

OPC Oral Annual General Meeting Report July 12th, 2022

Annual General Meeting Report: Mary Capobianco – Community Life

Madame Chair,

During the first two years as Community Life Chair, my goal was focused on the provincial theme of *Loneliness*. With that in mind, came the CARE Connection Project.

Then of course came the onset of the pandemic, the spread of COVID and the lockdowns. During this time, we were truly challenged in ways we could not even have imagined. However, if these past challenging years have taught us anything, it's that **Together, We Are Stronger**. Never have we needed our CWL sisters more than during these trying times.

Just as we were starting to come to terms with the fallout of COVID, on May 27th, 2021, a terrible discovery was made. Reports were released about 215 unmarked graves discovered on the grounds of the former Kamloops residential school in Kamloops, BC. This was followed by more discoveries on other former residential school grounds across the country.

This shocking news spread across our province and all of Canada. We were filled with sadness, mourning and an overall feeling of helplessness. So many questions and emotions. As Canadians and as Catholics, we knew we had to do better.

At the Post Convention Meeting, following the 2021 Ontario Provincial AGM, the OPC executive agreed that we needed to lead by example and we needed to take action. As a result, a Truth and Reconciliation working group was formed. As the chairperson for this standing committee, this then became my focus for Year 3 of my term.

Over the past year, I've sent out a number of communiques explaining our progress as we started our healing journey. The working group settled on 3 main goals; *Learning, Listening and Actioning*.

For the Year One Goal – we focused on LEARNING and becoming aware of our past. Educating ourselves so we could better understand what happened and why. To this end, the Truth and Reconciliation newsletter was started. A monthly submission can be found on-line as part of the OPC monthly newsletter. The newsletter features events held by councils throughout the province, information to help clarify questions we encountered and of course recommendations for some great book reading.

As well, a new section was created on the OPC website specifically for Truth and Reconciliation. The site is filled with links to prayers, workshops, videos, other websites and you can also find out about upcoming events. There are also links to free courses available to everyone, covering Indigenous issues. A lot of this information was provided through our members sharing their own learning experiences.

Over the past year, I would like to think that, as Canadians and as CWL members, we've made some progress towards this healing journey. I hope that, as a council and as a province that we are at least a little more knowledgeable and understanding of past Indigenous history. And most of all I hope and pray that this is only the beginning and that we continue our journey and our efforts to *Learn, Listen and Action*.

This concludes my report.

My written report can be found on pages XX and XX in the annual report book.

Thank you,

Mary Capobianco
Community Life Chairperson.