



Third Annual National Kindness Week Celebrated with Multi-Partisan Press Conference

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

February 13, 2024 - Today, Canada kicked off its third annual National Kindness Week (February 11 - 17) with a press conference hosted by Global Dignity Canada. The early morning event, held virtually, aimed to celebrate the transformative power of kindness and to highlight the significance of this national initiative.

National Kindness Week, initiated in memory of the late Rabbi Dr. Reuven Bulka, established through the "Kindness Week Act" (Bill S-223), is a testament to Canada's commitment to fostering a culture of kindness, volunteerism, and charitable giving. This legislative effort, spearheaded by former Senator Jim Munson, received Royal Assent on June 3, 2021.

Global Dignity Canada Vice-Chair Olivia Bechthold emphasized that kindness lies at the heart of dignity, echoing the mission of Global Dignity Canada, a non-profit organization empowering young people worldwide. This was reinforced by Anishinabe Leader from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Meagan Commonda and youth leader, Odeshkun Thusky, also from Kitigan Zibi, who both emphasized the need to be kind to oneself, others and the land.

"We should continue to honour and mentor our youth, professionally and personally," said Ms. Commonda, who shared the impacts of kindness on her journey to recovery as a breast cancer survivor. "I always say that we cannot pour from an empty cup, and this is especially true when practicing kindness ... I now try to help and support others who are battling the same disease that I've survived."

Giovanna Mingarelli, national chair for Global Dignity Canada, underscored the role of partnerships and initiatives such as UNESCO's #KindnessMatters and the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation in driving kindness campaigns. She urged Canadians to participate in the #UniteKindness campaign, emphasizing the potential to create a kinder world through collective action.

Elected officials Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Member of Parliament for Saint-Laurent and Michael Barrett, Member of Parliament, Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, co-sponsors of the [Kindness Week Act](#) legislation, shared their perspectives on the importance of kindness in policy-making and community development, echoing the sentiment that kindness should be at the forefront of societal progress.

"When we experience kindness, and the more that we experience kindness, the happier we become and the more likely we are to pass that on to others," said Ms. Lambropoulos. "You never know who needs it."



"It was a wonderful way to have the 338 members of Parliament, as an act of kindness, initiate Kindness Week," said Mr. Barrett. "As the saying goes, 'None of us is better than all of us' and that couldn't be more true here. We have opportunities at different times in our lives to give back to our communities."

The event also featured Jamie Bell, Manitoba Chair for Global Dignity Canada, who emphasized the evolution of National Kindness Week and its impact on communities, particularly through arts-oriented projects and youth engagement.

"Through our programming, we've witnessed firsthand how kindness, empathy, and collaboration can empower individuals and communities to overcome challenges and thrive. We're seeing the next generation of young leaders stepping up," said Mr. Bell.

"One of the most interesting changes I've seen over these last three years is that foundational concepts like kindness and dignity are not just "outcomes or impacts." We're starting to see those values woven directly into our planning processes, right from the beginning."

Today's session and special guest speakers reiterated the call for collaboration and commitment to kindness, urging Canadians to seize opportunities to create a more compassionate and inclusive society.

As National Kindness Week unfolds, Canadians from coast, to coast, to coast are encouraged to embrace kindness as a guiding principle, recognizing its potential to bring about positive change in their communities and beyond.

Established in 2005 by HRH Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, Operation HOPE Founder John Hope Bryant, and respected Finnish professor Pekka Himanen, Global Dignity is an independent, non-profit, non-political organization dedicated to empowering young people with dignity.

It seeks to inspire respect, self-esteem, and tolerance for diversity while promoting the notion that every human being possesses the universal right to lead a dignified life. For more information, please visit our website at www.globaldignity.ca.

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Media Contact:

Olivia Bechthold
Executive Vice Chair
Global Dignity Canada
Email: olivia@globaldignity.ca
Phone: 613-539-5489