

July 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Strathmore High School's "New Blood" Production**

On June 16, 2015, The City of Calgary's Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (CAUAC) hosted a special reconciliation event as part of the City's *Aboriginal Awareness Week*. At this event, attendees had the opportunity to see Strathmore High School's production entitled *New Blood*. As Mayor of Calgary, I was fortunate enough to attend this event and was deeply moved by the production.

Directed by dance and drama teacher Deanne Bertsch with input from Blackfoot liaison and teacher Eulailia Running Rabbit, *New Blood* features drummers from Siksika First Nation and talented dance and drama students from Strathmore High School. Through telling the story of Siksika Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman's journey through the residential school system, it honours the resilience of Blackfoot and Indigenous peoples, encouraging healing for survivors, their children, and their communities. The performance also promotes meaningful dialogue among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples around the true meaning of reconciliation, compelling a sense of mutual understanding and respect for cultures, histories, and spiritual worldviews that are to be celebrated as equal and valid.

This production comes at a critical time when the *Calls to Action* from the recent Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) requires collective responsibility on the part of all levels of government to address the long-standing effects of colonialism and cultural dispossession. To build a shared future, the TRC *Calls to Action* also seek an expansion of the public discourse around the uniqueness of Indigenous cultures and histories. Strathmore High School has demonstrated active leadership in this endeavour. I am honoured to endorse Strathmore High School's efforts to circulate the stories and oral traditions of Blackfoot and Indigenous peoples as a step in our joint journey to reconciliation. I hope that you will acknowledge their efforts by providing the support they need to continue this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Naheed K. Nenshi  
MAYOR