

# Prince's Charities Canada seeks to empower youth employment

By Jayson Koblun

**OHSWEKEN** – The indigenous population is the fastest growing population in Canada and an off-reserve organization is seeking to help indigenous youth prepare themselves for entry into the workforce.

Michael Shapcott, from Prince's Charities Canada, came a general elected band council meeting on June 14 to fill elected councillors and chief in on the work they currently do and want to bring to Six Nations.

"We think all Canadian businesses need to take an important role in the process of working with First Nations — in particular, indigenous



Michael Shapcott (Middle), Lindsey Lickers (right) and Charlie Sault (left), from Prince's Charities Canada came to Six Nations Elected Council's general meeting on June 14. PHOTO BY JAYSON KOBLUN

youth," said Shapcott. "We've been encouraging our businesses to take up call-to-action 92 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission." Chaplet explained that call-to-action 92 says Canada's businesses need to take a

role in terms of reconciliation with Canada's First Nations.

Prince's Charities Canada is the Canadian charitable office of the royal office of the Prince of Wales and has been working on a youth employment

initiative for the last two years. His team sees a gap in opportunities for indigenous youth and they want to give opportunities for the gaps to close. Shapcott highlighted some of the work the group has already done in Toronto, Winnipeg and Halifax.

"We have worked with both indigenous and non-indigenous youth in those cities," he said. "We work to provide practical support in terms of employment, career exploration and we also work to link youth with job opportunities."

Shapcott said that they meet with various business leaders and try to ensure that they educate themselves on the history

— the good and bad — of Canada and First Nations relationship over time.

"We're working with business leaders to ensure that the barriers many indigenous youth face in terms of employment are overcome," said Shapcott.

Elected Chief Ava Hill said that she is glad to see an organization with a long term goal of creating jobs.

"I'm glad you are looking at employment," she said — mentioning that sometimes employers will hire indigenous workers and then not take the extra steps to train them properly and effectively or deal with cultural sensitivity issues.

Lindsey Lickers, also

with Prince's Charities Canada, said that less than two per cent of indigenous people make up the executive positions within corporate Canada and she wants to see that number change.

"By 2020 we want that number to be increased," she said.

"I agree that there are many talented people in our community who aren't given the opportunity to shine," she said.

Hill asked the delegation if they are thinking about collaborating with GREAT and Shapcott told her that they have been considering it, but wanted to approach Six Nations Elected Council first, out of respect, before moving forward.