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Every Child Matters: Orange memorial benches to be installed throughout Kahnawà:ke

For immediate release

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The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke's Sports and Recreation Unit (SRU), in collaboration with the Orange Shirt Day Committee and Kahnawake Shakotii'a'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS), are proud to announce the upcoming installation of orange memorial benches throughout the community as part of its Every Child Matters initiative.

The official launch of the Orange Memorial Benches initiative will take place at the Kahnawà:ke Sports Complex on Friday, June 27th at 7:50pm, just before the Kahnawà:ke Junior B Hunters lacrosse game begins at 8:00pm. Ratsénhaientoh Arnold Boyer will deliver remarks introducing the initiative, speaking to its significance, and sharing details on future bench installations. The first three Orange Memorial Benches will be unveiled during this event, with additional benches set to be installed at key community locations in the coming weeks.

These benches, generously sponsored by KSCS, are more than just places to sit—they are symbols of remembrance, reflection, and resilience. The idea was brought forward by the Orange Shirt Day Committee as a way to honor the children who never returned home from residential schools and to recognize the strength of survivors and their families.

Committee founders June Skye-Stacey and Helen Montour, both daughters of survivors, envisioned these benches to bring healing and awareness into everyday community spaces.

"Today, parents can sit and watch their children play," they shared. "But for our parents, there was always a question—Is my child safe? Are they being treated fairly? Are they fed? Are they happy? These benches are a reminder of that contrast and a celebration of the privilege we now enjoy, which is being able to see our children simply being children."

The benches will be installed in parks and gathering places across Kahnawà:ke, where families and children gather.

"This project shows the strength of what we can do when we come together as a community. By combining the efforts of SRU, KSCS, and the Orange Shirt Day Committee, we're creating spaces that support healing, reflection, and family connection. Supporting recreation and safe gathering spaces is at the heart of SRU's mandate, and we're proud to be part of a project that brings meaning and comfort to where our families come together." said Director of Sports and Recreation Roiatate Horn.

This initiative shows the collective commitment to community wellness, and we invite all community members to take a moment to reflect when they see these benches—to remember, to honor, and to continue the journey forward together.

For additional information, please contact the Sports & Recreation Unit at 450-638-3311.

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