

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK ABOUT RECONCILIATION AND WHAT IT MEANS TO ME. I WANT TO START BY TALKING A LITTLE BIT ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY AND BY HIGHLIGHTING SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO US AND ABOUT SOME OF THE STRUGGLES THAT WE HAVE FACED, ALL OF WHICH MAY SPEAK TO THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION.

OUR HOMELAND WAS IN NORTHERN NEW YORK STATE, BUT WE RELOCATED TO CANADA AND SETTLED ALONG THE GRAND RIVER, AS A RESULT OF OUR 1784 HALDIMAND TREATY WITH THE BRITISH CROWN WHICH WAS IN RECOGNITION OF OUR ROLE AS ALLIES DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. WE WERE ALSO CALLED UPON, IN LATER YEARS, TO DEFEND UPPER CANADA WHEN THE AMERICANS INVADED DURING THE WAR OF 1812.

THE SIX NATIONS' HALDIMAND TRACT, WHICH COVERS THE LAND THAT WE RELOCATED TO AS A RESULT OF THE HALDIMAND TREATY, IS A TRACT OF LAND 6 MILES ON EACH SIDE OF THE GRAND RIVER BEGINNING AT LAKE ERIE AND EXTENDING TO THE RIVERS SOURCE, WHICH IS A DISTANCE OF 186 MILES AND AN AREA OF 950,000 ACRES.

THE HALDIMAND TREATY SPECIFICALLY STATES, ABOUT THESE LANDS, "WHICH THEM AND THEIR POSTERITY ARE TO ENJOY FOREVER". IN THE MODERN CONTEXT, THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF THIS TREATY IS THE "PERPETUAL CARE AND MAINTENANCE" OF THE SIX NATIONS PEOPLE FROM THE TIME THE TREATY WAS ENTERED INTO.

EVEN THOUGH THOSE WORDS ARE IN THE HALDIMAND TREATY, TODAY, THE SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER PEOPLE HAVE LESS THAN 5% OF THE LANDS SO PROMISED, AS A RESULT OF INAPPROPRIATE ACTIONS BY THE CROWN.

OUR 1701 FORT ALBANY (NANFAN) TREATY WITH THE CROWN ALSO RECOGNIZES OUR RIGHTS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OUR TRADING RIGHTS THROUGHOUT A LARGE AREA OF LAND IN SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL ONTARIO. THERE ARE ALSO OTHER

INTERNATIONAL TREATIES THAT AFFIRM THAT SIX NATIONS HAS THESE RIGHTS.

WE ALSO HAVE PRE-CONFEDERATION TREATIES WITH THE CROWN THAT HAVE NOT BEEN LIVED UP TO. SIX NATIONS LAND RIGHTS ARE BASED ON THOSE TREATIES, WHICH ARE RECOGNIZED AND PROTECTED BY CANADA'S CONSTITUTION.

I WANT TO TALK A BIT ABOUT THE 5% OF LAND (WHICH IS 45,000 ACRES) THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY SITUATED ON.

SIX NATIONS – LARGEST POPULATED FIRST NATION IN THE COUNTRY – 26,000 CITIZENS - 5 SCHOOLS WITH 1,500 STUDENTS FROM KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8, 1 IMMERSION SCHOOL, 2 ARENAS, HEALTH CENTRE WITH A DIALYSIS UNIT, IROQUOIS LODGE, WOMEN'S AND MEN'S SHELTER, HOUSING (OWN AND RENT – TOWN HOUSES, APARTMENTS)

WE HAVE **700 EMPLOYEES** AND RUN A NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS: PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING, HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, PARKS AND RECREATION, WELFARE, LANDS AND RESOURCES, LANDS AND MEMBERSHIP AND OUR ADMINISTRATION OFFICE.

WE ALSO HAVE OUR OWN **POLICE SERVICES, FIRE DEPARTMENT AND AMBULANCE SERVICES**. THESE ESSENTIAL SERVICES, HOWEVER, ARE UNDER-FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHO HAS THE FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY.

WE ALSO JUST OPENED THE DOORS TO **THE SIX NATIONS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**, AS WE ARE STARTING TO WORK ON GENERATING OUR OWN REVENUE FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

WE ALSO HAVE A SIX NATIONS LANGUAGE COMMISSION AND A HAUDENOSAUNEE RESOURCE CENTRE WHICH IS CARRYING ON THE WORK RELATED TO OUR CULTURE AND CEREMONIES. MAINTAINING

OUR LANGUAGE AND CONTINUING TO EXERCISE OUR TRADITIONS AND OUR CEREMONIES IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US AS OUR LANGUAGE AND OUR CEREMONIES ARE VITAL TO WHO WE ARE AS HAUDENOSAUNEE PEOPLE.

