

Dexter Allen
First Prize Winner Grades 5-8

ESSAY:

When I was in elementary school, every Valentine's Day my classmates and I would all write a short letter to the prime minister entitled "have a heart" and delivered them to Parliament Hill. We reminded him of the promises of support he made to First Nations people when he got into a position of power. Writing these letters taught us of the injustices that First Nations people face in Canada, and we can thank Cindy Blackstock for involving people like me. Cindy Blackstock is a relentless hero. She is a member of the Gitksan nation who has taken the Canadian government to court for its mistreatment of First Nations people, and won. She is the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, which fights to give First Nations children better education and living conditions. Just last year the Caring Society made Jordan's Principle more accessible to those who need it. Named after a boy who died tragically because neither the provincial or federal government wanted to pay for his medical care, Jordan's Principle is the idea that First Nations children deserve to get proper medical treatment without cancellations or delays. Cindy Blackstock has made sure that Jordan's Principle has not gone undetected or ignored by the government. She believes that First Nations children are worth the money and wants governments to realize that too. I am really inspired by how she involves children in this struggle for equal treatment and inspires us to make a difference in the lives of our Indigenous friends. She makes Canada a better place by helping First Nations children and families get the support they need to overcome the barriers they face on a daily basis. That's something that a true hero does. That's something Cindy Blackstock does.