

PRESS KIT

tiff. toronto
international
film festival®

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2013

HI-HO MISTAKE!

EVERY CHILD NEEDS TO HAVE A GOOD SCHOOL

A FILM BY ALANIS OBOMSAWIN



HOPE



NEB
FNO



THE FILM



Photos: Production stills

In 2008, a young girl from the Northern Ontario Cree village of Attawapiskat made her voice heard throughout the country. The girl was Shannen Koostachin, a 14-year-old student leading a campaign for a proper school in her community. It was called Students Helping Students. Shannen and her friends gave speeches and invited thousands of young Canadians from across the country to write to the federal government, demanding the right to education for all children. But with the campaign in full swing, tragedy struck in 2010, when Shannen was killed in a car accident. The community was in shock—but they were determined that Shannen's fight would continue.

Alanis Obomsawin's documentary **Hi-Ho Mistahey!** portrays a community seeking justice and fair treatment. The director brings together the voices of those who have carried Shannen's Dream from one end of Canada to the other—and beyond, all the way to the United Nations in Geneva, in a larger-than-life adventure.



Photo: Production still

SHANNEN'S DREAM

The Attawapiskat school was demolished in 2009, 30 years after a diesel fuel leak contaminated the land on which it was situated. Three years after the school's demolition, students and teachers were still trying to make do with portables, but the cold (many wear coats indoors), noise and lack of space and resources created a climate of discomfort and demotivation. The teachers persisted, despite the difficult conditions and huge workload they faced. All were motivated by the same goal: to educate their students as best they can.

While awaiting the construction of a new school building, some of Attawapiskat's young people left the community to pursue

their studies—Shannen and her older sister Serena among them. They travelled hundreds of kilometres to go to high school in New Liskeard. While there, they met Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus.

After Shannen's sudden death, the campaign for a new school in Attawapiskat went national. Friends, parents, students, teachers, politicians—all came together to create the organization now known as Shannen's Dream. It is dedicated to a vision of equitable education for First Nations, offered in safe and suitable school buildings. Having witnessed the poverty in which members of the community live, Charlie Angus took up the cause, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard by the Government of Canada.

HOPE AND IDENTITY

The next step was organizing a campaign to bring Shannen's Dream to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, prepared for the meeting with a group of young leaders who are both inspired and inspiring. Following in Shannen's footsteps, they raised awareness about their conditions of education among Canadian youth, and fought for their rights. Serena and her parents, Jenny and Andrew Koostachin, got involved too. They feel an enormous sense of pride in the achievements of Shannen and her peers, and realize just how many people Shannen inspired.

Driven by a desire to ensure Aboriginal people have a platform to voice their concerns, Alanis Obomsawin takes us into the heart of the Shannen's Dream campaign. By sharing a diversity of stories from people of several generations—including students, hunters, parents, a priest and teachers—she reveals an important issue: the loss of Cree language and culture. When the transmission of knowledge, history and traditions is weakened, can a people's very identity survive?

GENEVA AND PARLIAMENT

February 2012 marked a major step forward. A delegation of six students flew to Geneva to deliver their message to a UN committee. After their presentation, they received scores of messages from Canadian schools, expressing solidarity with their cause. Then, on February 14, hundreds of students participated in Have a Heart Day on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa. The conscience of the nation was touched.

A few days later, Charlie Angus and his party introduced a motion in the House of Commons on education for Aboriginal Children. On February 27, 2012, it passed unanimously. In an adjacent room, parents, friends, students, teachers and politicians celebrated the victory, their faces lit up with hope. The construction of a new school in Attawapiskat could now begin. It would take two years to complete.

But across Canada, many other communities still don't have safe and welcoming schools. How long will they have to wait before Shannen's Dream becomes a reality?

ALANIS OBOMSAWIN



Photo: Cynthia Benjamin Cooper

WRITER, FILMMAKER AND PRODUCER

A member of the Abenaki First Nation, **Alanis Obomsawin** is one of Canada's most eminent documentary filmmakers. She has directed 40 films with the National Film Board of Canada, focussing on the lives and concerns of First Nations. Her most recent, **Hi-Ho Mistahey!**, tells the story of Shannen's Dream, a national campaign to ensure that First Nations students have fair access to education in safe and comfortable schools.