WE ARE ALSO HOME TO MANY TALENTED ATHLETES, ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS. MANY OF THEM HAVE WON SEVERAL PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS, SUCH AS THE JUNO AWARD AND A NOMINATION FOR THE BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN DANCING WITH WOLVES.

GRAND RIVER CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS POW WOW IS HELD THE THIRD WEEKEND IN JULY EVERY YEAR.

CHIEFSWOOD MUSEUM (HOME OF PAULINE JOHNSON, THE POET), WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE, MOHAWK CHAPEL

BESIDES THE WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE IS THE FORMER MOHAWK INSTITUTE, WHICH IS A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL THAT OPERATED FOR 150 YEARS. WE NOW ALL KNOW THAT THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ERA WAS A DARK PART OF OUR HISTORY AND OF CANADA'S HISTORY.

THE STUDENTS THAT WERE PUT IN THOSE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AT A VERY YOUNG AGE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF OUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS AND OUR LANGUAGE AND THEY WERE ABUSED PHYSICALLY AND SEXUALLY. THEY WERE NOT TAUGHT ANY PARENTING SKILLS AND THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW TO LOVE OR TO RECEIVE LOVE. ALL OF THIS HAS LED TO MANY OF THE INTER-GENERATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES THAT WE CONTINUE TO FACE WITH TODAY – DRUGS, SUICIDES, BULLYING.

IT CAN ALSO BE TIED TO THE WHOLE ISSUE OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN - INDIGENOUS WOMEN MAKE UP ONLY 3% OF THE TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION IN CANADA, YET OF

THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF MURDERS BETWEEN 2000 AND 2008, INDIGENOUS WOMEN REPRESENTED 10% OF THE FEMALE HOMICIDES IN CANADA.

IN A REPORT BY THE RCMP, IT WAS STATED THAT THERE ARE **1,181 UNRESOLVED CASES OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN**. THESE WOMEN HAVE LEFT FAMILIES BEHIND AND MANY OF THEM HAVE ALSO LEFT CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN REPEATED CALLS FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY, BUT UP UNTIL THE ELECTION OF THIS NEW FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HAD REFUSED TO CALL FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY. WE ARE GLAD TO SEE THAT SOME PROGRESS IS NOW BEING MADE.

THE VIOLENCE THAT HAS LED TO THE MURDER OF OUR WOMEN DOES NOT ONLY HAPPEN ON THE STREETS OF THE BIG CITIES IN THIS COUNTRY. IT HAS ALSO HAPPENED IN OUR OWN COMMUNITY. WE HAVE FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LOVED ONES AT THE HANDS OF THEIR PARTNERS. WE HAVE WORKED WITH THOSE FAMILIES AND RATHER THAN LABEL THEM AS FAMILIES OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, WE HAVE EMBRACED THEM AND NOW CALL THEM OUR EMBRACE HER WITH LOVE FAMILIES. WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THEM TO BRING AWARENESS TO OUR COMMUNITY ABOUT PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND ABOUT LEARNING TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

THERE ARE A **NUMBER OF COMMUNITY WALKS AND VIGILS** HELD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO REMEMBER OUR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND WE ARE ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED. THERE ARE **ANNUAL VIGILS HELD ON OCTOBER 4TH OF EACH YEAR AND ALSO ON VALENTINE'S EACH YEAR**.

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS THAT I SPOKE OF WERE IMPOSED UPON OUR PEOPLE BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT WAS SAID AT THAT TIME THAT THEY WANTED TO “KILL THE INDIAN IN THE CHILD”.

THEY DID NOT WANT OUR PEOPLE TO HAVE THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT WE HOLD AS THE FIRST PEOPLES IN THIS LAND.

WELL WE DO HAVE SPECIAL STATUS AS THE FIRST PEOPLES IN THIS LAND.

SECTION 35 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA STATES THAT CANADA RECOGNIZES THE RIGHTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY. THERE ARE ALSO SUPREME COURT OF CANADA CASES WHICH STATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE DUTY TO CONSULT AND ACCOMMODATE US IF OUR RIGHTS ARE GOING TO BE AFFECTED IN ANY WAY. IN ADDITION, THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CLEARLY STATES THAT OUR RIGHTS CANNOT BE AFFECTED WITHOUT OUR FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT.

