



## Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

November, 2017

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### **Annual Accountability Report 2016-2017**

It's hard to believe but we're already approaching the end of 2017. It's time to share some of the accomplishments of our work over the past year, and to ask you to please **donate to support this work**.

Read our Annual Report at <http://report.quakerservice.ca> and find out how your donation is helping us to bring peaceful and healing approaches to conflict right here, right now. Please stand up for peace and justice and make a donation to CFSC.

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### **Big news about UN Declaration Bill**

Readers of the E-News will be familiar by now with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We've worked with partners for many years to raise its profile as the human rights instrument essential to promoting just relationships between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples.

For the past two years we've worked continuously with partners to call for Canada to do more than just say it supports the *Declaration*. We've called for a legislative framework to ensure full and effective implementation. Making Canada's laws consistent with the *Declaration* is a major and important step in the ongoing process of reconciliation. The federal government has been hesitant to commit to a legislation framework.

Last week, at a symposium we helped organize, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould surprised everyone by announcing that the government of Canada had *changed its position*. It will endorse private members Bill C-262 and support the full implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*!

This is a huge win and a testament to the power of quietly convening people to discuss important issues. We've been there along the way, helping key groups work through their conflicting viewpoints and needs. Sometimes this quiet diplomacy can help major change take shape, change that once seemed impossible.

If you feel led, you may wish to contact your member of parliament to express your pleasure with Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould's announcement, and that you hope your MP will be supporting Bill C-262.

Watch the video of Jody Wilson-Raybould's speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHjFI8mpzo&feature=youtu.be>

Read the joint statement from May 2016 in support of Bill C-262:

<http://quakerservice.ca/news/bill-c-262-essential-framework-implementation-un-declaration/>

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## **Synthetic biology conference a success**

It's rare to have the chance to hear from a leading expert in their field. But it's rarer still to hear them offer a presentation together with a leading critic of that field! This is just what happened at the highly successful conference on synthetic biology recently hosted at Friends House in Toronto. We're working to get the conference video edited and online in high definition. In the meantime, you can access

- presentation slides: <https://www.slideshare.net/CanadianCouncilofChurches>
- low-definition recordings: <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/redesigning-the-tree-of-life>
- the World Council of Churches article: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/re-engineering-life-forms-church-forum-raises-concerns> and
- the *Anglican Journal* article: <http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/food-culture-food-life-food-ritual-ethics-synthetic-biology-examined-conference/> about the event.

You can also learn more about synthetic biology at <http://quakerservice.ca/syntheticbiology>

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## **Joint letter supports disease treatment centre**

In an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, prominent human rights and environmental organizations urged the federal and provincial governments to ensure people from the Grassy Narrows First Nation have access to specialized, long term medical care for mercury poisoning. Seven groups, including CFSC, have written in support of the Grassy Narrows First Nation appeal for the creation of a specialized facility in their community to meet the needs of those suffering from the effects of mercury poisoning resulting from contamination of their river system.

"The basic human rights of the people of Grassy Narrows have been denied for decades. A medical treatment centre is a step to recognize and respond to the terrible injustices imposed and ignored by industry and governments. We stand with the people of Asubpeeschoseewagong to insist that they have access within their community to the specialized health care they need," said CFSC Clerk Derek Nice.

Read the open letter at: <http://quakerservice.ca/news/joint-open-letter-grassy-narrows/>

Earlier this month it was revealed that for decades the governments have had credible and compelling evidence of ongoing mercury contamination at Grassy Narrows, but withheld this

information from the people of Grassy Narrows. Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott has suggested willingness to build the necessary health facilities:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/ottawa-mercury-health-facilities-grassy-narrows-1.4423317>

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### **CFSC endorses *Multi-Faith Charter***

Canadian Friends Service Committee joined a long list of endorsers (including Quaker agencies and Meetings) to a *Multi-Faith Charter* brought to the president overseeing the climate change conference in Bonn, Germany that happened earlier this month. The full text of the charter is at:

<http://quakerservice.ca/news/cfsc-endorses-multi-faith-charter/>

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### **Research scholarships available**

Canadian Friends Historical Association (CFHA) offers a University research scholarship and a high school student essay award program. CFHA's hope is to increase awareness of the history of Friends in Canada. Find out more about the criteria and download the application documents at

<http://cfha.info/founders.html>

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### **Canadian School of Peacebuilding sessions announced**

The Canadian School of Peacebuilding will be held again at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg in June 2018. From June 11-15 session one will include: Peacebuilding Approaches to Violent Extremism, Peace Skills – Dialogue as a Peacebuilding Process, Financial Empowerment for Development and Peacebuilding, Conflict and Development Issues in Indigenous Communities, and Justice and Peace – Ecumenical Horizons.

From June 18-22 session two will cover: Who is My Neighbour? Ethics in a Bordered World, Trauma, Peacebuilding, and Resilience – Level 1, and Arts-based Approaches to Social Change. To find out more or register for either session visit: <http://csop.cmu.ca>

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