



Gifts for Peace:

A New National Initiative

by Gillian de Graauw

To celebrate and commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Scouting, the National Youth Committee has created a life-changing initiative focusing on eliminating racism within our country. Canada is considered to be one of the most influential and multicultural nations in the world. Our borders are open to everyone accepting all races, religions and cultures. But racism still rears its ugly

head. Education is a small, but powerful force in changing the very landscape of Canadian society and Scouts Canada wants to be a part of it. As such, the National Youth Committee feels that by educating our youth, and aiding them in educating others, we will provide a gift for peace; a gift of understanding and tolerance. Here's how your Scouting group can contribute to this nationwide *Gift for Peace* by helping to eliminate racism.

How Do I Participate in the Gifts for Peace Project?

You have two options for participating in the Gifts for Peace project:

Option #1: Sharing: If you and/or your parents were born outside of Canada, you have the opportunity to share something about your native country/culture.

OR

Option #2: Discovery: If you and/or your parents were born in Canada, you have the opportunity to learn about a country/culture which is unfamiliar to you. If other youth in your group are also working on **Discovery**, try to each pick a different topic for your exploration. It might be interesting to pick a culture which has negative stereotypes associated with it, but the ultimate choice is up to you.

What Does Sharing Entail?

Beavers: Invite parents to help out with this. Ask them to provide a game, craft, recipe, song, or story that is en-

joyed by children in their native country. Invite them to teach it to the Beavers in your colony. Have a discussion with your colony about the importance of accepting other people's differences.

Cubs: Think about your native country/culture. What is one thing that you would like Canadian youth to know about where you come from? Think of an activity you or your parents enjoyed in your homeland and share it with your pack. This could be a game, craft, recipe, song, or story. Have a discussion on the topic of racism. Where does racism come from? How is it hurtful and dangerous? Can it lead to bullying? How can it be stopped?

Scouts: Think about your native country/culture. What is one thing that you would like Canadian youth to know about where you come from? Design a presentation and/or poster about your culture that could be shared with a younger section. The presentation/poster should include cultural information you think is im-

portant for Canadians to know, and an activity to share (i.e. game, craft, song, or story). Ask your leader to help arrange a time for meeting with a younger section. Have a discussion with your troop about racism, its origins, its problems, and ways to end it.

Venturers/Rovers: Think about your native country/culture and identify stereotypes about it that you have noticed in Canadian society. Design a project to dispel these stereotypes, and share it with a younger section or another community group. Possible ideas include hosting a cultural night, making a presentation to a school, or running a station about your culture at an area event. Have a discussion with your company/crew about racism.

All Sections: E-mail your findings to webmaster@scouts.ca to be posted on the web. We'd also like to track the number of countries that we're sharing information about so be sure to indicate which country you're working on. Remember to make the instructions clear enough so that someone

reading them for the first time can do that activity. Write a few comments about your experiences during the *Gifts for Peace* project. Were you surprised at how little Canadians knew about your culture? Do you think you made a difference in their level of understanding about your country? Did you have fun? Finally, e-mail a notification to your leader/advisor that you have finished your *Gift for Peace* project and have him/her check out your contribution to the "Cultural Connections Collection."

To see what other youth/groups have submitted, log on to the Scouts Canada web site (www.scouts.ca) and click on the "Gifts for Peace" link.

What Does Discovery Entail?

Beavers: With your colony get a map of the world and choose a country that you would like to learn more about **OR** talk to someone you know who was born outside of Canada. Learn a game, craft, recipe, song, or story that is enjoyed by youth in the country you have chosen and share it with the Beavers in your colony. Have a discussion with your colony about the importance of accepting other people's differences.

Cubs: Get a map of the world and choose a country that you would like to learn more about **OR** talk to someone you know who was born outside of Canada. Read/hear a bit about life in that country and think about whether the facts are different from what you first believed. Learn a game, craft, recipe, song, or story that is enjoyed by youth in the country you have chosen. Share the infor-

mation you learned and the new activity with your pack, and have a discussion about racism. Where does racism come from? How is it hurtful and dangerous? Can it lead to bullying? How can it be stopped?

Scouts: Choose a country/culture that you would like to learn more about. Do some research on that country by looking in the library, on the internet, or talking to someone who belongs to that culture. What things that you learned surprised you? Design a poster or presentation that could be shared with a younger section to teach them some of the new information you learned. Your presentation/poster should include a cultural activity (i.e. game, craft, recipe, song, or story). Ask your leader to help arrange a time for meeting with a younger section. Have a discussion with your troop about racism, its origins, its problems, and ways to end it.

Venturers/Rovers: Choose a country/culture that you would like to learn more about. Do some research on your topic and make an effort to contact someone from that culture to find out first hand what life in your chosen country is like. If you don't know anyone from your country/culture of interest, you could try contacting a local cultural association for help. During the discovery process, think about which things you learned surprised you the most. Design a project to share this information with a younger section or another community group. Possible ideas include hosting a cultural night, making a presentation to a school, or running a

station about your country/culture of interest at an area event. Have a discussion with your company/crew about racism.

All Sections: Repeat the same process as is used for the sharing process; however, write a few comments about your experiences during the *Gifts for Peace* project. Were you surprised at how little you and other Canadians knew about this culture? Do you think you made a difference in others level of understanding about this country? Did you have fun?

Check back to the "Cultural Connections Collection" in a few months to learn even more about other people's cultures and see what neat activities have been shared by other Scouting youth.

What Now?

Now that your group has participated in the *Gifts for Peace* initiative, it is time for the rewarding part. Sit back and watch your efforts start to transform your schools, communities and groups. Once the challenge has been completed, contact your local Scout Shop to order your campfire blanket crests. Enjoy the challenge and together we will observe Scouting overcome racism and hatred.

The Gifts for Peace initiative will only occur until the end of our Centennial Celebrations in June of 2008 so get involved while you still can! X

– Gillian de Graauw is the Deputy Executive Commissioner for Youth and has been involved with the Scouting Movement, in the senior sections, for the past thirteen years.



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