



February 20, 2016

Reconciliation trip - July in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Innunwug, Ontario Booshoo !

Greetings from KI !

We are happy to invite you, on behalf of our community, to our reconciliation trip that is entirely led by our very own: youth of KI.

In this event, we are inviting 25 Canadians to join us, to live in our homes, to share in our daily experiences, see our deep connection to our waters, our land, our people, and our way of life here in our homelands of KI; the traditional way ! In doing this, we hope to raise awareness not just for our own community, but for all our fellow First Nation remote communities, for the good.

You see, we could go on and on about issues and concerns we have as a remote First Nation, but I don't want to do that. Instead, we would love for you to first-hand experience our love of the land, feel the fresh air we get from mother earth, taste our food given to us by the Creator, and to greet our People... then you will see that we are people just like everyone else- we feel, we hurt, we cry and we laugh.

As well, we have the full support to run this event by our Chief, James Cutfeet, and our Council. They are behind us in all that we do, and we couldn't be any more blessed to have them support and believe in us, and for them to allow us to lead the way. As you may have heard time and time again "youth are the leaders of tomorrow", but you rarely see that youth are given a chance to demonstrate and bring that saying to life and into realization through leadership. We the youth believe that by us holding this event, we can be an example; and that if given a chance, we can do great and mighty things for ourselves and for our people. **And for this reconciliation event, we are doing it!**

You see, most people would think it is unusual for First Nation People and Canadians to be friends due to racial, origin, and language differences (to name a few), but we strongly disagree. How else can we live amongst each other and create a better home in this country we call Canada that we share together? By us coming together, working and sharing in our lives can be an example of just that and especially that it is possible to be friends; **we are friends!** Also in doing this, **we can create a better and stronger country for us, for our children and our children's children.**

In closing, please know how honoured we are to host you and thankful you will be taking the time to see why we love our People, our Home, Our Waters, our Land, and our way of life. Maybe in doing this, everyone will begin to stand together and be as one!

Meetgwetch !

Leona Matthews,
Youth Leader

Karyn Paishk,
Youth Leader

Justin Beardy,
Youth Leader

(SEE BELOW: YOUTH QUOTES)

‘WE INVITE YOU TO OUR HOME’
QUOTES FROM YOUTH LEADERS - JUNE EVENT INK.I.

Shannon Winter

I am inviting you into my community for a week for you to show you how beautiful my land is, in addition I'd like for you to try our traditional food and other useful things we get from the resources around our community. I believe this will get the word out that we are still living off the land, that we wouldn't know what to do without it. I think this will help with our future generations, to hopefully get our traditions to stay alive. As a youth myself, I'd really like to see my land used as my ancestors used it. Not everything is in perfect condition be we make it work.

Justin Beardy

We are a poor people. Only few of us are fortunate enough to move from poverty to middle class. And with this, I am extending an invitation to Canadians to my home, so you may see; even with what little we have, we are still willing to share. I would like for you to see the beauty of our land and our culture. To see from your eyes and your hearts that we are rich. Not in the terms of money, but heritage

Martha Rose

‘To see our living conditions - they’re is 6 of us in our 2 bedroom trailer.’

Hillary Childforever

Well, I'm 15 years old I'll be 16 in the summer. One tough thing about living in KI is that at times, I feel trapped like there's no where else to go. I've experience a lot of stuff, but every summer I spend my birthday in the bush in Geraldton & do training for all sorts of activities. I've even went to aviation, I flew a plane above Thunder Bay for half an hour. Also, I've designed a yearbook for KI last year.

I'm inviting the Canadians because I want them to experience what it's like to live in an isolated community & the beautiful land we have here we call our home. I believe we can do this if we just put in the time and if we work as a community we can accomplish anything. It would probably make more youth come out and support this big event, maybe even show their talents.

Karyn NightHawk

‘I don’t have a home in my own homeland”

Meekwun Anderson, Drummer

To me this is important for the youth a chance to show some people and others that youth can do more than just drink and do drugs...show 'em we are capable of great things and we can come together to bring anything to life.

Darryl Sainnawap - *Ontario First Nations People Council, KI youth rep*

'I want them to know what it's like to live up here'

Brianne FiveDays

'I would like to invite Canadians to our home for them to experience the land and culture that I am so proud of.'

Justin Beardy

That life in the North can be hard but we still have hope.

Lysanne Mckay

I would like to invite you to my reserve KI. It's an opportunity to experience the way we live up north and how we survive. Come and see the beauty of the north that I have come to love and respect. I was born and raised in KI by my grandparents which is common among natives.

This will benefit the youth in KI because it will encourage them to want to do more for their community, for themselves and also to make important contacts to help them accomplish what ever it is they desire.

Karyn NightHawk

I saw the video msg from the youth walkers addressed to us and it really inspired me to keep going and to see this project through. It was the motivation I needed to take this lead and finish what we started. Yes I would like very much for them to come and visit us in June because I know the youth of KI would be so excited and they can talk to the them give them a positive msg...after all they are role models.

Leona Matthews

Greetings from KI ! First of all, I'd like to extend an invitation to you to attend our June Event-Only in KI. In doing this, I hope we become great friends. I also would love for you to share in the experiences we share every day of our lives; whether they'd be good or bad ! Just like every community, we too have our own issues and concerns, but not only that. We have a deep connection with our people, our waters, and this God-given land we call home ! In showing this to you, I hope that you too open your eyes and see the reason why we fight so hard for our way of life. Meegwetch and I am looking forward to seeing you this summer, it'll be a blast!

Lawrence Morris

To: His Excellency David Johnston

Hi, my name is Lawrence Morris. I am a youth from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Innunwug - K.I (formerly known as Big trout Lake). We have met each other in November 2012. Myself and another youth from K.I Came to Rideau Hall and sang our community honour song. We were accompanied by Andrée Cazabon. What I would really like to ask you is if you would like to attend our June event here in K.I as a our guest of Honour. I really had the privilege of meeting you in November and I would have the privilege of meeting you again. Thank you!

Justin Beardy

Hi, my name is Justin Beardy.

I am from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) formerly known as Big Trout Lake
I am writing this, so you can better understand my connection to the land. Unfortunately, I can not speak for everybody, but there may be many others with a similar connection.

You see, I don't go out on the land or the lake because I feel like I have to. I do it because I want to. When my grandfather was still alive, he used to tell us; "Go to the land, that is where we get our power". At the time, I didn't know what he was saying; I thought he was just crazy. Growing up with alcoholism and my drug addictions, I soon came to realize that way of life didn't matter. When I was in the bush, it just felt great to be alive. So yes, I believe there is a power there. I now know what my grandfather was teaching me. It took a great deal of time to understand this and I am grateful for what he taught me.

When I go hunting or fishing, I give thanks for every kill and pray their passing to the next life is a good one. Every kill is a sacrifice the animals make, so it is a blessing to be chosen by the animal for its sacrifice. So I believe, thanks and a prayer is not only customary but necessary; out of respect for their sacrifice. I kill only what I intend to eat or feed others. I try to feed the elders or the people unable to go out onto the land, as much as I can. So much as, I sometimes have nothing to take home. I hunt and fish with my father, so these are his teachings to me as well.

Going out on the land is the best time to think about life. I get a lot of time to myself, there are no distractions and it's just beautiful out there. I draw upon all of this, so my focus is more clear on issues I may contemplate on. A lot of times, I find the answers to my hardest questions. Going on the land is not something for us to do, it's what makes us who we are. My connection to the land is like a baby to their mother. She is my mother and this cord cannot be cut.