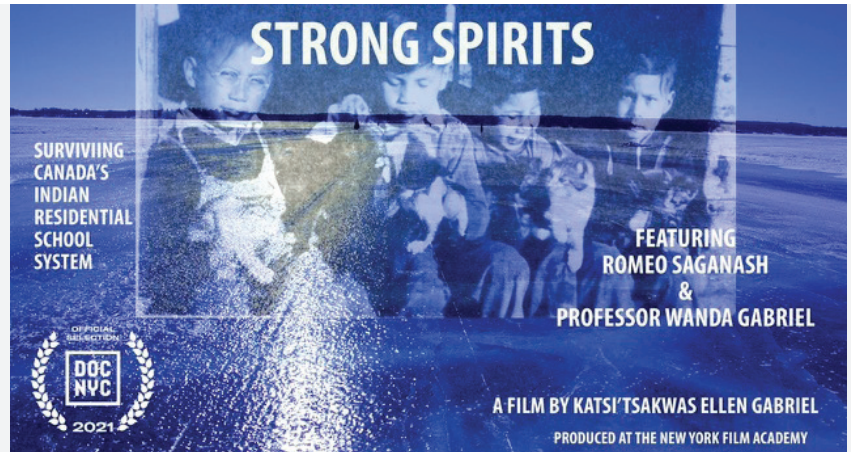


Quaker Concern

Strong Spirits Soar in New York

By Jennifer Preston



In 2021 CFSC's Reconciliation Fund provided grant funds to long-time CFSC partner Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel for her studies in documentary filmmaking at the New York Film Academy (NYFA). Ellen is an artist and land defender from the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Kanehsatà:ke. We are thrilled to support this critical decolonizing work. In her application to CFSC, Ellen described the Conservatory Master's thesis class:

This has thoroughly enriched my life and I am gaining new skills in this medium based in good storytelling abilities through experts in their fields. This will help my advocacy work through the medium of documentary.

As part of her studies, Ellen directed *Strong Spirits*, a short documentary dealing with Canada's Indian Residential Schools and the ongoing legacy of the genocidal programs. This film was then selected by the New York Film Academy to be run in DOCS NYC, the largest documentary film festival in the United States.

Here's how the festival described *Strong Spirits*:

Indigenous peoples' identity, language, culture, and value systems have been persistently under attack due to ongoing systemic racism embedded in Canada's colonial laws, which ruptured the family unit. This story tells of the strength and resiliency of Indigenous peoples to retain their identity.

As *Strong Spirits* was the only selection by a Canadian film maker, Ellen was also invited to participate in *Only In New York*—a round table opportunity for filmmakers who had works-in-progress to take meetings with industry figures with roles in distribution, financing, grant-making, co-production, and more.

“This will help my advocacy work.”

Ellen describes her film:

Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced obstacles to the existence and respect for their languages, cultures, and family units. As has been recently confirmed by Indian Residential School survivors, over 6,000 Indigenous children lost their lives in these state run schools. Romeo Saganash of the Eeyou (Cree) nation of James Bay tells his story of survival and the pain in losing an older brother at an Indian Residential School.

This is a story about surviving genocide, as told by Romeo Saganash, and the impacts of historical trauma upon Indigenous families and communities as explained by Professor Wanda Gabriel.

As an Indigenous activist and advocate for the past three decades, I am honoured and pleased to be part of the NYFA showcase for the world to discover the stories, strength/resilience, and spirit of Indigenous peoples.

Continued on pg 7



Why abolish prisons?

A short and simple infographic made by CFSC highlights why Friends nationally have, since 1981, supported replacing prisons with more healing and life-affirming responses to crime:

<https://QuakerService.ca/AbolishPrisons>

Popular event videos now available

Last year was our 90th anniversary. To celebrate, we hosted an event each month that gave a particular Friend the chance to share the story of how they came to be involved with Quaker service work. The series included current and past CFSC members, staff, and donors. Videos of these sessions are now online:

<https://QuakerService.ca/GetToKnowThee>

Indigenous rights research

CFSC is part of a project at the University of British Columbia looking at decolonizing settler states and implementation of Indigenous peoples' human rights. This project is partnered with academics and Indigenous peoples in Canada, New Zealand, and Finland. The grant received from the government of Canada for this work is part of the newly launched Global Indigenous Rights Research Network, where CFSC's Jennifer Preston serves as co-director.

