

Statement of Sinixt Elder, Ed Banning, Vallican, B.C., Blockade Warrior (1989).
October 15, 2016, 2-7 PM, Incheilium Community Center.

Over the last few years, in Vallican, at our Sacred Village Site protected by a blockade beginning in 1989, what is left of the Sinixt Village Site Caretaker has worked to senselessly to disrespect and block the work of Marilyn James, our Vallican Site-Sinixt Elder, storyteller, and career educator.

As a result of Marilyn's work, on Tuesday, October 4, 2016, the Canadian Education Association (CAE) awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Columbia-Kootenay Learning Center in Trail, B.C., to advance "leveraging traditional Indigenous principles, protocols and concepts while developing a culturally relevant, land-based, project-based outdoor education program for at-risk youth... a teaching formula based on Indigenous ways of knowing and learning through traditional ceremonies, language, and history was designed to ensure that students acquire the skills to form a positive, healthy relationship to self, others and to Mother Earth. As a result, students' suicidal ideation and addictions have transformed into life affirming hope – their despair and depression have been pushed aside by daring to dream a future for themselves." The CEA is committed to making this model as a national Canadian model.

Marilyn's work was also honored at the CEA's annual convention, Vancouver, B.C. October 6-7, 2016 and she was the final Keynote Presenter, at its closing.

An honorable man, finding himself compromised by the use of artificial stimulants and firewater, would voluntarily remove himself from our Sinixt Sacred Burial Site at Vallican, held in such great respect by The Sinixt Peoples.

Any forthcoming donations should be used in the rehabilitation of this man so that he could once again enter the site with head held high and free of substance abuse dependency. Your fundraising would best serve our original Blockade, Sacred Site of Reoccupation, and Repatriation by not encouraging dishonor of Sinixt Peoples and our Sacred Sites with the enabling of addictions and disgraceful misconduct.

Alcoholic abuse and peyote addiction in our Village Site is dishonorable. Respectful Sinixt Peoples know this is not, nor has never been, The Sinixt Way. It is beyond shameful that when Eva Orr and Alvina Lum, our recent Ancestors, took their journey, some of we Sinixt now dishonor their honorable memory.

Sinixt Peoples cannot become participants in barbarous acts, threatening our own Elders with violence and condoning threats of any kind. Our formerly respectful, Caretaker, has left us with public shame. He is a liability at Village Site, a Sinixt public disgrace who long ago gave up on his own spiritual and physical care.