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Mobilizing Awareness

On June 18, 2015, Steve Heinrichs, (left) and Leah Gazan (right) joined a large group of supporters of the Indigenous community to hear Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger apologize to thousands of 60s scoop survivors for the impact it had on individuals, family and community. The 60s Scoop refers to the adoption of First Nation/Metis children in Canada between the years of 1960 and the mid-1980s, a time when an abnormally high number of adoptions took place. In many instances, children were literally scooped from their homes and communities without the knowledge or consent of families.

Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada Director, Indigenous Relations; and Leah Gazan of Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation, Faculty/Special Projects Coordinator at University of Winnipeg and President of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, are deeply committed to relationships with the Indigenous community. The two are engaged in mobilizing awareness through a number of social justice movements.

Mennonite Church Canada invites you to share these Celebration Snapshots with your Congregation through your church newsletter, bulletin board, website or other communication avenue. They take no more than 2 minutes to read.

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11



From left to right. Back row: George Veith and Tobia Vendenburg Veith (China), Jeanette Hanson and Todd Hanson (serving China via Rosthern, Sask). Middle row: Christina Bartel Barkman (Philippines), Lillian Nicolson (Burkina Faso), Thanh Pham (preparing for ministry in Cambodia), Nhien Pham (serving Vietnam from Vancouver, B.C.). Front row: Darnell Barkman (Philippines), Norm Nicolson (Burkina Faso), Taryn and Nathan Dirks (Botswana).

Global Impact

Your church is at work around the world! At Mission Seminar 2015, Witness Workers shared their stories and an infectious passion for spreading God's love globally.

"Mennonite Church Canada congregations are supporting some of the most talented and creative leaders/missionaries who can all tell stories about love, friendship and even painful loss in their lives of service," says Darnell Barkman, who serves with his wife Christina in the Philippines. "Thank you to all of our supporters. We represent you to the global church and we bring their love and stories back. Your investment in us is a great part of what God is doing in the world today."

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Nick Spaling (front, right), professional NHL hockey player together with kids from Camp Assiniboia, Manitoba.

Faith, On the Ice and Off

Seven year NHL veteran Nick Spaling (front, right) says it isn't always easy to play professional hockey and avoid the temptations that arise. For the past four summers, Nick, who was recently traded to the Toronto Maple Leafs, shared his message with young people at Mennonite Church camps across Canada. This summer, he visited Camps with Meaning at the Camp Assiniboia location in Manitoba. Spaling encouraged them to work hard for their goals and surround themselves with mentors who have strong Christian values. He has also inspired campers at Camp Squeah (Mennonite Church British Columbia), Camp Valaqua (Mennonite Church Alberta), and Silver Lake Camp (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada). These campers led by Joel Burkholder (left front, seated) were especially excited to receive autographed pictures.

"To be in my position and be able to come out and share a day with the kids is great. If that helps in any way, kids in their faith or kids in different aspects of life, it's the reason I'm here," said Spaling. Nick is a member of the Mennonite Church Canada family through Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ontario.

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Hermann Heidebrecht (left) and Korey Dyck (right) inside the Mennonite Heritage Centre, the new home of a database with 100,000 names of Russian Mennonite descendants.

Reconnecting Through New Database

Descendants of Russian Mennonites now have a new resource to help them connect with long-lost relatives. On June 29, Hermann Heidebrecht (left) chair of Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur geistlichen Unterstützung in Mennonitengemeinden (AGUM), a partner of Mennonite Church Canada, presented the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (MHCA) with a 100,000 name database for the descendants of Russian Mennonites who did not manage to escape Russia before the Iron Curtain rose in 1945. Up to 200,000 Mennonites were left behind. Ties were severed with those who had managed to escape.

Since the project began to gather database information in 1972, a number of those Russian Mennonites found their way to Canada, relocating primarily to south-eastern Manitoba. "This new database provides a wealth of information," says Korey Dyck, Director, MHCA (right). "Everyone in Canada with a Russian Mennonite heritage will find a relative on that list."

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