



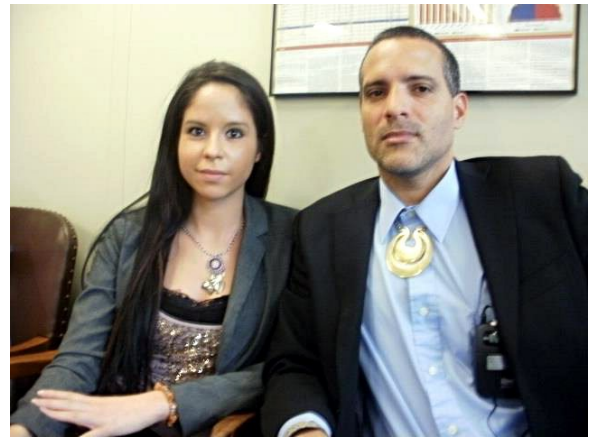
Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations

The Only Multi-Racial Worldwide Indigenous Confederacy In Existence

Andrea Landry - a Canadian indigenous leader of tomorrow

May 10, 2012

I had the pleasure of meeting 23 year-old Andrea Landry at the Tribal Link Project Access Global Capacity Building Training Course for Indigenous Peoples, held in May 2012 in New York City; USA. I feel no embarrassment whatsoever in admitting that the first thing which caught my attention about Andrea was her external beauty, I AM a living non-visually impaired Scorpio male after all...but once I got to know her - her inner beauty eclipsed all aforementioned.



To listen to Andrea speak in person on issues near and dear to her - one gets taken on an emotional roller-coaster ride....but this is a good thing, for when someone speaks from the heart with a deep passion and firm conviction as she does; you can do little more than buckle-up and go along for the ride.

In her own words:

"My name is Andrea Landry, I am a youth representative for an organization in Canada called the National Association of Friendship Centres. I come from the Anishinaabe People (also known as Ojibway) in Ontario, and my reservation is called 'Pays Plat First Nation'. I reside in British Columbia right now but I am moving home this summer to become more involved in my culture and begin learning my language.

The Royal Proclamation came into place in 1763 in order to create "government systems" and hold land cession negotiations between European and aboriginal people living on the land in Canada. Through this proclamation came great fraud and abuses by the European settlers. The proclamation gave allowance to the settlers to fish and hunt on the grounds of the aboriginal populations without their acceptance. Before this, the concept of land ownership and the price of land was something that was foreign to Canada's Aboriginal people.

The Indian Act then came into place in 1867, and this was created by the Canadian Government to "kill the Indian in the child." Through this the residential school system was created, where aboriginal children were taken from their homes and forced into a schools system where they were physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually abused for speaking their languages, practicing their traditions, and for being who they truly were as aboriginal children. These children were stripped from their culture, their hair was cut, and they lost any opportunity to communicate with their brothers, sisters, and other family members.

My grandfather was a child of the residential school system, and without proper healing mechanisms in place, he struggled with alcohol addiction until he passed away. His family, my mother and her siblings, were highly impacted by cycles of abuse through the residential school system as their father never truly healed after he was let out of the schools. Through this, many families never truly gained a sense of family patterning, or an understanding on how to run a family, after trauma, abuse, and no means of healing.

My mother has broken the cycle by healing and graduating with her degree in Anishinaabemowin – our language. She is now on her way to gaining her Bachelor of Education in order to teach the language in our community.

The National Association of Friendship Centres is the largest urban aboriginal infrastructure in Canada and it is a service-delivery mechanism which helps aboriginal people who move from their reservations to cities. The programs vary from the fields of health, education, culture, recreation and sport, employment and a variety of others.

The very first time I attended the Friendship Centre programming, I was living in Thunder Bay, Ontario, a city with a high level of racism to the aboriginal population. I remember having little to no empowerment in regards to who I was, where I came from, and who I represented within the urban context. I began to have a really negative perception of self. Through this low esteem came the thoughts of suicide and violence against my self.

Upon entering the doors of the friendship centre, I remember being ashamed of someone seeing me walking into the building where the “Indians” go. Yet, after spending countless hours with my youth worker and being brought to pow-wows and ceremonial events, I slowly began to gain a sense of self. I began to acknowledge who I truly was... a young, aboriginal youth in the urban context. I began to feel proud for the color of my skin, and for the people that I came from.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has enabled myself, and the group of urban aboriginal youth living in Canada, to have a voice. Upon entering the city of New York, I was filled with the feeling of being completely overwhelmed, and a little afraid on what was going to occur. Yet through the training I became open to the issues that indigenous peoples face on a global scale, as well as what we can do collaboratively to promote effective change within our communities.

Being a young, Anishinaabe woman from Canada, I realize the struggles we face, but also the work we can do to aid other regions in order for a brighter future for indigenous peoples living around the world."

Anyone who knows about the Indigenous Rights struggles waged in the last half century on the international stage - knows the prominence that Canadian Indigenous men and women have earned by living at the tip of the spear. Living legends come readily to mind like Chief Willie Little-Child, Kenneth Deer, Ron Lameman and others...but Mark my words - for I have seen some of the leaders of tomorrow, and they include women like Danika Little-Child, Jessica Yee, and Andrea Landry. Rest assured...our future is in very capable hands!

Damon Gerard Corrie

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Damon is also the Founder & President of the Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations (www.pantribalconfederacy.com) & Barbados Representative of the United Confederation of Taino People

(UCTP); and CARICOM Commissioner on the Indigenous Commission for Communications Technologies in the Americas (ICCTA). A registered participant in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), member of the Indigenous Caucus of the Americas Working Group (since 2000) on the Draft Declaration of the Americas; and sole Caribbean Representative on the Planning Committee of the IV Indigenous Leaders Summit of the Americas (ILSA) - both at the Organization of American States (OAS).