



Michael Gravelle, M.P.P.

Thunder Bay – Superior North

February 6, 2020

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Clara Sacchetti-Dufresne Co-Executive Director
Aleksa Shermack Co-Executive Director
Community Arts and Heritage Education Project (CAHEP)

Dear Clara and Aleksa,

I'm pleased and honoured to provide you with this letter stating my strong support, as MPP, for your efforts to secure grant funding for the **Community Arts and Heritage Education Project (CAHEP)**.

CAHEP has proven itself a most vital and resourceful presence in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario through live performance and school events, arts and heritage workshops, and your ongoing outreach to the public, most notably children and youth.

Thank you for the information about 15 years of CAHEP and the variety of programming it has delivered cost-effectively, professionally, and with tremendous sensitivity to youth audiences and participants. Yours is a history of arts and performance that takes risks and addresses vital issues. I and many others recognize CAHEP as a public good that adds much to our educational and arts and heritage opportunities by offering well-conceived and skillful programming.

I am excited by the next steps you propose in leadership/empowerment and arts education for a large number of income-insecure and indigenous girls and girl-identified Grade 7 and 8 students attending Thunder Bay schools. Such programming has never been more timely, as our region tries to address the increasingly dangerous paths that lie in close proximity to our youth, which may only offer exploitation, addiction, legal difficulties, and physical and emotional harm.

The proposal you present on the **Speak Up** program is strong and research-based. The girls are being offered an opportunity to develop positive pathways and critical thinking skills through creative activity and self-expression. I am with you in the goal of nurturing individual strength, while also emphasizing the power of the group as it works together.



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As MPP, I personally see and understand the need in our community for the kind of work that CAHEP is proposing. Your proposal is broad and inclusive in its concepts, while most specific in identifying the at-risk youth it seeks to reach, and whose lives CAHEP hopes to enrich.

As MPP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, I will respectfully ask that the Canadian Women's Foundation, and other potential partners consider this letter to CAHEP my strong 'vote of confidence' based on CAHEP's past, present and future. The continuation of vital CAHEP programming and the Speak Up program are of major importance to the future of at-risk girls, and are reality-based steps toward a brighter outlook for all of us in the North and throughout Ontario.

I will ask that those contacted regarding this proposal look favourably on CAHEP's many public-spirited efforts, and I will thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours, sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gravelle".

Michael Gravelle, MPP
Thunder Bay-Superior North