I WAS AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY IN MAY WHEN MINISTER CAROLYN BENNETT, MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, SPOKE AT THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES AND STATED THAT CANADA WAS NOW PREPARED TO ENDORSE THE UNDRIP WITHOUT CONDITIONS. IT WAS A HISTORIC OCCASION, BUT NOW THE HARD WORK BEGINS AND WE MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNDRIP.

I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING THE MEETINGS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER MEETINGS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM AROUND THE WORLD FOR A FEW YEARS AND ONE THING WE ALWAYS SAY IS “NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US”. WE NEED TO NOW ENSURE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALSO LIVES BY THOSE WORDS AND INCLUDES US IN ANY OF THEIR

FUTURE WORK. THE DAYS OF THE GREAT WHITE FATHER OR FATHER KNOWS BEST ARE GONE. WE ARE INTELLIGENT PEOPLE WHO KNOW BEST WHAT IS NEEDED FOR OUR PEOPLE AND WILL NOT SIT IDLY BY ANYMORE.

ALTHOUGH SIX NATIONS IS A LARGE FIRST NATION AND DOES PROVIDE MANY SERVICES OUR CITIZENS, **IT IS STILL NOT ENOUGH FOR THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE HAVE IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

NEEDS – EDUCATION – POST SECONDARY (WE HAD TO TURN DOWN 400 STUDENTS LAST YEAR WHO WANTED TO ATTEND A POST SECONDARY INSTITUTION), HEALTH – DIABETES, CANCER, HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE – NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT – NEED PIPING, NEED NEW BRIDGES AND IMPROVED ROADS

ONE WAY THAT WE COULD GENERATE FUNDING FOR OUR COMMUNITY IS THROUGH THE SETTLEMENT OF OUR LAND RIGHTS.

SIX NATIONS WAS ENGAGED IN LAND RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RETURN OF SUBSTANTIAL PARTS OF OUR ORIGINAL GRANT, A FEW YEARS AGO. THIS PROCESS, HOWEVER, BROKE DOWN AND NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS. THE PREVIOUS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO COME BACK TO THE TABLE TO DISCUSS OUR LAND RIGHTS.

THESE UNRESOLVED LAND RIGHTS, THROUGHOUT THE HALDIMAND TRACT, ALSO IMPEDES THE GOVERNANCE OF 38 MUNICIPALITIES AND THE LIVES OF NEARLY 1 MILLION PEOPLE. BECAUSE OF THE AFFECT OF OUR UNRESOLVED LAND RIGHTS ON THE SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES, I TRAVELLED TO OTTAWA, ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS, WITH THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BRANTFORD AND COUNCILLORS FROM THE COUNTY OF BRANT, WHO ALSO TOOK FORWARD THE MESSAGE THAT SIX NATIONS LAND RIGHTS NEED TO BE RESOLVED.

NOW THAT WE HAVE A NEW FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PLACE, WITH A PRIME MINISTER WHO STATES THAT NO RELATIONSHIP IS MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THEY WILL RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITH US AND WE ARE HAVING TALKS WITH THEM TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO SO.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU TWO OTHER EXAMPLES OF WHERE WE MIGHT ALSO GENERATE REVENUE FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

THE BRANTFORD CASINO IS SITTING ON THE NATHAN GAGE LANDS IN THE CITY OF BRANTFORD. THOSE LANDS HAVE BEEN DECLARED TO BE A VALID CLAIM BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHO HAS SAID YES THOSE ARE YOUR LANDS AND THEY WERE TAKEN FROM YOU. THE PROVINCE HAS RECEIVED OVER 1BILLION DOLLARS FROM THE PROCEEDS OF THAT CASINO, THE CITY OF BRANTFORD HAS RECEIVED OVER 50 MILLION AND SIX NATONS HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY DIRECT FUNDING FROM THAT CASINO. EVERY THREE MONTHS OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS READ THE BRANTFORD EXPOSITOR AND SEE A STORY ABOUT ANOTHER PAYMENT OF \$900,000 OR \$800,000 BEING MADE TO THE CITY OF BRANTFORD AS THEY ARE CONSIDERED THE HOST CITY AND RECEIVE 5% OF THE SLOT REVENUES. YET WE GET NOTHING. SO YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE FRUSTRATION THAT SOMETIMES LEADS TO PROTESTS LIKE THE CALEDONIA INCIDENT THAT HAPPENED IN 2006.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS GRAND RIVER ENTERPRISES. THEY ARE AN INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO MANUFACTURING BUSINESS LOCATED IN OUR COMMUNITY. IN ORDER TO CARRY ON THEIR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, THEY WERE FORCED TO GET AN EXCISE TAX LICENSE FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THE TAX THEY PAY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR THIS LICENSE IS APPROXIMATELY \$220 MILLION PER YEAR. THE FUNDING THAT SIXNATIONS, AS THE LARGEST FIRST NATION IN THE COUNTRY, GET FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WHO HAS THE FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO

PROVIDE SERVICES TO US, IS AROUND \$14 MILLION. GRAND RIVER ENTERPRISES HAS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD RATHER PAY THAT \$220 MILLION TO US, INSTEAD OF SENDING IT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE APPROACHED THE GOVERNMENT WITH THIS PROPOSAL AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT MAYBE IT COULD COME OFF THE TOP OF WHAT THEY OWE US WITH RESPECT TO THE LAND THAT WAS STOLEN FROM US.

YOU ALL KNOW THAT OUR ANCESTORS WELCOMED THE FIRST EUROPEANS HERE AND TAUGHT THEM HOW TO SURVIVE. AFTER THEY SETTLED HERE, OUR LAND WAS TAKEN FROM US AND WE WERE PUT ON INDIAN RESERVES. THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES PROVIDE US WITH SOME FUNDING INDICATES THEIR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THEY HAVE THE FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO ACCOMMODATE US. THE MONEY THAT WE RECEIVE FROM THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT TAXPAYERS MONEY, IT IS MONEY THAT IS RIGHTFULLY OWED TO US FOR THE LAND THAT WE LOST WITHOUT BEING COMPENSATED FOR.

WE DO NOT RELY ON A TAX BASE TO FUND ANY OF OUR ESSENTIAL SERVICES, LIKE THE MUNICIPALITIES DO, AS WE HAVE TAX IMMUNITY AS BEING THE FIRST PEOPLES IN THIS LAND.

SO, IN THE MEANTIME, **SIX NATIONS IS STARTING TO GENERATE OUR OWN REVENUE AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS – AS I MENTIONED WE RECENTLY OPENED THE SIX NATIONS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – SOME OF THE COMPANIES THAT WE HAVE ENGAGED WITH ARE SAMSUNG WITH WHOM WE ARE 10% EQUITY OWNERS IN WIND AND SOLAR PROJECTS. WE HAVE ALSO ENTERED INTO PROJECTS WITH MANY OTHER COMPANIES. SIX NATIONS IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND WE ARE ALSO LOOKING TO DO TRADE BOTH HERE IN CANADA AND INTERNATIONALLY.**

LET ME NOW TALK ABOUT “RECONCILIATION”.

TO SOME PEOPLE RECONCILIATION IS THE **RE-ESTABLISHMENT** OF A CONCILIATORY STATE. HOWEVER, THIS IS A STATE THAT MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ASSERT HAS NEVER EXISTED BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

TO OTHERS, “RECONCILIATION,” IS ABOUT COMING TO TERMS WITH EVENTS OF THE PAST IN A MANNER THAT OVERCOMES CONFLICT AND ESTABLISHES A RESPECTFUL AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP AMONG PEOPLE

FOR ANY TYPE OF RECONCILIATION TO HAPPEN, THERE MUST BE AWARENESS OF THE PAST, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE HARM THAT HAS BEEN INFLICTED, ATONEMENT FOR THE CAUSES AND ACTION TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR.

AS YOU CAN SEE FROM MY COMMENTS, WE ARE NOT THERE YET. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IS NOT A MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL ONE.

ALTHOUGH SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO RECONCILIATION REMAIN.

TOO MANY CANADIANS KNOW LITTLE OR NOTHING ABOUT OUR DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS, OUR CULTURE AND OUR PRIDE. THIS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUELS DISTRUST BETWEEN INDIGNEOUS PEOPLES AND CANADIANS IN THE MAINSTREAM SOCIETY.

RACISM IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS SEEN THE MOST IN THE SMALL TOWNS AND CITIES THAT SURROUND FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES. WE SEE IT IN WHEN OUR SPORTS TEAMS VENTURE OUT TO PLAY DIFFERENT GAMES. WE SEE IT IN THE SCHOOLS, WHEN OUR KIDS HAVE TO ATTEND SCHOOLS OFF RESERVE.

IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT 94 CALLS TO ACTION BY THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION, A SURVEY WAS DONE, WITH RESPONDENTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THIS PAST MONTH. IN THAT SURVEY, 48% OF NON-INDIGNEOUS CANADIANS BLAME THE

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE CURRENT PROBLEMS THAT INDIGNEOUS PEOPLE FACE.

THE SAME SURVEY ALSO FOUND THAT 67 PERCENT AGREE THAT INDIGNEOUS PEOPLE HAVE A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT ABOUT RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND TAXPAYERS. THIS SHOWS THAT THE VIEWS OF NON-INDIGNEOUS CANADIANS IS STILL TAINTED BY NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES.

A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE SURVEY SAID THAT THEIR IMPRESSION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HAD WORSENERED IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. OF THOSE, 53% SAID THAT THE REASON FOR THAT WAS THAT INDIGNEOUS PEOPLE RECEIVE "SPECIAL TREATMENT" FROM GOVERNMENT AND RECEIVE SERVICES AND BENEFITS NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHER CITIZENS. THEY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE BENEFITTING BECAUSE WE WELCOMED THEIR ANCESTORS TO OUR LAND AND HELP THEM TO SURVIVE HERE AND BECAUSE WE ARE SPECIAL PEOPLE, AS I MENTIONED BEFORE.

SO THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE IN THE AREA OF RECONCILIATION.

I DO, HOWEVER, HAVE SOME GOOD EXAMPLES OF HOW RECONCILIATION IS HAPPENING IN OUR AREA.

IN 2006, YOU MAY RECALL THAT THERE WAS AN UPRISING OF SIX NATIONS PEOPLE JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF CALEDONIA. THIS WAS INSTIGATED BY THE SALE OF LAND, WHICH WE SAY IS OURS AND WHICH WE HAVE NEVER BEEN COMPENSATED FOR. THIS EVENT LED TO A DETERIORATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE TOWN OF CALEDONIA AND THE PEOPLE OF SIX NATIONS. THIS WAS A VERY DIFFICULT TIME AS MANY OF OUR KIDS ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL IN CALEDONIA AND MANY OF OUR PEOPLE SHOPPED IN CALEDONIA.

THERE WAS A SCHOOL TEACHER FROM ONE OF THE SCHOOLS AT SIX NATIONS WHO LIVED IN CALEDONIA AT THE TIME. SHE FOUND HERSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS TURMOIL AND WANTED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT RE-ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP THAT

HAD EXISTED PRIOR TO THE TURMOIL. SO SHE BEGAN A PROGRAM CALLED "THE PEN PALS PROGRAM". SHE REACHED OUT TO ONE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN CALEDONIA AND ASKED THEM TO EXCHANGE LETTERS WITH THE STUDENTS AT ONE OF THE SCHOOLS AT SIX NATIONS. HER VISION GREW FROM THERE AND JUST ONE WEEK AGO TODAY, OVER 2,000 STUDENTS, SOME FROM SCHOOLS IN TORONTO, GATHERED AT CHIEFSWOOD PARK AT SIX NATIONS TO CELEBRATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEN PALS PROGRAM. THEY WERE JOINED BY THE HONOURABLE ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL, THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, AND THE MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION, THE HONOURABLE DAVID ZIMMER.

LET ME GO BACK TO THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN OUR AREA WHICH WAS CALLED THE MOHAWK INSTITUTE. WE, IN OUR COMMUNITY, CALLED IT THE MUSH HOLE BECAUSE OF THE MUSH THAT WAS MADE THERE IN BIG VATS AND FED TO THE KIDS THREE TIMES A DAY. OUR PARENTS ALWAYS TOLD US THAT IF WE WERE BAD KIDS, WE WOULD BE SENT TO THE MUSH HOLE.

THAT SCHOOL WAS OPEN FOR OVER 150 YEARS AND WAS RUN BY THE ANGLICAN CHURCH. THE BUILDING ITSELF IS CONSIDERED AN ASSET OF SIX NATIONS. IT IS IN DISREPAIR AND THE ROOF NEEDS TO BE FIXED AND THE INSIDE NEEDS TO BE REFURBISHED. THE WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE CURRENTLY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BUILDING.

