



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS ANNUAL PEACE EVENT

Join us for the Sixteenth
Grandfather William Commanda Annual Peace Event

A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

Sunday, September 20, 2015

11:00 am - 5:30 pm

**Circle of All Nations Event
at J.K. Wyllie Boardroom,
233 Gilmour Street, Ottawa**

Supporters of Grandfather Commanda, *The Wolf Project*, and *Plenty Canada* invite you to the annual *Circle of All Nations Event to Fan the Flame for Peace* and:

- * Acknowledge the Autumn Equinox
- * Honour the United Nations International Day of Peace
- * Celebrate the 9th Annual Ottawa Peace Festival
- * Celebrate Linkages with South Africa
- * Build Bridges, Promote Peace and Partnerships, and Celebrate Sustainable Relationships!

AGENDA

- 11:00 Opening Ceremony & Prayer
11:15 A Circle of All Nations, Culture of Peace Welcome – Romola
12:00 Special Guest Elders - Grace Sesma and Ken Cohen
12:30 Asinabka/Sacred Chaudiere Site update and discussion – MC Larry McDermott
Urbanization, development and condos – Carolyn Anderson
13:30 Break
13:45 Report on *Circle of All Nations* (CAN) work in South Africa: CAN, NACCW, the Circle of Caring and strengthening Child and Youth Care Work - Romola
14:45 CAN colleague Adrian Esposito explores Indigenous Healing – Karen Bisson
15:15 Indigenous Languages Update – Serena d'Agostino; Indigenous Garden Report – Franny Varty/Dean Jones
15:30 The Wolf Project and Racial Harmony – Ray Sunstrum
Special Focus on Uncle Gabriel Commanda and supporting his memory.
15:45 Thoughts about Peace, Consensus and Dissent – Tito Medina
16:00 Ottawa Peace Festival – Bill Bhaneja
Encore Vivant! How Grandfather's Legacy continues to inspire across the world!
Music, Light Dinner and Socialization

Information sharing tables – themes: nature and peace, Asinabka Indigenous Centre, water, land, eels, creativity, river art, birch bark craft, and Grandfather's Circle of All Nations books, dvds, and latest reports on international linkages!

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR PEACE PASSION?
LET US KNOW BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2015
circleofallnations@sympatico.ca 613-599-8385**

Backgrounder: *Circle of All Nations and Peace Building*

This *Fanning the Fire for Peace* project is inspired by the work of the late Algonquin Elder William Commanda and his decades of outreach and leadership in the capital city. In 1998, Grandfather Commanda and the Wolf Project hosted a landmark event to promote inter-cultural understanding and racial harmony at Darcy McGee High School: a gathering entitled *Lighting Candles for a Culture of Peace*. In 2000, Grandfather Commanda organized the Millennium *Circle of All Nations* International Peace Gathering at Nepean Point, to animate the United Nations Declaration of Decade for a Culture of Peace.

Note, by the way, that *Nepean* is an Algonquin word that means *Place Where We Sleep*, a testament that this crossroad place of the Ottawa River flowing west to east, with the Gatineau flowing from the north and the Rideau from the south, anchored by the Sacred Chaudiere Falls on ancient rocks from the seafloor of 460 million years ago, this special Place of *Glare Rock, Asinabka*, was a known meeting/sleeping place of nomadic, journeying Indigenous Peoples from *Time Immemorial*, and one that was certainly acknowledged in historical times in the name that continues to lives on. It is not insignificant that William Commanda launched his Millennium peace effort at Nepean Point. In this regard, we remember that, despite the attempted *cultural genocide* of the centuries of colonization, he, as Keeper of the Sacred Three Figure Wampum Belt, continuously animated the spirit of friendship, consistent with the instructions of his ancestors.

At the 2000 Millennium *Circle of All Nations* Peace Gathering at Nepean Point, the former Governor General, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, participated in a special circle discussion on the Indigenous Peace Centre at Asinabka. Later that year, Grandfather participated in the UN Peace Conference in New York; and he also participated in the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association/David Suzuki Foundation Boreal Rendezvous canoe launch from Victoria Island, with then Excellency, John Ralston Saul, asserting the nature/peace theme. In 2005, Cercle de Paix and the Mayor of Montreal presented him with the pacifist of the year award in celebration of the September 21 United Nations International Day of Peace. It was at this time that the UN began to acknowledge the day formally again, after the post 9/11 years; several organizations inspired directly by Grandfather provided impetus for this in New York! He inspired and supported citizens of Ottawa in countless peace initiatives and activities including the Ottawa Peace Festival, and peace walks in Montreal and Victoriaville, Quebec.

We all know that with 9/11, the world sank into increasing darkness. However, Grandfather Commanda did not falter in his belief that *there is no way to peace; peace is the way* (Gandhi). He also knew that there was no way to peace without respect for Mother Earth and the four key elements, fire, earth, water and air, and so he repeatedly animated his Indigenous prayer, *Ginawaydaganuc, We Are All Connected* in words and action.

Grandfather Commanda dedicated the last forty years of his life to creating a *Circle of All Nations, Culture of Peace*. Entirely unsupported by any organization or funding, he reached the hearts of diverse communities, nationally and internationally, with his love, courage, wisdom and prayer for peace. He animated the people/nature connection in his annual *Circle of All Nations* gatherings and in his Paddle for Peace initiative, and in all his efforts, he integrated peace building and environmental stewardship. Also a canoe builder of international renown, over seventy-five of his canoes carried this energy around the world, including to Queen Margrethe of Denmark, from whose land the first newcomers had arrived on Turtle Island centuries ago and immediately spilled blood. His lifetime of effort was acknowledged with Master Canoe Builder and Bill Mason River Conservation recognition, receipt of the Key to the City of Ottawa, appointment as Officer of the Order of Canada, Lifetime Achievement with the 2010 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, receipt of the Wolf, Harmony, Bernard Assiniwi and Martin Luther King Dream Keeper Awards, and two Honorary Doctorate Degrees.

We continue to affirm Grandfather Commanda's work, which is consistent also with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, sharing local perspectives across cultures on the path to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and all others; we believe that this animation of the Indigenous prayer is a key step to building a stronger culture of peace in the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Region, and to inspiring people both nationally and internationally in critically challenging times; and we continue to work to see Grandfather's legacy anchored at the Sacred Chaudiere Site.

Join us and see how his legacy is *Encore Vivant!!!*