Reform criminal records system

We joined over 60 groups in urging the federal government to reform Canada's outdated criminal records system. We want criminal records to be automatically sealed once someone successfully completes their sentence and lives in the community without further criminal convictions. This change will promote reintegration and workforce participation, and improve community safety:

<https://QuakerService.ca/CriminalRecords>

Keeping up the pressure on Saudi arms sales

A wide range of labour, peace, human rights, and faith groups from across Canada continue to pressure the government about its arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The sales are in violation of Canadian and international law and have resulted in Canada being singled out as one of the countries fueling the brutal war on Yemen:

<https://quakerservice.ca/SaudiArmsSalesDec2021>

Addressing corporate abuses

CFSC has joined two campaigns to address abuses committed by Canadian corporations. One campaign has drafted model legislation that it calls on Canada to adopt. The law would require Canadian companies to undertake human rights and environmental due diligence throughout their global operations and supply chains:

<https://quakerservice.ca/HumanRightsDueDiligence>

The other campaign calls for Canada to support the creation of a new international crime: ecocide—mass damage and destruction of ecosystems:

<https://QuakerService.ca/Ecocide>

Military carbon emissions

In the run-up to the COP climate conference in Glasgow, CFSC joined over 200 organizations from around the world in raising the urgent issues of military carbon emissions. The campaign made strides in getting people talking about this issue, but far more action is needed:

<https://QuakerService.ca/MilitaryEmissions>

International Day of Peace

Again in 2021 CFSC joined hundreds of groups in sending a letter to all delegations at the United Nations urging, among other things, that they refocus on peace, justice and inclusion:

<https://QuakerService.ca/PeaceDay2021PDF>

Quaker Concern

Quaker Concern is the newsletter of Canadian Friends Service Committee, the peace and social justice agency Quakers in Canada. Since 1931, CFSC has been a small team but has achieved a great deal.

Donations are received with gratitude. The generous support of individual donors makes all of the work described here possible. CFSC issues tax receipts for donations over \$10.

Read current and past issues online at QuakerConcern.ca. Contact us to switch to a digital subscription.

Canadian Friends Service Committee

60 Lowther Ave, Toronto, ON M5R 1C7

☎ (416) 920-5213

✉ info@quakerservice.ca

📌 quakerservice.ca

📱 [f](https://www.facebook.com/CFSCQuakers) [t](https://twitter.com/CFSCQuakers) [i](https://www.instagram.com/CFSCQuakers) [@CFSCQuakers](https://www.linkedin.com/company/CFSCQuakers)

Charitable Number: 13214 6549 RR0001

Civil Disobedience as a Response to Fossil Fuel Expansion

By Ruth Walmsley



Prayer Circle Direct Action Group risking arrest at Trans Mountain work site, Coquitlam, British Columbia, May 31, 2021. Credit: @donnaclarksnaps

On September 9th, 2021, I was arrested in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience, as part of an inter-faith prayer circle direct action. On that day, a group of us entered an active work zone in a forested area in Burnaby, British Columbia (BC), effectively stopping tree cutting in preparation for construction of the TransMountain Expansion Project (TMX).

We sat in prayer and meditation, and sang songs honouring the sacredness of water, in order to make the statement that this desecration of Mother Earth must stop. This expansion of new fossil fuel infrastructure will result in an increase in fossil fuel emissions, at a time when the science is abundantly clear that to maintain a liveable planet we need to transition away from burning fossil fuels.

As a person of faith, I am mindful of the moral imperative to think seven generations into the future when making decisions. We are called to leave the world in a condition that will continue to support life as we know it, for present and future generations. This is clearly not happening. The continued expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure, such as TMX, during a declared climate emergency, is in violation of this moral imperative.

We are in uncharted territory. Climate change is irreversibly altering life on Earth, and threatening humanity's ability to survive.

I am a mother of two adult children. Access to the basic requirements of life such as clean water, air, and food should be their birthright. They are the first generation ever facing the reality that this birthright is being stolen, by a capitalist, colonial system that allows greed and profit to take precedence over people and planet.