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, THE CULTURAL CENTRE STAFF CAME TO OUR COUNCIL AND ASKED US WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THE BUILDING. SHOULD WE TEAR IT DOWN OR SHOW WE REPAIR IT. WE TASKED THE STAFF TO GO OUT AND ASK THE COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY THOSE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS WHO ATTENDED THAT SCHOOL AND WHO WERE STILL ALIVE. SOME OF THEM WANTED IT BURNED TO THE GROUND. BUT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY WANTED IT REPAIRED AND SAVED. THEY SAID THAT WE NEED TO "SAVE THE EVIDENCE" AS A REMINDER TO ALL CANADIANS OF WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DID TO OUR CHILDREN FOR OVER 150 YEARS. THEY ALSO WANTED IT SAVED AS A REMINDER TO ENSURE THAT THIS WOULD NEVER EVER HAPPEN AGAIN TO FIRST NATIONS YOUTH.

SO BEGAN THE SAVE THE EVIDENCE CAMPAIGN. IN JANUARY OF 2015, THE SIX NATIONS ELECTED COUNCIL CONTRIBUTED \$220,000 TOWARDS THE REPAIR OF THE ROOF. AND IN A PUBLIC EVENT AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE, I CHALLENGED DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO MATCH THAT CHALLENGE. THERE ARE THREE AREAS WHERE WE ARE TRYING TO RAISE FUNDING UNDER THE SAVE THE EVIDENCE CAMPAIGN. FIRSTLY, WE WANT TO REPAIR THE ROOF AND THEN REFURBISH THE INSIDE TO MAKE IT REPLICATE THE SCHOOL WHEN IT WAS OPERATING, SO THAT PEOPLE CAN TOUR IT AND EXPERIENCE WHAT A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL WAS LIKE. LASTLY, WE WANT TO ESTABLISH AN ENDOWMENT FUND.

I AM GLAD TO SAY THAT THE FIRST ONE TO STEP UP TO THE PLATE TO MATCH OUR CHALLENGE WAS THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRANTFORD. WE ALSO RECEIVED DONATIONS FROM THE ROTARY CLUB AND A COMMITTEE CALLED THE FRIENDS OF THE SAVE THE EVIDENCE CAMPAIGN WAS ESTABLISHED. THIS COMMITTEE IS COMPOSED OF NON-INDIGNEOUS CITIZENS OF BRANTFORD.

AND ON MAY 30TH OF THIS YEAR, I WAS IN THE MEMBERS GALLERY OF THE LEGISLATURE OF THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT AT QUEEN'S PARK, WHERE I LISTENED TO AN APOLOGY MADE BY PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE ABOUT ONTARIO'S ROLE IN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ERA. AT THE SAME TIME, SHE ALSO PLEDGED A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF FUNDING TOWARDS THE REPAIR AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE FORMER MOHAWK INSTITUTE, ALONG WITH FUNDING IN A NUMBER OF OTHER AREAS. IT WAS AT THAT TIME, AS WELL, THAT SHE ANNOUNCED THAT THE MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS WOULD NOW BE CALLED THE MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION.

AND ON JUNE 21ST, NATIONAL ABORIGINAL SOLIDARITY DAY, WE HAD THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DAVID JOHNSTON, THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA, AND THE HONOURABLE ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO, VISIT THE FORMER MOHAWK INSTITUTE. WHILE THEER, THEY TOOK TOURS OF THE SCHOOL AND HEARD FIRST HAND, SOME OF THE STORIES OF THE RSIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS. IN ATTENDANCE, ALONG WITH THEIR EXCELLENCIES, WERE THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEMBERS OF THE PRESTIGIOUS PRINCES' CHARITIES, WHICH IS A TRUST SET UP UNDER THE NAME OF PRINCE CHARLES. THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL INCLUDES FORMER LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS, FORMER PREMIERS AND OTHER HIGH PROFILE INDIVIDUALS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THEY ALSO WERE ABLE TO TOUR THE SCHOOL AND HEAR THE STORIES FROM THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS. HISTORICA CANADA ALSO LAUNCHED A VIDEO CLIP OF ONE MINUTE WHICH IS ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND WHICH HAS BEEN SHOWN ON CBC.

