



CHASITY DELORME

#NoDAPL

A Movement of Nonviolent Indigenous Resistance

A movement of nonviolent Indigenous resistance. That is how I would describe the current peaceful approach in protecting and defending a sacred burial site as well the water on the Treaty Territory surrounding the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota.



Photo Credit: Efram John "Water Protector"

My involvement in the movement has been a rollercoaster of emotions that is at the

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same time filled with blessings from the Creator.

As a mother of three children, a proud Cree woman, and an academic, being an advocate and/or a voice for Indigenous social issues often stems from one of these three areas of my life. As mother I feel I have a responsibility in paving the future for my children, as well as ensuring the world will be a safe place for the generations yet unborn. As an academic it is important for me to educate myself on the current and historical injustices faced by my people across Turtle Island. Most importantly, as a Cree woman in the contemporary world I have a responsibility to protect the teachings of my ancestors — and these teachings include being stewards of land.

When I first heard of the “NODAPL” (Dakota Access Pipeline) movement I educated myself about it. I quickly observed that the values I live by — as mother, a Cree, and an academic — were all compromised as a result of this pipeline being put into the ground on the Standing Rock Reservation. It did not take much to come to the conclusion that, should this pipeline be put in the ground, it would result in a spiritual and environmental disaster.



Photo Source: Google

Spirituality and Prayer is the guiding essence of the movement

The history of Indigenous resilience is one that is not taught in our current education systems, but it is a history that many of my Indigenous relatives across Turtle Island have been faced with for the past 500+ years.



Photo Credit: Efram John "Water Protector"

Here in Regina, Saskatchewan on Treaty 4 Territory, I gathered my community; I gathered elders, women, children. We prayed, we sang, we danced. The women put on their healing dresses and we danced for healing. We asked the Creator to help our relatives south of border. We prayed that other communities across Turtle Island would also become educated on this potential environmental disaster.

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It was a beautiful gathering.

But my soul was still not fulfilled, and not long after the community prayer and healing dance I made a quick decision to find my way to the Standing Rock Reservation.

As I entered “Flag Road” I quickly discovered for myself the intensity of Indigenous Resiliency throughout this movement. The immense rush of warrior energy as I drove in was overwhelming. An instant feeling of “Home” took over my spirit and soul and I immediately began looking for other ways I could become directly involved.



The hundreds of flags of solidarity was enough to bring a tear to anyone's eye; the songs and the continuous chanting of the Lakota words "Mni Wiconi" (Water is Life). The spirit of the people lived in the air of land that was being occupied by the Water Protectors at the Standing Rock Reservation.

Photo Credit: Efram John "Water Protector"



This was a movement that would touch the souls of thousands of people at an international level.

Photo Credit: Efram John "Water Protector"



A Spiritual Movement with National Solidarity

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Each time I returned “home” to Standing Rock these last few months I become more educated on the environmental racism taking place, the disregard of historical Treaty agreements, and the neglect of basic human rights and safety. But what will forever be ingrained in my heart is witnessing the power of my people; the power when their inner warrior surfaces and they are forced to defend themselves against the very same injustices our ancestors have battled for hundreds of years.



Nations of Allies

Photo Credit: Castity Delorme



Nations of Solidarity

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CHASITY DELORME is a Cree women from the Cowessess First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory, and the mother of two teenage daughters and an adopted son. In the fall of 2016 Chasity graduated from First Nations University of Canada receiving her degree in Health Studies with a concentration in Indigenous Health. She is active in the student movement, and founded the internationally-recognized social media campaign #notyourstereotype, encouraging Aboriginal people to portray themselves as they want to be portrayed.



Prayer ties