The shameful tragedy is that we have known for decades that we are extracting and consuming fossil fuels at a rate that far exceeds Earth's capacity to maintain a stable climate, yet this has been allowed to continue. NO MORE. Those of us who are awake will no longer allow this system to continue. We will not stand by and do nothing while one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction within decades—more than ever before in human history—as a direct result of human activity.¹

“My heart breaks with the knowledge of the damage that has already been done... But we can do something.”

My heart breaks with the knowledge of the damage that has already been done, for the lives we can never bring back. I grieve the reality that life as we have known it is not something my children and future generations can be assured of. But we can do something. We can wake up and refuse to allow the system that perpetuates this destruction to continue.

I have pursued many different avenues to express my opposition to the TMX:

- I co-founded the community organization Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion in 2012, which is still active to this day.
- I applied to be an intervener in the National Energy Board hearings in January 2014, on the basis of my deep concern about potential adverse impacts this project would have on myself and my family. The Board rejected my application to participate as an intervener and I was not even allowed to submit a letter of comment.
- I spoke before the Ministerial Panel appointed by the Trudeau government after their election in 2016.

Continued on next pg

Civil Disobedience continued

- I have met with my member of Parliament, written dozens of letters, and signed countless petitions urging the government to cancel this project.
- I have organized and attended numerous marches and rallies in protest of this project.

At this point, with construction of the TMX proceeding, I feel I have no option left to express my deeply held conscientious objection, other than nonviolent civil disobedience.

I experienced what I would call a spiritual leading to take action by witnessing against the expansion of new fossil fuel infrastructure and the resulting destruction to the earth caused by increased carbon emissions.

It was vitally important for me to know that I had the full support of my spiritual community behind me in taking this action. I asked for and received a clearness committee from my Vancouver Monthly Meeting, which helped me discern the rightness of moving forward to risk arrest. Once clarity was reached, my committee continued on as a committee of care. I felt very held by my Meeting, as well as by Friends from across Canada who sent supportive messages.

I am charged with criminal contempt of court for defying an injunction that was granted by the courts to Trans Mountain. The severity of the sentences has escalated in an attempt to deter people from protesting. What began three and a half years ago as a \$500 fine and community service is now two to four weeks in prison. That's what those of us being arrested now are facing.

I believe in the rule of law as a principle that defines the rights and responsibilities of people to coexist peacefully in society. I do not take lightly my decision to break the law by peacefully participating in a prayer circle blocking the construction of the TMX. However, my conscience compels me to act in the most powerful way that I can, to prevent any further destruction of whatever chance is left for a liveable world for my children and future generations.

The action I am taking is also in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of this land, who do not give their consent to this project.² I recognize that this territory where I live, the city of Burnaby, where this pipeline is being built, has been the home of the Coast

Salish people since time immemorial. Canada fully endorses the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The UN Declaration sets out an explicit requirement to obtain free, prior and informed consent. It affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to make their own decisions about their lives, territories, and futures, and to decide according to their own laws, customs, and traditions whether a project should proceed, be modified, or be rejected.³

“I experienced what I would call a spiritual leading to take action.”

Many strong and courageous people have walked this path before me. They too have stood before the National Energy Board, Ministerial Panel, and courts of law, and brought compelling scientific evidence that demonstrates the dangers and folly of proceeding with the TMX. The evidence is available for anyone who wishes to look.

My decision to engage in peaceful civil disobedience is a deeply personal one. It is one that is motivated by my love for creation and concern for the future of my children and life on Earth. I am witnessing to the truth that Earth is a finite planet, with a limited capacity to sustain life. I have learned that life on Earth involves a reciprocal relationship, and we have forgotten how to pay attention to taking care of this balance.

I am just one person, but I know that I am part of a much larger tide, and I believe that tide is turning. That we cannot continue on the course we are currently on is obvious, and yet the system remains in place that allows it to continue. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Too much has already been lost. Let us see what love can do.



