



Home Children Canada

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Press Release - For Immediate Release

September 28th – National British Home Child Day

Communities Across Canada Join the Beacons of Light Campaign to Honour Forgotten Children of History

On September 28, 2026, Canadians will once again mark National British Home Child Day, a day proclaimed by the Government of Canada in 2018 to recognize the lives and legacies of over 100,000 British Home Children sent to Canada between 1869 and 1949.

This year, communities across Canada and abroad are invited to take part in the Beacons of Light Campaign, a national tribute organized by Home Children Canada, a registered charity dedicated to preserving the memory of the Home Children and supporting their descendants.

Who Were the British Home Children?

Between 1869 and 1949, over 100,000 children from poor and vulnerable families in the British Isles were sent to Canada under child migration schemes. Many came from families experiencing extreme hardship and were placed in institutions before being emigrated. Once in Canada, they were distributed to farms and households across the country, where they were expected to work as labourers or domestic servants.

Siblings were often separated, and the children were rarely given a say in their futures. While some experienced kindness, many faced isolation, harsh working conditions, and a lack of oversight or protection.

Contrary to popular belief, only approximately 12% were true orphans—most had living parents or relatives in Britain. Many carried the stigma of being “Home Children” and grew up in silence, often unable or unwilling to speak about their experiences.

Despite this, their contributions to Canada were profound. Over 25,000 served in the World Wars, and today it is estimated that 4 to 6 million Canadians can trace their ancestry to a British Home Child.

The Beacons of Light Tribute

Since 2019, Beacons of Light has united Canadians in remembrance by illuminating landmarks, monuments, and buildings in red, white, and blue—or in yellow, representing Home Children Canada’s floral emblem, the sunflower.

Individuals are also encouraged to participate in the Porch Light Tribute by leaving their outdoor lights on overnight on September 28, symbolically leaving the light on for the children who never made it home.

Past Beacons of Light events have included flag raisings, educational exhibits, museum programs, and sharing circles, where Home Child descendants and Indigenous communities reflected on Canada’s broader stories of colonization.

This year's celebration will include a reception with the British High Commissioner to Canada, Mr. Robert Tinline, invited British Home Child descendants and dignitaries, including representatives from government, heritage organizations, and the community, expected to attend.

Quote

"The British Home Children story is Canada's story. It is one of resilience, strength, and survival—but also of loss, separation, and injustice. By honouring them through the Beacons of Light, we ensure that their contributions—and their struggles—are never forgotten." — Home Children Canada

How to Participate

Canadians can join the Beacons of Light campaign by:

Asking their community to illuminate a building, monument, or memorial on September 28
Hosting or attending local educational or commemorative events
Taking part in the Porch Light Tribute
Sharing photos and stories on social media using #BeaconsOfLight2026

About Home Children Canada

Home Children Canada is a charitable organization dedicated to raising awareness about the British Home Child migration schemes, reuniting families, and preserving historical artifacts and stories.

With a database of over 84,000 Home Children, HCC has delivered more than 400 presentations, developed award-winning exhibits, and continues to educate Canadians about this hidden chapter of history.

For More Information

www.homechildrencanada.com

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