

1. What is a healing forest and where did the idea begin?

In 2015, Indigenous lawyer Patricia Stirbys and environmental and development advisor Peter Croal envisioned planting a forest of 6,000 trees to represent children of residential schools. In addition, the forest would include 1,200 more trees to represent missing and murdered Indigenous women.

In discussion with Charlene Bearhead, Education Lead for the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), the vision grew and changed. NCTR would host the project and communities across Canada would develop individual healing forests in relation to each community's history and experiences.

For more information on the National Healing Forest, see nctr.ca/educator-pages2.php#healing

2. Are there other healing forest Projects?

The first healing forest was opened in Edmonton, in November 2016, on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River, where there was an existing footpath. Over 1,000 paper hearts were installed with messages of hope and regret.

Another healing forest is currently being planned in Perth, Ontario. Consultations on that project began in January, 2017.

3. What is the Winnipeg Healing Forest?

The intent of the Winnipeg Healing Forest is to create a memorial to Indigenous children lost to the residential school system, murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, and Indigenous children lost in child welfare systems.

The healing forest is more than a memorial, it will be a gathering place for families and communities, and a place for healing and learning. It is a place where students will learn our histories and connect to the land. It is a place for remembering the past and envisioning the future.

4. Why was St. John's Park selected as a location for Winnipeg's healing forest?

St. John's Park is bordered by Main Street on the east and by the Red River on the west, and is near many schools, including: Champlain, David Livingston, King Edward, Luxton, Machray, Children of the Earth, St. John's, and R.B. Russell.

Additionally, St. John's Park currently has artifacts and statues focused on settler and military history. The park holds many stories of the North End. These various histories will be enriched by Indigenous histories within the healing forest.