Ruth Walmsley is a member of Vancouver Meeting. She was one of the speakers at an event CFSC hosted in November 2021 to share stories, strategies, and answer questions about nonviolent direct action. Watch a recording at

<https://QuakerService.ca/PeacefulProtest>

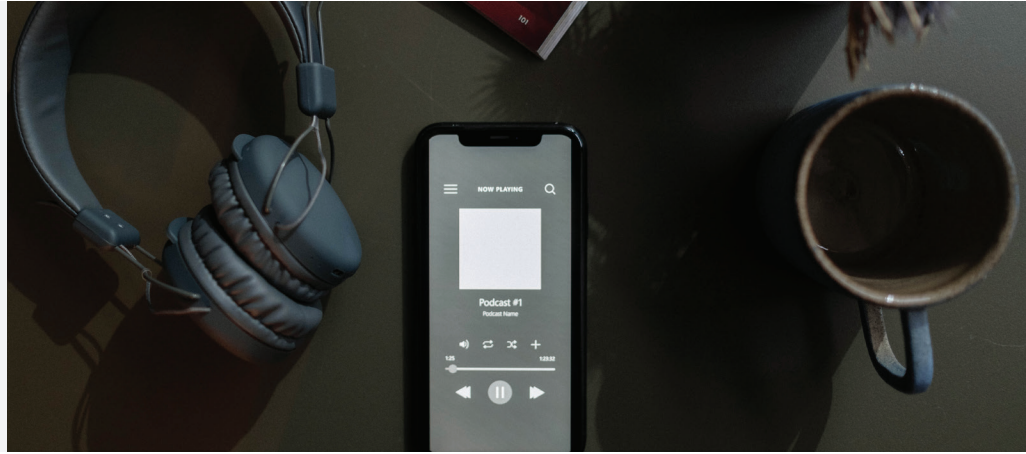
1. UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating', May 6, 2019, <https://bit.ly/UNNatureDecline>

2. Chief Maureen Thomas, "Statement from Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust on Direct Action," Feb 6, 2018, <https://bit.ly/Tsleil-Waututh>

3. Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, February 12, 2019, <https://QuakerService.ca/FPIC>

Inside Outside: Podcast Profiles

By Nancy Russell and Miranda van Haarlem



In our criminal justice work, CFSC seeks to elevate the voices of those with lived experience. We believe that listening to these voices is essential for genuine and meaningful system change. For obvious reasons, direct access to the voices of people currently or formerly incarcerated can be hard to find. Intriguingly, the development of podcasting may have created a partial solution to this problem.

Since the release of the first podcast in 2004, this channel of communication has grown dramatically. The Podcast Exchange estimates that more than eight million Canadian adults listen to podcasts at least once a month. To improve our understanding of the harmful nature of the Canadian criminal justice system by listening, we spent the month of December searching for podcasts that directly present the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons.

Below we summarize three of our podcast discoveries. We recommend that you sit back, click a link you like, and have a listen.

Miranda's favourites

Life Jolt

Hosted by Rosemary Green, this CBC podcast focuses on the lived experience of women involved with Canada's criminal justice system. Rosemary, a former inmate herself, a mother, and a prison reform advocate, explores a comprehensive range of topics from parenting within prison to the gross over-representation of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons.

Episode Four: Parenting from the Pen

In episode four, Rosemary discusses the topic of parenting and motherhood from the inside. The enduring effects of parental incarceration are apparent

as one guest comments "even when my husband walks out the door to go to the store, he (her son) thinks he's leaving him, he says, 'I'm going to miss you, Papa. Are you coming back, Papa?'"

Episode Five: Inside and Indigenous

In episode five, as the title suggests, *Life Jolt* explores the subject of the incarceration of Indigenous women. The podcast touches on Canada's violent colonial history, its impacts, and current injustices.

Miranda says: While I was listening to these episodes, I was deeply affected by how the personal stories and journeys throughout our lives are influenced by those who came before us and will further touch those who come long after we are gone.

Off the Record

Off the Record is hosted by two young men that have lived experience with the criminal justice system and are determined to have open and honest discussions about their lives before, during, and after incarceration.

Season Two, Episodes 4-6: How to Love from the Outside

In a three-episode series, *Off the Record* explores the complications of being involved in a relationship with someone who is incarcerated. We hear from Cindy, who loves and cares for her incarcerated partner. Cindy discusses how communicating with someone on the inside can be emotionally draining, and that staying strong and positive for everyone, including herself, is difficult.

Cindy mentions the lack of support services for individuals in her situation. "If we want to talk about incarceration, and we want to talk about the effects and reducing the effects of incarceration... then support services need to be available."

