

On Thursday, June 17, 2010 a very special event took place at the Iroquois Lacrosse Arena. Students from Six Nations and Haldimand County came together to meet their pen pals they had been writing to all year. The Pen Pal Committee is extremely appreciative of the contributions of the following people and community organizations.

Thank you to all teachers and students of Grand Erie District School Board, Brant Haldimand –Norfolk Catholic District School Board and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada who participated in letter writing throughout the year. Thank you to all of the parent and community volunteers who helped to ensure all events ran smoothly and to the area artists and media who attended to witness and archive this event.

Thank you to the people who participated in the opening to help set the tone for the day; Layne Smith and Angela Burning for the Thanksgiving Address and Sarah Stacey for sharing a beautiful poem of friendship, Leroy Hill who very eloquently explained the meaning of the Friendship Wampum Belt, Craig Wardrop from Ontario Power Generation for sharing kind words of friendship, Hubert Buck and the Smoke Dancers for the impressive singing and dancing, and the staff from the Iroquois Lacrosse Store who explained and demonstrated the game of Lacrosse.

This event was personally and financially supported by some very generous community businesses and organizations. They are: Ontario Power Generation, The Dreamcatcher Fund, Tim Horton's, and the Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (Brantford). We give thanks for your kind support and encouragement.

It was exciting to share in the planning of the individual stations that were prepared and coordinated by some very special people and community organizations; Stoneridge Day Care and Ontario Early Years Haldimand-Norfolk joined together to present the FUN activity of 'Old School Games', Ganohkwa Sra and Haldimand-Norfolk REACH joined together to present the COMMUNITY activity of beading bracelets and exchanging friendship keepsakes. Thank you to Ms. Robin Staats and the many volunteers for supervising the FRIENDSHIP activity of making Two Row Wampum key chains. Thank you to Mr. Ken Maracle for delivering your special historical knowledge at the UNDERSTANDING station. Thank you to Mr. Lyle Anderson, Mr. Duey Longboat and Ms. Niki Skye for your guidance and social singing and dancing at the RESPECT station. A very special thank you to our wonderfully talented chefs, Mr. Alan Buehner of the Good Shepherd Centre and Mr. Brian Skye (and their assistants), who worked tirelessly to create a wonderful sampling of traditional Iroquoian foods at the KINDNESS station. Thanks to the many volunteers who coordinated amazingly to feed groups of 120-160 in 30 minute intervals.

We give thanks to our special guest, Ms. Susan Aglukark, who sang two very special songs and shared her heart-warming experience of having a pen pal. She spoke about the value of sharing our cultures and the value of friendship in our daily lives.

We think all would agree that the venue was a contributing factor in making this event a memorable one. The staff at the Iroquois Lacrosse Arena were consistently helpful and accommodating throughout the planning and delivery of the event.

Thank you all for believing in the value of friendship and community. The Pen Pal Committee.

