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Foreword : Time Is Right To Reach Back And Look Forward

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FOREWORD

Time Is Right To Reach Back And Look Forward

Ivan Brown

It is very encouraging indeed to see the collection of articles that appears between these covers, and that comprises the second issue of the First People's Child & Family Review. This collection resulted from a request to a wide variety of authors to consider the topic Reconciliation in child welfare, and to generate some ideas that would contribute to our greater understanding of it.

The reason for this request was to help set the scene for a planned Reconciliation in Child Welfare Movement. This Movement is conceived as a North America wide dialog that will enable us to change our thinking and the nature of our relationships, and thus to move toward child welfare policy and practice that works to our better advantage.

One initial event will act as the "kick-off" for the Reconciliation Movement, but many other events – both large and small – are expected to follow. The initial event is entitled *Reconciliation: Reaching Back, Looking Forward: Indigenous People and Child Welfare*¹ and will take place in Niagara Falls, Canada in October 2005. This will be an exciting opportunity for 200 invited leaders from across Canada and the United States to come together to help create the movement that will address – over the coming years – the best ways for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to work together to support child welfare for Aboriginal children, families and communities.

To succeed, the Reconciliation Movement will have to be honest about historical and current relationships. In particular, it will have to recognize that it is essential to begin by looking at past harm and by understanding the reasons

why that harm occurred. It will be just as important, however, to examine our current practices to see where imbalances of power and philosophy are still resulting in harm being perpetuated. Only by understanding – then altering – such imbalances in an open and willing way can Reconciliation truly begin to take place.

The articles in this issue of the *First People's Child & Family Review* help us along this path toward understanding. It will be our responsibility for knowing when we understand sufficiently to move forward and alter those things that are not in our children's best interests.

¹ *Reconciliation: Reaching Back, Looking Forward: Indigenous People and Child Welfare* is an event of the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, and is sponsored by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (USA), the Child Welfare League of Canada, and the Child Welfare League of America.

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