

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



FINO  
NFB  
NFB  
NFB



# 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