

**68<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Ontario Provincial Council  
The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
ORAL CONVENTION REPORT  
July, 2015**

**Submitted by: Karen McDonald, Diocesan President  
Diocese: Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Council**

In 2014, members in the Sault Ste. Marie diocese were asked to consider supporting the dream of Shannen Koostachin, a youth from Attawapiskat First Nation, who was called home to God at age 15 in a car accident. *Shannen's Dream* is "a national youth-driven campaign" to honour her memory and promote education rights for aboriginal children.

As with any new initiative, members naturally had questions. They were encouraged to educate themselves and then decide if they could help make *Shannen's Dream* a reality.

One highlight took place at our April convention as we welcomed Charlie Angus, Member of Parliament (Timmins-James Bay) and co-founder of *Shannen's Dream*. Charlie knew Shannen personally and spoke from the heart about the plight of First Nations children. We learned that Shannen recognized an injustice and acted on it ... sound familiar? She believed kids deserved a chance to go to a real school and to feel excited about being educated ... we advocate for proper education. She fought to build safe schools on reserves ... we advocate for those less fortunate. She publicly challenged the federal government over its decision to cancel a project to build a school in Attawapiskat ... we go to government to advocate for change.

Councils in our diocese have already chosen to support *Shannen's Dream*. They did their homework. Donations at convention were sent to Shannen's Dream and a local aboriginal health centre. Members are responding to their baptismal call to serve and their commitment to social justice, something I believe attracts younger members to the League ... if baking was the sole requirement, this "rookie" would not be here. We are confident this project will unite our members with one heart and one voice to fulfill our mission.

Have you ever admired someone you will never have the opportunity to meet? I do, her name is Shannen, and she believed that kids could change the world. I leave you with her favourite words, "*Hi-Ho Mistahey*", meaning I love you a lot ... I love you very much.

This concludes my oral report.