

MEMBER INSPIRES HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY CAUCUS THEME ON STEREOTYPING



Susan Archibald, ONA's representative for members of Aboriginal backgrounds on our Human Rights and Equity Team, has quite the story to tell.

“SIXTIES SCOOP”

Archibald is a Swampy Cree First Nations woman and proud mother of three beautiful First Nation daughters. Born in Kapuskasing, Archibald was unaware until later in life that she had been a victim of the “Sixties Scoop,” a program that saw Aboriginal children taken away from their birth families and adopted into non-Indigenous communities. She was adopted at two-years-old by her Caucasian family. They lived in South Porcupine, a small town located outside of Timmins.

Following a move to Owen Sound with her adoptive family at the age of 10, Archibald began to recognize feelings of difference, experiencing exclusion and discrimination based on her identity as a Canadian of Indigenous heritage throughout her elementary and high school days.

Being a nurse was initially not on her radar. In fact, Archibald attended Humber College where she obtained a diploma in make-up artistry. After an abusive 12-year relationship, she was able to move forward and establish her self-identity as an independent woman and single mother of one daughter.

CARE LACKING

In 2000, Archibald married and had two more daughters. Her middle child had ongoing health issues that brought them to the local hospital, and Archibald found that due to her previous history with the hospital, the care her daughter received was lacking. That spurred her, at the age of 40, to go back to school and become

an RPN. She graduated in 2010 and continued her education, obtaining a BScN with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology through Georgian College in 2014. By doing so, Archibald said she has been able to advocate for better health care for her and her daughter, obtaining a treatment plan for her daughter's Periodic Fever Syndrome.

Archibald found her calling as a RN at the South West Community Care Access Centre (now the South West Local Health Integration Network), where she continues to work as a Hospital Care Coordinator, Discharge Planning. She has been the ONA site rep for the past year.

PROVIDING A VOICE

Archibald said she joined the Human Rights and Equity Team to actively support and empathize with her co-workers and fellow ONA members. Having faced discrimination herself, she is able to communicate solidarity with others facing oppression and provide a voice for those who are vulnerable.

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Archibald shared her personal experiences as an Indigenous woman facing discrimination in the health-care system with the team last year and her story had such an impact it was instrumental in developing the 2017 Human Rights and Equity Caucus theme, *We Need to Talk: Understanding the Reality of Stereotyping*.

Archibald also shared her experiences in the broader context of the stereotyping of Canada's Indigenous peoples to Caucus delegates with her counselor Trish Meekins.



For more on ONA's HRE Team, visit ona.org/hre

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