Continued on next pg

Inside Outside continued

Miranda says: Cindy's deep empathy for others impacted me. She was continuously making sure those around her were comforted and had all the supports they needed. This episode highlighted the need for families to be involved at all stages of the incarceration process, and for information to be collected regarding supports needed for those on the inside and their families.

Nancy's Favourite

Ear Hustle

The *Ear Hustle* website describes the podcasts as "the daily realities of life inside prison shared by those living it, and stories from the outside, post-incarceration."

Season Eight, Episode 67: Tray Tumbler Spork

Ear Hustle has an "inside team" (currently incarcerated) and an "outside team." Both teams interact directly with one another and are featured on the podcast. Members of the outside team take a 30-day challenge and pledge to follow a specific set of constraints similar to those you find in a prison. This means changing the way they eat, get dressed, and exercise for one month. They discuss their experiences directly with inmates at San Quentin Prison (the "inside team").

The intention isn't to duplicate a prison life, but rather to "see how constraint shapes the way we see the world." Members of the outside team are concerned that the challenge might seem disrespectful to the inside team. But incarcerated team members said they felt that the 30-day challenge showed that people on the outside thought about them and cared about those on the inside. They were not forgotten.

Season Eight, Episode 68: Camp Grace

The *Ear Hustle* team follow a group of children into maximum security Salinas Valley State Prison. The children are there to spend two days with their fathers, whom many haven't seen in years.

Camp Grace is an established project. Usually the father-child gatherings take place over a five-day period, which allows for more connection and relationship mending/building. This year, due to the pandemic, the time was reduced to two days.

In this heart-warming podcast we hear the voices of children and their fathers. Before the visit, the children

are asked for "a rose and a thorn." Answers include roses: "my family, my dog, my cat, being able to see my dad" but also "I don't have a rose, just a thorn: I don't know if I want to see my dad." Fathers are also heard, "my kids live far away, they grow up so fast... feels like you are dying inside when you can't take care of your own kids."

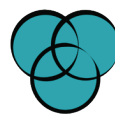
For a father to have access to the Camp Grace experience, they must go for an entire year without any incidents. For one father, this meant exiting a prison gang. For this to be successful, he had to leave his routine and his friends and ask to be moved to another section of the prison. He said that it was "both the hardest and the best thing he ever did." One father's children did not show up for the visit because the mother changed her mind at the last minute.

Nancy says: For me, this podcast emphasized the importance of family and the harmful impact of incarceration on children and their families.

Podcasts such as *Life Jolt*, *Ear Hustle*, and *Off the Record* provide us unique access to the voices of lived experience within the criminal justice system. These podcasts are both impactful and a way to deliver new pathways for listeners and organizations to include lived expertise in the future development of policy and practice.

Many individuals on these podcasts mention the lack of support services available. CFSC is a founding member and provides significant logistical support to the Canadian Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (CCCIP), which works on these issues.

Information about the problems faced by families is available on the coalition's website <https://ChildrenOfIncarceratedParents.ca>. On the "About" page you can find a list of organizations across Canada working collaboratively to strengthen the voices of all impacted by incarceration.



Nancy Russell is CFSC's Criminal Justice Program Coordinator. Miranda van Haarlem is a student from the Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate program at George Brown College currently carrying out a placement with CFSC. For links to the podcast episodes discussed here visit this article on <https://QuakerConcern.ca>.

Strong Spirits continued from pg 1

Systemic racism and the genocide that was the norm must be revealed if there are to be any chances of reconciliation; to learn from the past and move forward into a more enlightened future.

This is about the thousands of Indigenous voices that have been silenced by state policies and education systems. However, as more bodies of Indigenous children in unmarked graves are being found in former Indian Residential Schools, we are witnessing that their spirits are speaking more loudly than any advocate and survivor ever have.

It is the time to learn, to listen, and to heal, and I am very proud that NYFA has included me in their selection of student films to be shown at DOC NYC.

When Romeo Saganash was a Member of Parliament, CFSC supported his work around developing federal legislation to implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. CFSC has also partnered many times on various human rights' projects with Ellen Gabriel, in her community. Providing a grant to Ellen in her growth as a filmmaker extends our support of Indigenous partners who are advocating for decolonization and reconciliation. The strength of residential school survivors, including Romeo, is a breathtaking reminder of the work to be done to be sure all people in this country understand the history and the ongoing legacy of colonial policies. The film also features Professor Wanda Gabriel of McGill University, an expert on trauma, and surviving trauma. Last year CFSC partnered with Ellen in a short video with Professor Gabriel, which can be seen at <https://QuakerService.ca/WandaGabriel>.

