



Report From Your Board Chair

Building Community Partnerships

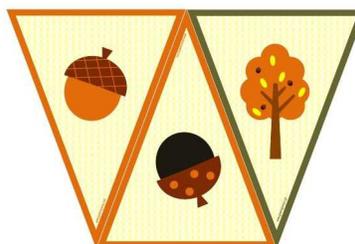
While most of us enjoyed or endured the heat of the summer, a group of committed West Hillers worked hard at making significant progress on our Building Community Partnerships initiative. With the support of two grants received from the United Church through PTCC (Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation), the team of Annie, Gretta, Florence, Barb, Ruth, Babette, Debbie, Louise and Kevin have been working with Eco-Ethnomics.

The initial work of doing an environmental scan of our community, which identified the demographics, organizations, programs and local facilities, was completed. This allowed the team to pinpoint opportunities for building community partnerships using our building as a community hub. From this, potential organizations with a proven track record were singled out and discussions have begun on the shared use of our facilities that would provide needed services to the community and increased financial stability for the West Hill community.

As work continued on this front, the deadline for the next round of grant money from the PTCC was fast approaching. A small group worked hard very quickly and our third request was made by the deadline. There were two elements of our grant request. The first, with the increased multi-group use as a community hub, we requested \$23,300 to install three high-efficiency furnaces and air-conditioning to support the entire building. The second element was a request for \$34,000 to continue working with Eco-Ethnomics on the Business Planning, Community Engagement and Market Research related to our goal of creating a sustainable community hub. It should also be noted we are approaching a separate funding source of the United Church to address the full repairs of our roof and overhead area of our front doors.

On behalf of the congregation, I would like to thank one and all who continue to actively work on this very important initiative of creating a West Hill Community Hub based on our values, passion and commitment to action.

Randy Bowes



News From First Nations Study Group

CALLS TO ACTION AND THE WAR ON DRUGS IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

#18 of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action calls upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

What's happening? Although the Government of Canada is committed to implementing all Calls to Action, work on Call to Action #18 has not begun or is in early planning stages.

#19 calls upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

What's happening? Indigenous Services Canada is working with Indigenous organizations including the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council (and its Governing Members) to advance shared priorities focused on improving and closing the gaps in health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Services Canada has engaged with First Nations and Inuit partners in all regions to strategically allocate health funding announced in Budget 2017. These additional resources are aligned with health priorities identified by Indigenous partners. These new investments will help improve access to needed services in the area of maternal and child health, mental wellness, clinical care, home care and communicable diseases controls. To keep Indigenous families healthy, Budget 2018 proposes to invest \$1.5 billion over five years, starting in 2018-2019, and \$149 million per year ongoing.

Will it be enough....

Attawapiskat First Nation Chief Launches Personal War on Illegal Drugs

By Liam Casey, Canadian Press, April 2018

The chief of Attawapiskat First Nation has launched a personal war on illegal drugs because he says he is tired of waiting for others to deal with a problem that is destroying his small community in northern Ontario.

Chief Ignace Gull, who was elected in 2016 following a state of emergency triggered by a spate of youth suicides, says he's using the authority under the Indian Act to search suspected drug dealers.

Gull and four other local officials search everyone who lands at the fly-in community's airport, including local police officers.

"It's a success so far," the chief said Wednesday in a phone interview. "These (drugs) are destroying the community."

Police say the drugs come in through the airport or by mail.

Gull said he's sick of waiting for police whose hands are tied by the weeks it often takes to get search warrants signed by a justice of the peace in Sudbury, Ont. "Police can't come to the homes without a search warrant, so I have to do it," he said.

The chief began the searches on May 27, working with a small team that includes two councillors and two volunteers. He brought in a drug-sniffing dog along with a handler and guard from a security company in Timmins, Ont., to help out on a recent three-day blitz.

They've seized fentanyl, speed, marijuana, other opioids and large shipments of alcohol, Gull said.

The community has been demanding action since the 2015 suicide crisis, Gull said, and drugs were part of the problem.

"The drug dealers aren't hiding anymore; people just line up to get them, like getting coffee at Tim Hortons," Gull said.

Since it's a small community with about 1,500 people, Gull said they know the alleged dealers. So he just goes to their house, grabs the drugs and gives it to police.

