



Earl McNaughton (former Six Nations Native Pageant president), Dakota Brant (writer/director of play), Marvin Greene, Cam Staats (current president), Carole Smith (Ontario Trillium Fund representative) and Ava Hill (Six Nations Elected Councillor) all gathered at the pageant grounds on Monday. Smith was honouring the pageant with a \$15,000 donation from the Trillium Fund that will be used towards upgrading the lighting and audio at the play. (Photo by Erin Tully)

Trillium Fund recognizes the Pageant

By Erin Tully
SIX NATIONS

The Six Nations Pageant/Forest Theatre got substantial financial backing from the Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) on Monday afternoon. Representatives from the theatre group graciously accepted a \$15,000 donation to improve their pageant performances and a symbolic plaque.

Approximately 30 people gathered at the pageant grounds to witness the donation ceremony.

OTF representative Carole Smith said that she was happy to make the donation to help the pageant and its volunteers.

"Ontario is always striving to create and strengthen healthy and vibrant communities," said Smith. "The ways to strengthen those communities

is by supporting and recognizing the volunteers."

The \$15,000 cheque will be put towards the purchase of new lighting and sound equipment. The new hardware will improve the sound quality at the pageant and the lights will help with making the play more esthetically appealing.

Dave Levac, Brant MPP was scheduled to appear at the ceremony but was not able to attend. He did release a statement to the pageant about how he thought the money could help.

"By providing \$15,000 to support arts and culture on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has assisted the Six Nations Native Pageant/Forest Theatre in improving the deliverance of an important cultural history lesson," said Levac.

Cam Staats, president of the pageant, said that volunteers appreciated the financial donation.

"I want to express our deepest gratitude for believing in our pageant," said Staats. "We always try to make our production the best our volunteers can make it. The new equipment will take our already good production to the next level. We want to carry on for the next seven generations. Nia:weh".

A media release at the event offered guests some background to the Six Nations natural amphitheatre.

"Since 1948 people of all races have gathered at the Six Nations Native Pageant/Forest Theatre, a natural outdoor amphitheatre to view performances that share an entertaining history lesson to help erase the stereotypical image of the Indian and show him as part

of a rich, meaningful culture, ignored and misrepresented in history."

Dakota Brant, writer and director, said that she was excited about this year's theme.

"This is the pageant's 61st year and I am honoured to write and direct it. It's been an amazing experience to write the script," said Brant.

This year's theme is inspired by Pauline Johnson's poem 'The Cattle Thief'. Brant said that the play is a fictional biography that represents Pauline Johnson.

"I think everyone should read the poem and they'll see that it was really radical for who she was," said Brant.

She made note of Johnson's

constant efforts to walk in both worlds of her heritage. She was English and Native and strived to represent both cultures.

"She had to be a proper lady," said Brant. "It was two times as hard for her to be Native and two times as hard for her to be English but she became a stakehold in modern literature.

Before Brant talked about the play she spend a moment to acknowledge Six Nation man, Cameron Staats.

Staats has donated countless hours and efforts to many community events, project and initiatives.

"I want to acknowledge the commitment from Cam Staats in the community," said Brant.

She said that Staats was the reason that she had gotten in-

volved with the play. Brant also said that Staats inspires many youth to get involved in community events and wanted to recognize his hard work and tireless efforts toward the play and all his community work.

Ava Hill, Six Nations Elected Councillor, attended the event and spoke on behalf of the Band Council.

Hill shared her memories of growing up near the pageant grounds and thanked all the volunteers for keeping the pageant alive.

The pageant's first performance of the year will be held at the Seneca Road pageant grounds on August 7th and 8th at dusk. The next round of performances will take place the following weekend on August 14th and 15th.