

CFUW Owen Sound – Issues Committee

Home to Two Ojibway Reserves: Cape Croker and Saugeen

“Seriously....why should it matter to me? I’m not responsible.”

Motivation to research TRC: 1. We discovered an appalling degree of ignorance about the history and culture of our First Nations people. 2. One of our members was among the dozen who signed the Declaration of Action at the June 1st, 2015 closing ceremony in Ottawa.

Mission of our Issues Committee: to become informed ourselves and then to inform, engage and inspire all members of our club.

Process

1. Committee members read and reviewed TRC and then held a brainstorming session to determine which issues we wanted to research more thoroughly. Each member chose one.
2. Members presented their topics to the Committee as a “dry run” to presentation to whole membership.
3. First formal presentation at our November 2015 meeting gave overview of the TRC report. Audience was cautioned that “some information will be disturbing, some shocking”. Intent is not to shame and point fingers, but to focus on the truth – the foundation for reconciliation. All of our presentations were followed by Q&A. It is essential to allow dialogue, engagement and opportunities for further learning.
4. Mini 15 minute presentations at subsequent general meetings followed.
 - January 2016: Comparison between current Ontario Public School Curriculum and Funding and the current First Nations Residential schools.
 - February: First hand experiences as told by a member who had adopted 2 First Nations boys during the Sixties Scoop.
 - March: The impact of residential Schools on the First Nations community
 - April: Book review of John Milloy's A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879-1986
 - May: Where do we go from here?

From Here to Where?

- Education is key

Resources:

- TRC website
- DVD “3rd World Canada” www.thirdworldcanada.com
- Paul Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative
- Don Drummond, Queen’s U School of Public Policy on ed funding gaps
- “The Spirit Level” by Wilkinson and Pickett 2009
- Bill C-33
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1991
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007
- Sydenham Public School Student Exchange Program with Northwest Territories students

“Yes, it matters to me.”

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