"We need help, we want the government to step in and do something to help us instead of watching us from the sideline," he said.

A few weeks ago, Gull met with Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, who told him to apply for funding that is available to help. A spokesman for Goodale said they are aware of the challenges Attawapiskat faces and noted the federal government is investing \$291.2 million over five years in a First Nations policing program.

"These investments include increased and ongoing funding for (program) recipients to support priorities such as additional officer positions, officer safety, policing equipment and salaries," said Scott Bardsley.

He said the force for the region, Nishnawbe Aski Police, recently finished a three-year deal through the program, which “will strengthen policing in Attawapiskat and bolster its response to these challenges.”

He said there is money available for crime prevention projects and for initiatives to reduce gang and gun violence. “This funding would include a portion provided to Indigenous organizations to help build capacity through education, outreach and research, addressing the unique needs of Indigenous communities and urban populations,” Bardsley said.

Nishnawbe Aski Police Sgt. Jackie George said the chief’s approach is common in northern First Nation communities. Airport screenings are particularly effective at keeping drugs out of fly-in communities, she said.

“It keeps people from trafficking contraband into the communities because they know they’re going to be searched,” she said.

Last November, the Mushkegowuk Council, a regional organization that represents northern First Nations that includes Attawapiskat, declared a state of emergency on illegal drugs and alcohol.

“This pandemic has reached serious levels where it’s clearly destroying our people and communities,” said Grand Chief Jonathon Solomon at the time.



Attawapiskat



IN THE SPIRIT

Yoga Studio & Wine Lounge



REMINDER — YOGA CLASSES (SENIORS DISCOUNT). We still offer special seniors classes (yoga in chairs and for those with mobility issues) Mondays at 10:15-11:15 a.m. and Thursdays 9:00-10:00 a.m. (\$15/class includes tea/coffee & cookies). (Highland Creek Plaza, 376 Old Kingston Road)

We have many more options for all ages. Please check out our website for our class schedule, rates and more information (647-352-4879): www.inthespirtityoga.com, email letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com

First Nations Study Group to Visit First Peoples Exhibit at Royal Ontario Museum

On Monday September 24th, our First Nations Study Group will be visiting the Royal Ontario Museum to see the Daphne Cockwell Gallery featuring First Peoples art and culture with more than one thousand works of art and cultural heritage from across Canada, west to the Pacific Ocean, north to the Arctic, east to the Atlantic, with some artifacts from cultures in Alaska and south of the Canada-United States border, from Pre-European times to the present day. An Indigenous Knowledge Resource Teacher will be in the Gallery from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm to answer any questions we may have about the cultures and contributions of Indigenous peoples.

Meet at the church at 9:00 a.m. and carpool to Kennedy subway. Admission to the ROM is \$16.00 for adults, and \$13.50 for 65+.



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Regular Services, Meetings and Events

Every Sunday
 First Sunday of every month
 Every other Monday (start date TBA)
 Last Monday of every month
 Every Tuesday (starting 2nd week of September)

Second Tuesday of every month
 Every Thursday
 Last Friday of every month

Sunday Service	10:30 AM
Visitors' and Travellers' Lunch	1:00 PM
Men's Group	TBA
First Nations Study Group Meeting	1:00 PM
Labyrinth Walk	10:30 AM
Holiday Crafting	1:00 PM
Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Choir Practice	7:30 PM
Dinner with Friends	6:00 PM

Upcoming Special Events

Monday, September 24th	First Nations Group visit to the ROM See page 4
Saturday, October 13 (rain date Oct 20)	West Hill Clean-up Day
Saturday, November 10 (to be confirmed)	FOGVA Jukebox Saturday Night with SHOWTIME - Tickets \$25
Saturday, November 17	Holiday Bazaar

FundScrip-from-a-Distance for Our Refugee Family!

Every two weeks, Peter Thomas distributes an envelope of gift cards to each person who has ordered them. FundScrip, an organization that purchases gift cards from hundreds of retailers and makes them available for purchase by charities, adds to our bottom line by skimming a percentage off each purchase and saving it for the church. When someone buys a \$100 grocery card from FundScrip, 2-4% of the purchase is returned to West Hill by FundScrip.