Finally, Ellen's reflections on the experience:

NYFA's documentary program lifted my spirits to explore a new medium of creativity. I explored new ways of telling Indigenous stories in a supportive and inspiring atmosphere.

The majority of classes were on Zoom, but I was able to attend one in-person class thanks to the support of CFSC, and I am eternally grateful for this wonderful opportunity and kind gift. CFSC has been an outstanding and supportive ally throughout my work in activism. Niawenkó:wa—a big thank you CFSC.

CFSC's Reconciliation Fund was established in 2017 in response to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and an individual Friend's leading to contribute to reconciliation by donating a portion of his annual income to reconciliation initiatives. The purpose of the Fund is to support the grassroots, community-based efforts of Indigenous people in Canada who are working on cultural and language revitalization and other projects. We are proud and honoured to support such vital reparations work.

Applications to the Reconciliation Fund are found here. We only fund projects that are the work of Indigenous people; our grant maximum is \$2,500.

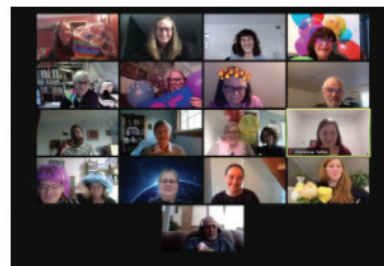


Jennifer Preston is a member of Hamilton Meeting. She serves as CFSC's General Secretary and coordinates the Indigenous Rights program.

Annual Accountability Report 2021

Our Annual Accountability Report is now available. Read it at <https://Report.QuakerService.ca>

"As we let our barriers down or remove them, we move closer to the center of our being. When we tap into that central core, we experience a self-acceptance and a sense of peace that allows us to connect with others without fear or apprehension. It is this connection that transforms us and others."—John Shuford



Members and staff celebrate General Secretary Jennifer Preston's 25th anniversary of working for CFSC, November 2021.

Transformational work

There are a great many charitable organizations out there. But how many of them make it to their 90th birthdays? 2021 marked the 90th anniversary of Canadian Friends Service Committee!

That's 90 years of Quakers quietly working away behind the scenes to open space for dialogue among parties in conflicts, to build trust, and to help people find common ground.

Friends on the Move



Keira Mann started with CFSC as a summer Program Assistant in 2015 and went on to join our small staff team. Keira supported many pieces of CFSC's work including organizing our online events. She has now gone back to school to study graphic design. We wish Keira all the best in her future career!

CFSC staff **Matt Legge**, committee member **Christina Tellez** and associate **Trevor Chandler** facilitated Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting with an interactive program focused around peaceful communication.

Matt and Trevor continued to facilitate the free virtual *Are We Done Fighting?* workshop series. (You can find out more about this popular series and add your name to the waitlist for a future offering at <https://QuakerService.ca/Register>). Matt joined a university class in South Carolina that is studying the book to answer questions and lead a discussion about peace issues.

CFSC staff **Jennifer Preston** presented with Professor **Sheryl Lightfoot** as part of the ecumenical *For the Love of Creation* series on Indigenous

peoples' rights and climate change. She joined associate member **Paul Joffe** to speak at the Salmon Nation conference, giving a presentation titled *Why the UN Declaration Matters: How Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Can Make a Difference, Particularly with Actions on Sustainable Development*.

CFSC hosted four virtual meetings with Indigenous experts to discuss the UN Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as part of a larger project on this topic.

✓ Yes! I want to support justice and peace.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Check boxes to receive additional CFSC materials

- E-Newsletter Quaker Concern by email
 Information about leaving a legacy with my will

Be a sustaining donor

Pre-authorized monthly gifts (from your bank account) are easy to set-up and change at any time.

- Yes, email me sign-up forms!
 Yes, mail me sign-up forms!

Cheque or money order

I/we would like to contribute:

- \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

Mail form to: CFSC, 60 Lowther Ave, Toronto, ON M5R 1C7

Note: One-time or monthly donations can also be made at quakerservice.ca/support. Donors receive a tax receipt.