



Remarks to Gitxsan Summit, October 18, 2012
Dr. Peter Newbery, Chair, USRC Capital Campaign Committee

Sim'gig'yet, Sigidim Hanuk. I am honored to be able to speak to the chiefs and members of the summit this afternoon regarding developments around the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre.

Everyone in the room knows how important and well used our old Skeena Ice Arena, or as many of us know it, the Ken Trombley Memorial ice arena, has been. How important it has been for our community. For our young people, and for many of us who are older, it has been an important focal point not only for ice hockey, and other forms of recreation, but for other community events as well. I want to take a moment to offer a word of deep appreciation to all those who were involved in the building of the ice arena some 50 years ago. At that time people came together with volunteer labor, as well as local financial contributions, to build a facility which has been at the heart of our community these many years. However recent assessments of the building, have told us that the building has serious deficiencies, and that it is time to rebuild.

We, our time, have an exciting opportunity to develop a recreation facility; we aim for an all-season recreational facility that will serve our community well into the future. It needs to be a facility which recognizes and builds on the strengths and the unity of our community, a facility which will be a point of pride, and joy, for all of the communities of the Hazeltons'.

I am honored to have been asked to be the chairman of the capital campaign committee. It is our challenge to raise upwards of \$10 million for this important community project. I'm also especially honored today to be able to announce that Carol Huynh has agreed to be the honorary chair of our capital campaign committee. Carol brings to this role an outstanding national and international reputation not only as a first-class athlete but as a credible, sincere, joyous individual, a young person who has grown up in our community, and an ambassador for sport. She refers to this community as home. She will be a wonderful asset as we take on the big challenge of raising funds to develop this facility.

Let me take a moment to speak to you as a physician. I am deeply concerned, and have been for many years, about the health of this community. We know we have big health challenges, and we also know very well that health is directly related to exercise and fitness. A new facility will contribute hugely to not only the physical health of the people in our community but also



to our mental and spiritual well-being. This facility is important from the standpoint of our wholeness and health.

It is also important that we see ourselves all coming together as a unified community to take on and build on this project. Our young people need to see us acting in harmony. We need to see ourselves acting in harmony. The outside world needs to see us acting in harmony and this is one project into which we can enter wholeheartedly and fully as we seek to develop a facility that will respect and recognize the capabilities of our young people and contribute to our overall health.

And finally I see the facility adding to the educational opportunities and benefits that our young people will experience. There is plenty of evidence, to support the idea that learning and development take place much more effectively when children are fit and have opportunity to exercise. The new facility, centrally located, and next to the high school, may contribute to the development of whole new education programs that may be closely linked with athletic activities, which will be a huge benefit for our children. In addition, I have had conversations with many of you about the fact that we have great athletic talent in our community which doesn't have an opportunity to develop or to be recognized. I foresee a time when, with a new all-season recreational facility in place our young people will be recognized for those capabilities both nationally and internationally. We have already produced a gold-medal Olympian in Carol Huynh. I am convinced there are many other Olympians among our young people.

So I invite us to join with all the enthusiasm we can develop, to making an investment in an all season recreational facility for the Upper Skeena. We will, if we get this right, reap tremendous health benefits for our community. We will establish ourselves as a unified community able to carry forward on wonderful and significant projects together; we will contribute to the educational benefits and opportunities as well as the athletic opportunities for our children.

Let us pick up the challenge and work on this wonderful project together. We cannot let our children down.

Thank you.