Peter has been distributing cards to participants for several years now, but he can only give the envelopes to people who are able to get to West Hill. Those of you who live at a distance can participate, but the donation West Hill would receive is compromised by the cost of mailing so we have not promoted the option.

That said, we think you might be interested in supporting our refugee family by using the program. The Refugee Resettlement Team has devised an innovative way that ALL West Hill supporters – those at the church and those at a distance – can use FundScrip to contribute to raising funds for our refugee family, each household building up a significant donation over time. Simply order gift cards on a repeat order – processed every two weeks – and set the cards aside for our family.

Cards start as low as \$5 – Indigo, Starbucks – which makes your contribution manageable and your long term donation significant. Ten dollar cards are available for almost everything – Shoppers Drug Mart or HomeSense. When our family arrives, they will be provided the cards to help them get set up in their new home.

If you aren't already signed up to FundScrip, you can do that online using the invite code YWVFVW. Once you've created an account, place an order for what you would like to donate *every two weeks* to our refugee family. When you've placed your order, click on the 'make this a recurrent order' button and you're all done. The cards will accrue at the church and you will receive a Canadian Income Tax Charitable Donation receipt.

Thanks for supporting our soon-to-be neighbours. Just knowing we're all in this together has made their wait – in hiding – so much easier.



Earth's Own Luminosity

Tune: Dix

Hope comes home with every birth,
every child, from shore to shore,
each of sacred, endless worth,
each, a joy not known before.
Endless possibilities;
Earth's own luminosity.

Learning through the tender years
all absorb the world they know.
Laughing, losing, shedding tears
year by year they live and grow.
Searching possibilities;
Earth's own luminosity.

Standing strong and wild and free,
seeking wisdom, speaking truth,
singing freedom's constant plea,
youth believes in endless youth.
Still, the possibilities!
Earth's own luminosity.

Age soon tames the restless heart
calms the pulse and slows the feet.
Joy and duty, long apart,
share in making life complete.
Chosen possibilities;
Earth's own luminosity.

Might we, with our lives ascend
far beyond this simple tale,
rising up, life to defend,
love, its champion, to prevail.
Each of us, each born to be
Earth's own luminosity.

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Mission & Service

~ Nations Uniting ~

In the Six Nations First Nations community in southern Ontario sits a simple white building. For over five years Nations Uniting has offered a place of community and provided educational workshops to the surrounding communities on and off the reserve at various locations up and down the Grand River. Healing Circles and Grandmothers' Teas are times of quiet sharing, with each person in the circle getting a chance to talk or ask questions and, most importantly, to respectfully listen to one another's stories of life. As people listen, they learn from each other. Nations Uniting also uses the Blanket Exercise developed by KAIROS Canada to bring to life teachings and reflections of forgotten Canadian history. The number of Sharing Circles is increasing as other churches hear about what Nations Uniting is doing and yearn to know more about their First Nations neighbours. Our gifts for Mission & Service support the journey toward reconciliation in Ohsweken, Ontario.

Self Reflection

How do I find my way back from here

when this isn't the way I came ...

nothing familiar,

no landmarks,

not even stars to guide my way ...

"Ha! As if you could read them, you idiot!"

and so many things I want to carry with me,

these heartfelt words,

this morning practice, ...

"A total waste of your time! Get back to work!"

new obligations to myself,

the things I hold to,

that save me,

"You are NOT serious! Those games you play at?

You hope that THEY will save you! That is simply too rich!!"

every morning, a new possibility,

a new beam of light to ride upon,

set into my life

by those who know my fears, my needs,

the way I whittle hope throughout my day.

"Yeah, how much have you told that therapist!

It wouldn't take much for her to realize

you are bat-shit crazy, girl! LOL!"

• • •

But I don't need to go back the way I came, do I?

I can find another way,

work it out as I go ...

"Hold on a minute! What? That way? You're going that way?"

One brick short of a load, you are!

Too stupid to find the right way!"

holding to these practices,

opening doors,

checking out possibilities,

bringing my fears along with me,

to help see the way.

"I can hardly wait to laugh when you fall flat on your face!"

I mean,

It's not like my fear is ever very far behind.

gretta vosper

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