Alanis Obomsawin launched her career as a professional singer in New York in 1960. In 1967, NFB producers Joe Koenig and Bob Verrall invited her to come to the Film Board as a consultant for a film about Aboriginal people. She wound up getting behind the camera herself, while continuing to sing for humanitarian causes, and going on to become a multidisciplinary artist.

As an activist filmmaker, **Obomsawin** is driven by a desire to give a platform to First Nations people in Canada. Her entire body of work bears witness to their experiences. From **Christmas at Moose Factory** (1971), which depicts life in a Cree village in James Bay as seen through children's drawings, to **When All the Leaves Are Gone** (2010), which explores the power of dreams and the strength of the human spirit, **Obomsawin** has ceaselessly shown the importance of her roots, and the importance of intergenerational links in preserving North American Aboriginal cultures.

Obomsawin is also an activist director who makes films about the pressing issues of the day, as her series of four films about the 1990 Oka crisis will attest. Her first film on the Mohawk uprising at Oka and Kanehsatake, the feature

documentary **Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance** (1993), won 18 international awards, while the second, **My Name Is Kahentiosta** (1995) is about a young Kahnawake Mohawk arrested during the 78-day armed standoff. **Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man** (1997), is a portrait of Mohawk high-steel worker Randy Horne, while **Rocks at Whiskey Trench** (2000) rounds out the series with the story of one of the ugliest incidents of the crisis.

Other notable films include **Incident at Restigouche** (1984), a gripping description of a raid by Quebec Provincial Police on a Mi'kmaq reserve; **Richard Cardinal: Cry from the Diary of a Métis Child** (1986), a disturbing documentary about a teen's suicide; and **No Address** (1988), a portrait of homelessness in Montreal. More recently, her film **The People of the Kattawapiskak River** (2012) plunges us into the housing crisis faced by the Cree of James Bay.

The people of Odanak, the community where **Obomsawin** grew up, and their stories figure largely in her work in films such as **Waban-Aki: People from Where the Sun Rises** (2006), which has won numerous awards, and the short film **Sigwan** (2005), a fable about a young girl comforted by animals of the forest.

Our Nationhood (2003) shows the determination of the Mi'kmaq of Listuguj to manage the natural resources on their traditional lands, while **Is the Crown at War with Us?** (2002) takes a hard look at the conflict over fishing rights between the Mi'kmaq of Burnt Church, New Brunswick, and their Acadian neighbours.

Alanis Obomsawin was named to the Canadian Film and Television Hall of Fame in 2010.

CREDITS

Director/Writer
Alanis Obomsawin

Editor
Alison Burns

Director of Photography
René Sioui Labelle

Additional Camera
Martin Duckworth
Michael Darby
Maarten Kroonenburg

Sound Recordist
Glenn Hodgins

Additional Sound
Richard Lavoie

Animation
David Barlow-Krelina

Original Music by
Alain Auger

Acoustic & Electric Guitars, Electric Bass, Percussions, Piano
Alain Auger

Flutes
Michel Dubeau

French Horn
Jocelyn Veilleux

French Horn
Louis-Philippe Marsolais

Narration
Alanis Obomsawin

Music Recorded and Mixed at Studio Vert&Blanc
Alain Auger

Additional Music & Voice Recording At NFB studios
Geoffrey Mitchell

Assisted by
Padraig Buttner-Schnirer

Sound Editor
Donald Ayer

Mix
Jean Paul Vialard

Foley
Stephane Cadotte

Production Assistants
Kenny Wheesk
Serena Koostachin

Research
Alanis Obomsawin
Katherine Kasirer

Rights Clearance
Elizabeth Klinck
Hinda Essadiqi

On-line
Denis Gathelier

Titles
Serge Gaspard Gaudreau

Graphic Design
Mélanie Bouchard

Digital Editing Technicians
Isabelle Painchaud
Pierre Dupont
Patrick Trahan

Cree Translation
Stella Koostachin

Transcription
Dyane Provost

Technical Coordinators
Jean-François Laprise
France Couture
Julie Laperriere
Micheline Faubert

