

June 1, 2011



DISTRICT COUNCIL

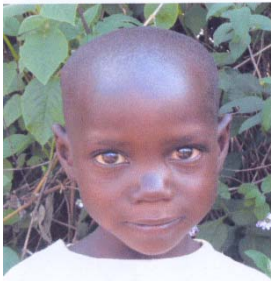
HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER'S REPORT

I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend to the death your right to say it.

- Voltaire

Human Rights...yours to protect.

1. Foster Child Organizations



Recently I attended a concert at the Mary Webb Centre in Highgate. Jimmy Rankin of the Rankin Family from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia played a classy group of songs to a sold-out crowd. As usual, World Vision accompanied him [as they always do with the Rankins]. I looked over the many pictures of Third World Children that needed assistance. For about \$30 a month, a lot can be done for these needy children. I chose Sara Irakoze from Burundi. One scientific study of 178 nations rated Burundi's population as having the lowest satisfaction with life in the world. It is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. As a side note, you may be using two of Burundi's main exports at Tim Hortons...coffee and sugar. Sara is nearly four years old. She carries water to help her family. For the cost of twenty coffees, her family can live a lot better with my monthly donation. I do recommend that OSSTF members consider fostering a child through the number of organizations that try to help young children in underprivileged countries to have basic human rights that we take so much for granted.

2. Human Rights Conference

In April, I was fortunate to attend the first OSSTF Human Rights Conference in five years. It was interesting to note that the OSSTF members came from all education workers including teachers, custodians, and educational assistant



workers. Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians was the keynote speaker. She centered on how Canada's water may be put at risk by the proposed Free Trade deal with the European Union. She also focused on the issue of pension plans, including the Ontario Teachers' Pension, being more socially responsible when they invest pension plan money. The panel discussions brought up the recent summer constraints on our civil and human rights. This centered on the actions of both our Federal and Provincial Governments at the G20 rallies in Toronto. The demonstrations taking place in Africa and the Mid-East were also examined.



The loss of some collective agreements was also a topic of interest. Although delegates were very supportive of the idea that the next conference will take place in three years, many thought that the OSSTF Human Rights Conferences should be held on an annual basis.

3. First Nation Workshop [2011 OSSTF Human Rights Conference]

I was fortunate to attend the First Nation Workshop. The presentation by the Six Nation Iroquois speakers was quite enlightening since my contact with First Nation students has been limited to Lambton-Kent Ojibway students. I was surprised that, although they knew their cultural heritage quite well, they only had limited information on our First Nation students. I also observed the other participants from across Ontario and Quebec had varying knowledge about native Canadians. A number of handouts were distributed. The moderator of the workshop offered to send more information to the participants. I have just received a flash drive that contains many documents and web sites on First Nation culture which I am currently examining and I will prepare a report for the September District Council Meeting.



4. Human Rights Newsletter



I am currently looking into the possibility of setting up a District 10 Human Rights e-Newsletter for the 2011-2012 school year. I receive correspondence from a number of sources on Human Rights, many within the educational systems. In addition, a number of news events often deal with situations OSSTF should actively take note.

***Dave Edwards, Human Rights Officer
OSSTF District 10***