

their lives.... We are working on a healing journey between the City of Wetaskiwin and the Cree First Nations.... As you come into Wetaskiwin from the south, you will see that our [city] sign is in Cree syllabics as well—that welcomes you.... We still have a long way to go. We are taking baby steps in the healing process. But we are working together for better communities, to understand and respect the differences and similarities in our cultures.²⁸⁸

At the Alberta National Event in 2014, Mayor Elliot, who was also inducted as a TRC Honorary Witness, offered an expression of reconciliation:

Our community is trying to learn more about the Survivors and the residential schools. Our schools, churches, and community have made cupcakes and birthday cards for the big birthday party tomorrow. Members of our community have been here for the last two days.... They are very, very supportive and they want to learn. We are trying to learn more about and understand the effects of residential schools and our friends from Maskwacis because we want to be good neighbours.²⁸⁹

The cities of Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, and Calgary have also issued proclamations declaring a year of reconciliation. In 2014, Vancouver went a step further, declaring that it was now a “City of Reconciliation,” and it has established a long-term framework for partnership and relationship building with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations and urban Aboriginal people.²⁹⁰ At the British Columbia National Event, TRC Honorary Witness Mayor Gregor Robertson said,

We are blessed to have so many different cultures in this place, and all of us who come from afar ... have been incredibly lucky to be able to come to this place. Many of us come from families, from clans, from cultures, that were wiped out, that had to leave. We were forced off our territories, and somehow we’ve managed to make a home here. That’s largely because of those First Nations ancestors who welcomed us ... who made it possible for refugees, for people of broken cultures all over the world to settle here, to stay here, even though our predecessors and our ancestors turned it right around and terrible things have happened. I think the strength that is in Aboriginal peoples across Canada is something for the world to learn from, something that we can apply to the big decisions that we have to make in our governments, our communities, our cities.

When I hear the strength in Survivors, when I hear the phrase “brave children,” when I think about brave Elders, I think “brave culture”—that bravery and that determination to learn from this past and to make the best decisions about how we look after each other, how we take care of each other, and those that need that help the most.... That we lift each other up; that we take care of the land and the sea that we inherited for the generations to come.²⁹¹