

Guest Speaker: Ms. Nella Nelson – “The Indian Act”

I invite Nella Nelson to speak to my First Nations Studies 12 class about the Indian Act and the personal impacts the Indian Act has had on her life. Nella is the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Nations Education Division in the Victoria School District. She is a leader, a role model, and an eloquent speaker.



Nella Nelson's Guest Presentation to
First Nations Studies 12
March 12th, 2008

Student Quotes about Nella Nelson's Presentation

- “Nella Nelson has a very striking presence. It is evident just from looking at her that she is a strong woman. I really enjoyed how she related the impact of the Indian Act on her own family.”
- “I will not forget what Nella's father wrote to the federal government when they threatened to take his status away: “I was born an Indian, I will die an Indian.”
- “The imposed restrictions that were implemented through this blatantly discriminatory legislation often resulted in ludicrous limitations for First Nations people.”
- “Mrs. Nelson gave a very different point of view than I already knew. I had learned about the Indian Act in Grade 10, but our textbook just gave a European settler's point of view & ignored almost all of the First Nations issues.”
- “I enjoyed passing the shell around this day. I felt that Nella was really interested in what everybody had to say which made the whole experience nicer since you could tell there was complete mutual respect.”

Guest Speaker: Mr. Alex Nelson – “Residential Schools”

Alex Nelson is Nella Nelson’s husband and I invite Alex to speak to my class about his experiences attending St. Micheal’s residential in Alert Bay when he was a child. Alex is also a gifted speaker and through his stories, Alex is able to bring a personal, emotional awareness about residential schools to the students. Alex is not only a residential survivor, but also a prestigious Aboriginal role model. Alex is the president of ASRA – Aboriginal Sports and Recreation.



Alex Nelson’s Guest Presentation
April 16th, 2008

Student Quotes about Alex Nelson’s Presentation

- “Alex explained how he centered his life around four principals: Honesty, Trust, Integrity, & Respect. He left us with the message that each one of us has the power to be strong & capable people throughout the stages of our life, no matter what happens to us.”
- “Even though Alex had gone through residential school & talked about all the horrible things that happened, he didn’t speak about it angrily.”
- “Alex Nelson is very inspiring to me. I feel so fortunate to have been able to listen to him speak.”
- “Like all great orators, Alex spoke simply but with great power. His words brought to life the dank halls of the ‘Big School’, the dining rooms filled with the smell of detergent and wide-eyed kids, & the cold, callous countenances of the teachers & attendants. It was definitely more powerful than any old black and white photograph.”
- “I think we can really begin to heal the pain of horrors like residential school by telling our stories and listening to others. And of course to never forget so that we will never allow these horrors to be repeated again.”