Respect Works Here

This is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of our people. That's where Reconciliation starts. ??

~ Mollie Bono

Community Champion

Mollie Quil Quil Sneena Bono

Mollie is an educator, storyteller, activist, feminist and grandmother.

She is filled with humour, passion, kindness and strength.

She has a quick wit and an arsenal full of knowledge and historical truths.

And if you are fortunate enough to participate in one of her workshops on Reconciliation, or to meet her in the community, you will benefit from the experience and your eyes will be opened. You will see what a treasure Mollie Bono is to the region and why she has been identified as a Community Champion.

Born as a member of the Okanagan Band, Mollie and her family moved to her mother's ancestral lands in the Valley of the Eagles (Similkameen) when she was young. She returned to Nkmaplqs regularly for visits with her paternal family and when she married a Suqnaqinx (or in its Anglicized form, Okanagan), she stayed here but maintained visits with maternal relatives.

Through her own personal history, Mollie has suffered the negative impacts of the Indian Act and has worked diligently to bring understanding of the issues and concerns to the larger community so that Reconciliation is possible. "We lost a lot through contact, colonization and the Indian Act," explains Mollie and it is clear that, to her, the extent of that loss, the impact on the families of the Okanagan people, and the systemic abuse of First Nations people locally and all across Canada, needs to be acknowledged, recognized and addressed before true healing can begin.

Naturally curious and a self-described "pesky kid" that asks all kinds of questions, Mollie has made it her life's work to gain knowledge and understanding and to share it back to the community in a meaningful way. She has worked for School District #22, First Nations Friendship Centre in Vernon and the Okanagan Indian Band. She has also served as Councillor on the Band for six terms and is currently serving her third term as a School Trustee.

Through her workshops and community talks, Mollie looks to share her insight. She is inspiringly receptive to questions and unswervingly honest with her answers. "I may be able to answer, I may not," she quips. Either way, she welcomes the dialogue.

Sharing her stories and truths with people, Mollie honors all of her ancestors, and especially the women. She uses very gentle humour to address heavy subjects and sad realities.

She is personable and engaging and provides a safe space for people to learn more. Her genuine outrage and her resolve to address what has, and is continuing to happen, at both a political and community level, even today, is powerful.

"We are still here, despite so many things that happened," says Mollie. "I really credit our ancestors and their foresight and their desire to live in harmony with the land. We need to reclaim that, which means we need to be protecting our land and our water. As First Nations, we are so connected to the land. That's why it is important that we are acknowledged as the First People, that it is acknowledged this is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of our people. That's where Reconcilliation starts."









