

# Snow Bear Learning Activity

**“Next year for Have a Heart Day, I want to be here celebrating Indigenous culture not demanding that basic human rights be met.”**

*—Daxton R., high school student, 2016*

## About Have A Heart Day

**Have a Heart Day** is an annual child and youth-led reconciliation event to help make sure First Nations children have a fair chance to grow up safely with their families, get a good education, be healthy, and feel proud of who they are.

On Have a Heart Day, children and youth stand with First Nations children by sending Valentines cards to elected officials and gathering on Parliament Hill and other spaces. These actions remind the government that all children in Canada deserve safe and comfy schools, clean water, and access to quality, culturally safe services no matter where they live or who they are.

## About the Activity

This snow bear activity invites learners of all ages to learn about Have a Heart Day, get outside, and show their support. After learning about why we celebrate Have a Heart Day, we invite you to create snow bears with signs or messages in support of equity for First Nations children.

Every action, big or small, counts! We invite you to adapt this activity to suit the needs, interests, and talents of those you share in it with.

## Learning Goals

After learning about Have a Heart Day, learners will create snow bears with messages in support of equity for First Nations children and share them with others.



## Steps

### 1. LEARN about Have a Heart Day

Did you know that the Government of Canada gives less funding for important services like child welfare, education, and healthcare to First Nations children than other kids in Canada? This is why the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (Caring Society) and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against the Government of Canada at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in 2007. **Spirit Bear**,<sup>1</sup> who is a *bearrister* and a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council witnessed all the Tribunal hearings on behalf of the 165,000 First Nations children impacted by the case. Soon, children and youth in Ottawa started bearing witness too, and Have a Heart Day began as a way for them to show their support.

Nine years later, in 2016, the Tribunal found that Canada discriminates against First Nations kids by underfunding the services they need. While things have gotten better, we continue to celebrate Have A Heart Day because Canada has yet to fully fix the problem. It is our way of standing with First Nations kids and telling the Government to have a heart and do the right thing! Every child matters!



**BEFORE JUMPING INTO YOUR SNOW GEAR AND GRABBING YOUR ART SUPPLIES**, take a bit of time to learn more about Have A Heart Day by checking out the resources below. When you're done, try to think about, journal, or talk through the questions on the following page.

### Where to learn more

- ♥ Read Spirit Bear's first book, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*<sup>2</sup> where he tells us all about the case at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the very first Have a Heart Day! The e-book is available for free on the Caring Society website!
- ♥ Look at pictures of real kids sharing their voices and gathering on Parliament Hill in the Caring Society's **photo gallery**<sup>3</sup> of past Have a Heart Days! Check out their signs for ideas for your own.
- ♥ Read these child-friendly information sheets about the case at the Tribunal: **2016 CHRT 2 Information Sheet**<sup>4</sup> and **2018 CHRT 4 Information Sheet**.<sup>5</sup>
- ♥ Listen to this **Warrior Kids podcast**<sup>6</sup> with special guests, Cindy and Spirit Bear about the case.
- ♥ If you're an adult learner, check out the documentary, *We Can't Make the Same Mistake Twice*<sup>7</sup> by Alanis Obomsawin.

1 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear>

2 <https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-and-learning-guides>

3 <https://fncaringsociety.com/events/have-heart-day/have-heart-day-photo-gallery>

4 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/big-win-kids-child-friendly-information-sheet>

5 <https://fncaringsociety.com/publications/child-friendly-information-sheet-2018-chrt-4-engfr>

6 <https://soundcloud.com/warriorkidspodcast/cindy-spirit-bears-mission-all-kids-treated-fairly>

7 [https://www.nfb.ca/film/we\\_can\\_t\\_make\\_the\\_same\\_mistake\\_twice/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/we_can_t_make_the_same_mistake_twice/)

## Questions to work through

- ♥ What is Have a Heart Day about? Why do we celebrate it?
- ♥ Who is Spirit Bear and what does he stand for?
- ♥ What is the case for First Nations kids at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal about? How is it connected to Have a Heart Day?
- ♥ How does learning about this case make you feel?
- ♥ What do you want to say with your snow bears and signs? What message do you want to share?
  - If you want, make a plan for what you want your snow bear or sign to look like!

## 2. CREATE your snow bear and sign

Jump into your snow pants and into the snow! Make a snow bear like Spirit Bear or some other animal or object that makes you think of Have a Heart Day.

Make a sign or write a message in the snow to go with your bear.

## 3. SHARE your work with others

Take pictures of your creation and share them! You can share them with your friends, family, community, or elected officials. You can find your Member of Parliament's email or address [here](#).<sup>8</sup> Mail sent to your Member of Parliament is free! No stamp is needed.

With permission from a grown up, share your work on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, or Instagram. Use the hashtag **#HaveAHeartDay** and/or **#JourneeAyezUnCoeur**.

## Other things you can do

Send a Valentine's Day card or letter supporting Have a Heart Day to the **Prime Minister**<sup>9</sup> and your **Member of Parliament**. Create your own card or letter or get creative using the letter or colouring pages found on the **Have a Heart Day Website**.<sup>10</sup> (Remember that mailing your Member of Parliament is free!)

Host an in-person or virtual Have a Heart Day party to raise awareness in your school or community. Choose a day leading up to Valentine's Day that makes sense for your class or community. Download and edit our **Have A Heart Day poster**<sup>11</sup> to use for your event.

Check out the Caring Society's **Have a Heart Day** webpage for resources like letter templates, colouring sheets, and other ways to participate.



**First Nations Child &  
Family Caring Society**

8 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en>

9 <https://pm.gc.ca/en/connect/contact>

10 <https://fncaringsociety.com/events/have-heart-day>

11 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/have\\_a\\_heart\\_day\\_poster\\_en\\_template.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/have_a_heart_day_poster_en_template.pdf)

