful protocol should there be any discoveries on the site. Should your community have an existing protocol, or wish to provide guidance regarding the protocol, we would welcome that advice.

We will be posting regular updates to our website ([www.childrenofshingwauk.ca](http://www.childrenofshingwauk.ca)) where you and your community members can stay up to date on this process. You will also find some background information and frequently asked questions there.

Unless you direct me otherwise, I will update you on a regular basis via mail (or email should you provide it) as to the progress of the search. Additionally, I would also welcome any additional advice and guidance you may have, should you be willing to provide it.

I can be reached via email at [irene.barbeau@childrenofshingwauk.ca](mailto:irene.barbeau@childrenofshingwauk.ca). Jay Jones can be reached via email at [jay.jones@childrenofshingwauk.ca](mailto:jay.jones@childrenofshingwauk.ca).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Irene Barbeau". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'I'.

Irene Barbeau  
President, Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association