



Mayor Kasenberg's Statement on Indigenous Reconciliation and Canada Day 2021

June 28, 2021

Like so many other people in our country, the last two weeks have left me with a sense of disconsolation as efforts have led to revelations about the findings of mass graves at the sites of two former residential schools for Indigenous children. I am beyond shock, beyond grief, and must channel my indignation, my anger, towards demanding action on reconciliation. We have a stain on our nation, and it is not only about our reputation I speak – but a stain on our very souls. Many living today are resolved to walk justly and do right against our country's unfortunate history in managing affairs with this land's Indigenous peoples. I am so resolved. It is to us to keep our federal government responsive and moving forward on the 76 of 94 calls to action that specifically speak to the Government of Canada.

The actions of this country, its institutions, and its contractors have done a grave harm to Indigenous peoples spanning generations. I want to personally extend my support to Indigenous peoples, and indicate that I am at your call, ready to learn should you wish to teach me, ready to act should you wish to advise me. I do not want to be a burden in this request, but a blessing. I commit to the personal and professional work needed on my part.

It is past time for reconciliation. It is past time for justice. It is past time to break down very real barriers that keep Indigenous peoples from living free, full lives. There is work for all of us to do, and to that work I make my humble I pledge.

I urge all of us to engage in the work of understanding and of justice-delivering throughout the balance of this year. Take a morning, and read about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its 94 Calls to Action. Find other great resources. As they are willing, spend some time sitting with Indigenous peoples and learning from their experiences. Refute wrong information. Start asking questions and demanding action to hold public officials and institutions accountable.

In Atwood, there is a continuing intent to execute Canada Day activities. Atwood's Canada Day reflects the hearts and experience of a community. We put on Canada Day festivities as acts of love and service. We hustle to offer hospitality that is gracious and noteworthy. We try to

create a little joy mid-summer. We try to celebrate diversity in our community. No other place of my acquaintance does Canada Day like Atwood does Canada Day.

This year, the Atwood Lions Club, of which I am a member, is trying to create a balance between an obvious need for reconciliation and the expectations for the experience of community. In plans for Canada Day, we have included meaningful actions to make our own efforts towards reconciliation. I will contribute the reading of a story for all ages, The Train, which tells of the experience of Indigenous children readying themselves for the train to school. Through this and other actions, The Atwood Lions are working to create a place and time for our community to reflect.

I believe in community. I believe in the power of community to create lives that are abundant, that include joy and sorrow, and that push us to reach out and provide service to each other. And I remain committed to hospitable efforts, in this case Atwood-created and Atwood-given – because this, in itself, is a small commitment to reconciliation and a better, more just country.

Mayor Todd Kasenberg
Municipality of North Perth

