



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Aboriginal Solidarity Day – a time to celebrate and reflect

For several years, the Hospital Employees' Union has taken part in celebrations across the province to recognize Aboriginal Solidarity Day on June 21.

It's a day for Canadians to acknowledge the contributions that Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) have made, and continue to make, to this country.

And this year marks an especially important time in our history, following Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent public apology for the abhorrent treatment of Aboriginal children in Canada's residential schools. Although the apology is long overdue, many First Nations people say it's a significant step toward healing and moving forward.

"HEU stands with all Aboriginal peoples in Canada in saying that it's now time to move from apology to action," says secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. "June 21 provides an important opportunity for those of us in the labour movement to join with all Canadians to fight for the abolition of discrimination – in all forms – that still exists, and demand a better quality of life for our First Nations citizens."

Darcy says it's crucial for Canadians to be reminded of the ongoing struggles our First Nations people face, like inadequate housing, unsafe water, unresolved land claims, unemployment, poor health care, and poverty – conditions that all Canadians should speak out against.

At HEU's recent women's conference, Cree singer/songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie spoke about the importance of communities working together through meaningful conversation to make positive changes in the world we share.

"There are still old pockets of old thinking around and you can't let it get you down," said Sainte-Marie. "If we were all camping on the ground together, we'd notice the commonalities among us... Solidarity is everything... Women and men can work together. Opposing viewpoints can work together. We just have to communicate."

Aboriginal Solidarity Day was first proclaimed by Canada's governor-general in 1996.

For more information or a list of events in your community, please check your local city council or visit the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website at <www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>.

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