I ALSO WANT TO SAY THAT I AM JUST NOW FINDING OUT THAT MY GRAND MOTHER ATTENDED THE MOHAWK INSTITUTE. SHE NEVER EVER SPOKE TO US ABOUT IT AND SHE NEVER PASSED ON OUR LANGUAGE (WHICH SHE SPOKE WHEN SHE WENT INTO THE SCHOOL) OR OUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS. WHEN SHE CAME OUT OF THE MOHAWK INSTITUTE, SHE ATTENDED A BAPTIST CHURCH AND INSISTED THAT WE ALSO ATTEND THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

NOW THAT I AM OLDER AND DO NOT SPEAK MY LANGUAGE AND AM ONLY JUST LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR TRADITIONS AND OUR CEREMONIES, WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT IN OUR CULTURE, I FEEL THE AFFECTS OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ERA ON MY OWN LIFE AS AN INTER-GENERATIONAL SURVIVOR.

I TOLD YOU THAT MY GRANDMOTHER INSISTED THAT WE ATTEND SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES EVERY SUNDAY. ONE THING I ALWAYS REMEMBER FROM ATTENDING THOSE CLASSES WAS THE HYMN THAT SAID – JESUS LOVES ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN – RED AND YELLOW, BLACK AND WHITE.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? WE ALL NEED TO ASK THAT QUESTION. WHY WERE OUR CHILDREN ABUSED BY MEN OF THE CLOTH WHO WERE RELIGIOUS LEADERS? WHY IS THERE NOW SUCH DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN RACES. AND HOW DO WE RECONCILE THAT?

IT HAS NOW BEEN A FEW MONTHS SINCE THE FINAL REPORT OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION WAS RELEASED. INCLUDED WITHIN THAT REPORT ARE 94 CALLS TO ACTION. IF YOU REVIEW THOSE CALLS TO ACTION, YOU WILL SEE THAT THEY RELATE TO ALMOST EVERY FACET OF THE LIVES OF THE FIRST

NATIONS PEOPLE. IT IS NOW UP TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE DAY TO START IMPLEMENTING THOSE CALLS TO ACTION AND IT IS UP TO YOU AND TO US TO ENSURE THAT THEY DO.

WE NEED TO THANK ALL OF THOSE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS WHO HAD THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO COME FORWARD AND TELL THEIR STORIES TO THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONERS. THEY CAME FORWARD AND TOLD THE TRUTH AND SO NOW IS THE TIME FOR RECONCILIATION.

WHENEVER I SPEAK TO GROUPS WHERE THE AUDIENCE IS MAINLY NON-INDIGNEOUS, I ALWAYS THANK THEM FOR INVITING ME AS I THINK IT IS SO IMPORANT THAT PEOPLE IN MAINSTREAM CANADA TAKE THE TIME TO EDUCATE THEMSELVES AND TO MAKE THEMSELVES MORE AWARE OF WHO WE ARE AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. WE HAVE RICH CULTURES AND HISTORIES AND WE ARE A VERY PROUD PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY TO SHARE OUR CULTURE.

THROUGH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS, PERHAPS THE STEREOTYPES AND MISCONCEPTIONS THAT EXIST WILL BE CHALLENGED AND ULTIMATELY ELIMINATED.

TO BUILD FOR THE FUTURE, CANADIANS MUST LOOK TO, AND LEARN FROM, THE PAST.

TOGETHER, WE MUST ALL DO MORE THAN JUST *TALK* ABOUT RECONCILIATION; WE MUST LEARN HOW TO *PRACTISE* RECONCILIATION IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES—WITHIN OURSELVES AND OUR FAMILIES, AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENTS, PLACES OF WORSHIP, SCHOOLS, AND WORKPLACES.

RECONCILIATION MUST INSPIRE INDIGNEOUS AND NON-INDIGNEOUS PEOPLES TO TRANSFORM CANADIAN SOCIETY SO THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN CAN LIVE TOGETHER. IN DIGNITY, PEACE, AND PROSPERITY ON THESE LANDS WE NOW SHARE.

BUT SOME OF THE SURVIVORS ARE SAYING “WHY DO WE NEED TO RECONCILE”? WE WERE YOUNG KIDS THAT WERE ABUSED. WE NEVER DID ANYTHING, SO WHY DO WE NEED TO RECONCILE?

EVEN THOUGH THAT QUESTION REMAINS, WE WILL MOVE FORWARD IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION, BECAUSE WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO ARE WELCOMING AND WHO SHARED OUR LAND. WE WILL ADOPT THOSE SAME PRINCIPLES AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE NOT ONLY RECONCILIATION BUT JUSTICE FOR THE FIRST PEOPLES OF THIS LAND.

NIA:WEN