

December 17 2015

Dallas Yellowfly
3 Crows Productions

Dear Dallas,

I am writing to thank you for the outstanding contribution you made to our Social Justice Conference this past November. I have been associated with the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District since the late 1980's and have been fortunate to work with many students from the Katzie Band over that time. It is an aspect of my work that I value greatly. We are long overdue in bringing the Katzie history and this country's Aboriginal history into our schools and making this part of the dialogue and learning in our classrooms across the school district. In my experience, the presentations that you, Cyril Pierre and Joe Ginger provided for students attending the Social Justice Conference were a first for our school district. You provided an unforgettable experience to those students fortunate enough to attend the sessions. I want to extend my deep thanks to you, Cyril and Joe. I am certain that the presentations about residential school experiences come at a high personal cost to those who speak of them.

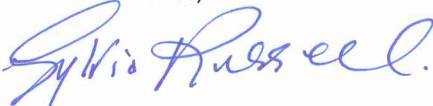
You ended the two day Social Justice conference with your keynote presentation. When students entered the gym at Riverside Centre, they looked tired and spent. They had experienced so much over the two days, and some of the information had clearly impacted them greatly. You began your keynote with the story Qwalena, which engaged, thrilled and excited the students. The sense of magic and mysticism you created in that school gymnasium was gripping. The students and adults, including me, were all transfixed both by your storytelling ability and also by your powerful use of multi-media.

Your final presentation to the students about your family history was, in my opinion, the most accessible presentation that our students will ever hear in terms of the personal costs of residential schools across the generations of one family. You presented the story in a way the audience understood. It was a factual account, told in a clear and open way, and it was an important experience for our students. Your presence, your talents and your story were incredibly compelling. It did not surprise me to see a young man presenting you with one of his canvasses at the end of your presentation. These sorts of gifts from students happen only rarely, and that it happened that afternoon speaks to the deeply felt emotions that you evoked in the students.

Dallas, thank you for your involvement in our Social Justice Conference. I am happy to support your work through this letter and offer my recommendation to other school districts who might be considering offering your presentation.

I hope that you have a wonderful winter holiday.

Warmest wishes,



Sylvia Russell
Superintendent of Schools – SD42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows

cc: Patricia Giesinger, Principal – Westview Secondary School
Dani Zagar, Teacher – Westview Secondary School