Caring for the Generation we will never know and always love

Rethinking Development Conference: Antigonish, Nova Scotia, June 21, 2005
Call them and they were never gone
Five hundred years ago, Europeans thought they could raise our children better than we could - here are the results
Residential Schools
“What if they squeeze all the Indian out of us? What will be left? What do they want, Howard? We’re Indians. That’s it. That’s what we are”
The last residential school closed in 1996.
There are between 22,500 and 28,000 First Nations children in the care of the Canadian child welfare system... three times the number that attended residential schools in the 1940’s.

Aboriginal children are less likely to be reported for physical and sexual abuse than non Aboriginal children – neglect (poverty, substance misuse, and poor housing) are the key reasons why Aboriginal come into child welfare care

Trocme, Knoke Blackstock, 2005
Disconnect between judgment of risk and source of risk

- Primary source of risk resulting in removals
- Society
- Family
- Child
- Likely focus of Decision to Return
- Focus of Assessment of Risk
The Way Forward

- Respecting that Indigenous peoples are in the best position to care for Indigenous children (Cornell and Kalt, 2002; Chandler and Lalonde, 2003)
- Equal access to resources (MacDonald and Ladd, 2000; Nadjiwan and Blackstock, 2003)
- Focused and broad based social activism to address structural risk to communities
It begins with understanding that Reconciliation is before us not behind us.
Reconciliation: Its about the best of our love
Let our biggest legacy to the generation we will never know be the best of our love.
Reconciliation is more than freeing an oppressed people, it is about freeing our oppressed humanity.
It means understanding we all have one hand for giving and another for receiving … just like she does
It means teaching children to give the best of their love and respect to themselves, to others and to Mother Nature.
It means having fun together
It means honoring what has been true since the beginning
It is about sharing our culture and wisdom from one generation to another... to another... to another...
IN THE FUTURE, CHILDREN WILL BE...
Its about feeling safe and welcome in the lands that have been our home for millennia
It's about understanding that one of the greatest gifts we can give a child is the ability to dream....
“In the future, children will have Peace and be stronger, healthy, safe, and special.”
Its about understanding that culture is passing a society’s essence from one generation to another… including its love
Its about understanding that youth engagement is about building the next generation

Jocelyn Formsma
This is a beautiful new world in which we can learn to work together-A wonderful new world that our children can thrive for inner peace, and happiness always and forever

Olivia Sam
It means understanding that the Creator gave each culture a different way of understanding the world—only together can we save it and each other.
Reconciliation: Give the best of our love… another generation is depending on us

Children’s art work courtesy of Caring for First Nations Children Society,