Technical Coordinator, Projects and Shooting Equipment
Steve Hallé

Marketing Manager
François Jacques

Marketing Assistant
Geneviève Bérard

Publicist
Patricia Dillon-Moore

Legal Counsel
Dominique Aubry

Production Coordinators
Christine Williams
Dora Kolovos

Senior Production Coordinator
Isabelle Limoges

Program Administrator
Leslie Anne Poyntz

ARCHIVES, STOCK FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Personal photo collection courtesy of
Father Rodrigue Vezina
André Dubois - Archives Deschâtelets
CBC TV Archive Sales
Christopher Kataquapit- Moosonee
Christopher Kataquapit- Attawapiskat
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada
Glenn Hodgins
Alanis Obomsawin
Guillaume Poulin
Andrew Koostachin
House of Commons
Library & Archives Canada
Charlie Angus
Istockphoto
Archives of Ontario
NFB Images
NG Digital Motion (National Geographic)
Toronto Catholic District School Board

ADDITIONAL MUSIC

"Diamonds in the Snow"
Written by **Charlie Angus** (Chuck Angus)
Produced by **Alec Fraser**
Guitar and vocals: **Andrew Cash**
Bass and vocals: **Alec Fraser**
Violin and Mandolin: **Peter Jellard**

"Shannen's Dream Song"
Written and performed by
Grand Chief Stan Louttit

"Treaty #4"
Performed by **Colin Starblanket**

"Self-Control"
Written by **Mike Milligan**
Performed by **Wayne Potts**
1977- Sparrow Song

"My Little Brother"
Performed in Cree by **Sophie Spence**

Choir
Chœur des enfants de Montréal

Directed by
Amy Henderson

Choristers
Lena Abraham
June Aldinucci
Ryan Cheema
Daphné Durand-Forest
Capucine Gajan
Sonia Grach
Sam Hachem
Ling Jing Li
Jessica Looper
Emma Majaury
Juliette Marier
Dashiell Stevens
Mia Thomson
Michael Tzankov
Julie-Ann Vaillancourt

Female Hand Drum Group
Anelle Kioke
Holly Nakogee
Sabette Nakogee
Kara Rose Shisheesh

Teyonna Kioke
Jennifer PaulMartin
Christina Edwards
Judy Kamalatisit
Kayla Sutherland
Ginger Lazarus
Anna Kioke
Lisa Marie Linklater
Regina Rose

Chickeney Creek Group
Adrian Sutherland
Steven Craig Hookimaw
Larry Hookimaw
Andrew Sutherland
Shawn Hookimaw
Robert Sutherland
Gerald Wheesk
Wendell Edmond Edwards

Young Eagle Group
AJ Koostachin
Meegwun Metatawabin
Brent Evan Lyle Sutherland
Linden Mudd
Tyler Hookimaw
Talon Hookimaw
Dylan Hookimaw
Jack Linklaters
Rob Koostachin

Senior Kindergarten Student Singers
"O Canada" in Cree
Amelia Hookimaw
Lakendra Hookimaw
Simon Hookimaw
Tomika lahtail
Zenon lahtail
Sandy Kamalatisit
Keegan Kataquapit
Elenora Kioke
Orion Kataquapit
Dominic Koostachin
Ezekiel Metatawabin
Grace Moore
Jesse Nakogee
Marcus Nakogee
Garrette Paulmartin
Terrien Shisheesh
Tish Tookate
April Wesley
Mayci Wesley
Conlan Wheesk
Drake Wheesk

Special Thanks to
Charlie Angus, MP for Timmins-James Bay
The People of Kattawapiskak
Cindy Blackstock
Ontario Federation of Labour
Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Ontario
Rose Cutrara
The United Nations Office at Geneva
Pierre Elliott Trudeau School
Lady Evelyn Public School
Elgin Street Public School

Producer
Alanis Obomsawin

Executive Producers
Ravida Din
Annette Clarke

A production of
The National Film Board of Canada
Quebec Centre

© 2013 National Film Board of Canada



NFB.CA