

Greetings,

I attended, for the first time, the third annual Wicahitowin Aboriginal Engagement Conference in Saskatoon October 11-12. It was organized by the United Way of Saskatoon and there were more than 500 delegates. The conference theme was Leadership in Reconcili-ACTION and it was a transformative experience for me. I gained a greater understanding of what reconciliation means and that Saskatchewan (and Canada) is in the nascent stages of beginning a journey of healing and building a relationship of mutual respect and trust. Many interesting speakers made engaging points and all conference sessions were tied to a specific national Truth and Reconciliation Committee Call(s) to Action.

I had two takeaways from attending the conference. The first was to have your own personal call(s) to action. They can be as large or small in scope as you feel. The second was to try and learn to be comfortable with having uncomfortable conversations about reconciliation with Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Metis) and non-Indigenous people in your workplace, home, and socially. The next Wicahitowin Conference is scheduled for October 17-18, 2018 at TCU Place in Saskatoon. Registration was reasonably priced (early bird rate was \$150.00) and included a hearty breakfast and lunch on both days. I highly recommend attending the conference next year!

One important related reconciliation item is that the University of Regina's Faculty of Education, with support from the Government of Saskatchewan, recently released a free, downloadable eBook entitled *Shattering the Silence the Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in Saskatchewan*. It is a Project of Heart Saskatchewan eBook that was developed to facilitate teaching and learning about the topic. The resource is accessible [here](#). The University of Regina Library has cataloged the eBook, see record [here](#) and I invite libraries to add this resource to their online holdings.

I mentioned last month that Judy Nicholson and I were interviewed by Brad Grass for an episode of Sasktel Local maxTV Magazine about libraries. SLA was contacted soon after the budget cuts crisis ended this past spring but, due to scheduling, it took a while to film the show. It's available on demand for Sasktel cable subscribers. Mr. Grass, host of the program, also interviewed public library workers in Moose Jaw, Weyburn, and Watrous. Judy and others who were interviewed did a wonderful job of explaining why libraries matter in our communities.

Judy Nicholson and I attended the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Regina Dr. John Archer Library on October 16. It was a great event that included the Assistant Deputy Minister, Rob Currie, officially proclaiming Saskatchewan Library Week. Judy received the proclamation and gave greetings on behalf of SLA.

A story about the celebratory event is [here](#). Finally I wish all the host communities in Saskatchewan a great turnout and lots of fun at SLA's 4<sup>th</sup> annual Happy Hour on Nov. 2!

Best,

Michael Shires