

months of painful recovery.

After the bombing, Jamie's husband David Harris-Gershon (at home in Jerusalem when the bomb went off) experienced symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) including hyperventilation and insomnia. Initially David denied his own trauma as a secondary victim. When he finally acknowledged the impact of the bombing on him, his own healing began.

Five years after the attack, David set out to discover what had actually happened that day. As David states, "The bombing sent me on a psycho-logical journey, which years later, led me to East Jerusalem and the childhood home of the Hamas terrorist who set everything in motion. David learned that the bomber, Mohammed Odeh, came from a moderate, middle class family. He had two young children. Mohammed wasn't a typical Hamas terrorist. Captured three weeks after the incident, Mohammed had apparently expressed remorse for what he had done. His remorse also wasn't typical. David wanted to talk to Mohammed. He wanted to hear the story. He wanted to see if the remorse was real. Meeting Mohammed was impossible.

David then went through a long process to connect with his family — his mother and brothers and his two kids. They arranged to meet him in their home in East Jerusalem. As a symbol of his good intentions, David took gifts for Mohammed's children.

At Jerusalem's Toys R Us David bought Mohammed's five-year-old daughter a stencil set and his 11 year old a Rubik's Cube. After a long conversation with Mohammed's family, David's stereotypic view of Palestinians melted away. David described Mohammed's children as normal and beautiful. His mother and brother were also normal people who regretted what had happened and wanted peace.

The meeting affirmed David's conviction that dialogue is at the centre of reconciliation. Revenge and retaliation are not the answer. Conflict isn't a zero sum game where only one side can win, a game in which saying anything good about the other is seen as a loss.

When David returned to the United States his PTSD symptoms disappeared. David doesn't claim to understand what happened but knows the visit provided the opportunity for some healing.



The Healing Oasis Program

" Our new logo represents new growth, nurtured in water, that ripples out into the community and the dove of peace comes to the oasis. "

Who Are We?

Who are we as individuals, as a community and as a nation? When the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are fulfilled, we will know more about the wisdom of the people who lived on this land before the rest of us arrived. The Aboriginal people will rediscover their heritage and will start to

learn to live out of this proud culture as people in the new millennium. We, as non-aboriginals, will learn how our Canadian culture actually did develop. Together we will start to reconcile and integrate our histories, recognizing the harsh struggle of trying to live together. With much education and healing

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programming, we can grow together.

As we prepare this newsletter, a national election is imminent. We are examining the diverse and rich cultures which make up and enrich our Canadian identity. We are deciding what kind of leadership will nourish and empower this evolving identity and culture, who will guide us to develop this rich and vibrant people and land that we are already known to be?

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation process, with native people who lived in the government and church-run residential schools and their families, is Restorative Justice of the greatest magnitude. The honest, open, truth-telling, with the promise of amnesty, has created a history of early Canada that was previously well hidden. People who were lost and unknown were placed in the history and geography of Canada.

Let me share a couple of experiences that have helped me to understanding some small way, the journey of our native peoples.

I was part of a Blanket Ceremony. We stood on blankets in a large room, each person assigned a number, and the facilitator called a number for each treaty that had been signed with various Aboriginal groups since Confederation.

With each treaty, we were informed of how much land was taken from the native people. With

each treaty a blanket was removed and people were taken off the floor. When the number for the treaty that I represented was called, there were few of us left on the floor and there was very small area of blanket left. When they tried to take my blanket, representing more land, I wanted to stomp on it and not give it up. The saddest part of that experience for me was that of all the aboriginal people, half the population who started this process, there was no fight left in them. If members of each new parliamentary cabinet were mandated to experience the Blanket Ceremony, how would our leadership, our policies and our laws be different?

The other experience that has influenced me more recently was a Sisters in the Spirit Vigil. Over twelve hundred Aboriginal women are missing or have been killed. These are all unresolved criminal cases! That is a powerful political statement about the dynamics of oppression in Canada.

In preparing my Restorative Justice thesis, years ago, I went to Aboriginal leaders seeking advice on how to mediate and lead healing circles. I was told that that wisdom was lost to them. We agreed that maybe we could learn together. Now, restorative justice processes are used effectively in schools to deal with bullying and also in helping people heal the deep pain of much heavier crimes.

Who are we as individuals?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognized many common lasting effects on native individuals and their families, who have suffered from repression.

Gary Danuk, a Metis friend of ours, lived with these dynamics. He was born in extreme poverty in Northern Ontario. He was raised with abuse, exclusion and despair. He lived with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder). He did get a college education and he worked at various jobs for several years. He was deeply renewed by the natural world and loved to nurture his own plants. He was a Christian man who completed many Bible Studies and was nurtured by the message of God's love. He was not only religious; but, lived out of a deep spirituality. He prayed to the Great Creator for the healing of the nation, for the healing of Mother Earth and for healing for each of us as individuals. He longed for a spiritual transformation and reconciliation to wholeness. May he rest in peace.

In this space, we honour the life and Being of Gary "North Wind" Danuk.

How were our heritage stories similar, this Metis male and I, a white female of Irish decent? We both had a historical influence of alcoholism but the impact for me was very different. We were both inspired by nature and loved to nurture Mother Earth and the vegetation she produced. We were both deeply spiritual, knowing that the Spirit of the Creator empowers

each of us. Our lives were similar in some ways but my firm supportive foundation enabled me to overcome struggles, to grow and become a strong, healthy, productive adult, who loves life.

Pulling oneself out of physical, mental and emotional oppression is a huge leap, which often involves a tedious, painful journey to wholeness. As a nation, as a community, as individuals, we must try to understand and nurture each other.

Self-awareness of our personal identity is a powerful tool. When we know who we are, how we function, what we value and believe, when we can face and learn to understand the pain of our past, we grow. We learn new coping and relationship skills. We learn to love ourselves and others. We grow in strength and the assurance that we are valuable; we have skills and gifts to offer to our world.

Restorative Justice Week is always the third week of November, this year **November 13-22, 2015**.

Let me share a story of transformation and healing from the author of, *"What Do You Buy the Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife?"*

On July 31, 2002, a bomb went off in the cafeteria of Hebron University in Jerusalem. Nine people were killed. Many others were injured including American student Jamie Harris-Gershon. who was badly burned. Shrapnel pierced her intestines. She went through