

# Speech from AnneMarie VanSickle

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My name is AnneMarie VanSickle

I am employed as a Registered Nurse. I have 2 children, who attend Notre Dame Elementary School. My family and I have lived in Caledonia for 4 years. We received the keys of our new home on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2006. Our home borders Douglas Creek Estates in Caledonia. Our dream home has quickly turned into a nightmare, our lives hell. The last 7 months has taken its toll mentally, physically and financially.

We have been subjected to ATV's racing around our homes all hours of the night, some with their mufflers removed, as their driver's yell and scream. The sounds of hammering, banging and gunshots can frequently be heard. Our family and neighbours have had to endure sleep deprivation, verbal and physical assaults while law enforcement have turned their back. This directly violates our autonomy as well as violates the rule of law.

My phone line has been cut in 3 places. Occupiers with bandanas covering their faces, continue to ignore the "no go zone" they enter at their leisure then proceed to stand and stare at the residents and their children, take our pictures and shout obscenities.

Occupiers have come onto my property and my neighbours. The OPP continue to refuse to patrol 6<sup>th</sup> line, or the areas behind Braemar Ave, MacCrae St and Argyle St.

Our children have had to witness fires, burned bridges, threats, blocked highways, anarchy and lawlessness. We try to protect them but due to the location of our homes and their school they are subjected to this 24 hours a day. They have learned true fear and witnessed lawlessness. They attend school with an OPP presence in an attempt to ensure their safety. They feel imprisoned in their school and homes. Our youngest is fearful to be anywhere in the house, including the washroom, without a family member with him. Our oldest cries she is afraid and wants to know who will help us. Several children in our neighbourhood are in counselling, as they are unable to sleep or concentrate. Our children deserve better, how dare you blatantly disregard their right to be safe at school and at home.

Sleep deprivation has impacted my ability to provide optimum nursing care in my profession as it has in many other residents professions. Our concentration levels have decreased significantly when we are at work, as we obsess about our children's safety while they are at school. Our employers have had to accommodate our need to return to Caledonia to ensure the safety of our children and homes. We have had to miss several days at work. Yet this fiasco has nothing to do with the residents of Caledonia but with the Provincial and Federal governments.

This occupation has created a hostile, fear-driven environment, which we have been living in since the beginning of the occupation. I fear for my life, the life of my children and neighbours, as well as my home. We remain terrorized as we continuously witness a chaotic and inefficient approach to end this. Insomnia and fear are taking their toll on our home lives, we have tried to remain confident that this catastrophe will be resolved; we tried to maintain faith that the people responsible for our safety will not be "caught like deer's in the headlight's again". Our Provincial and Federal leaders have abandoned us.

Our town is being held hostage. These occupiers have damaged and destroyed roadways, interrupted hydro service for an entire region, and endangered public safety. Yet they have been

rewarded with living in model homes and receiving free water and hydro. These actions must not be tolerated. No one should be considered above the law.

The Public Safety Priorities of the Provincial Liberal Government, include the following:

- We want to know that our people — all of our people — are safe.
- We want our children to be safe, our loved ones to be safe.
- We're working with communities and neighbourhoods to be tough on crime
- Mr McGuinty you state being Premier of Ontario is — without a doubt — the best job anyone can hope to have. It is an honour to serve and a privilege to work every day with people from all walks of life to make this great province even stronger.

Premier McGuinty, you Sir are a medical anomaly, the fact you can stand when you don't have a spine will surely be discussed for generations to come. Your signature phrase "be patient" has outlived its usefulness, we expect the leader of our great province to have greater words of wisdom. Premier McGuinty, where have you been? Our patience has run out.

Some of our elected provincial government diatribe has alluded that this illegal occupation has been incident free and is merely symbolic. Your lack of knowledge concerns me, how can educated decisions regarding the safety and well-being of the people you serve be made with such a blatant lack of insight. Again I invite you to come to Caledonia without your entourage and spend a few days walking in our shoes. In fact, please come and stay at my home (or a few of my neighbours) you will be delighted to enjoy the many pleasures an illegal occupation has to offer. You can then take this opportunity to explain to our children why you are allowing this to happen.

Premier McGuinty, every time you break your word, you lose power, successful leaders keep their word and their promises. You only have one reputation in life. Your word is gold. Honour your word Prime Minister Harper:

**Your mission statement informs us:**

You are getting things done for families and taxpayers; Canada's New Government is building a stronger Canada.

- A prosperous and secure country.
- A Canada that is united at home and respected abroad.
- A country where what you've done and where you're going matters more than where you're from or who you know.
- A Canada that offers everyone a fair shot.
- A country with safe streets.
- A Canada that leads not follows.

What exactly have you done for the residents of Caledonia?

## **You Promise Accountability**

- Continue to reform our political institutions and the political process to make them more accountable and more democratic. Who is being held accountable for this fiasco, and what type of democracy not only encourages but also participates in negotiations while a town is being held hostage.

The Canadian Charter of Rights states

- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

- Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination

I assume these rights include the residents of Caledonia.

This leads me to the role the Ontario Provincial Police have played in this catastrophe

## **Ontario Provincial Police**

### **Vision**

“Safe Communities.... A Secure Ontario. Is Caledonia not included in this vision?

### **Mission**

“Policing Excellence through our People, our Work and our Relationships” There is much more work to be done to accomplish this mission

### **Promise**

- The OPP commits to working continually to earn the confidence of the citizens. A confidence that will not be taken for granted.

- The OPP fulfills this commitment by providing the best and most professional service, possible, and by striving to build a culture of trust and open and honest dialogue with the communities it serves.

- The OPP appreciates the vital role they play in protecting the fundamental rights of all people in Ontario.

Where was the OPP’s commitment to your vision, mission and promise when assaults were taking place, vehicles were being hijacked, vandalism and blatant crimes were being committed in front of Provincial Police Officers.

We applaud the departure of Commissioner Boniface, her lack of leadership, failure to provide a safe environment for the residents of Caledonia and her underhanded secret meetings with a few was to say the least inappropriate.

The events of the Caledonia occupation and the OPP response / non-response have caused the Ontario Provincial Police to become a non-viable policing agency in Caledonia if not all of Haldimand County...

This non-viability is not the primary fault of the officers on the ground for the most part (there are however a few exceptions), it is the fault of the OPP command structure and the policies of the OPP that have been utilized since the start of the DCE occupation. There is no recovery from the damage that has been done to the OPP in Caledonia, they are operating with little to no public confidence and there is no hope of restoring the community faith in them as a whole. While we understand that orders must be followed, every officer has a legal, ethical and moral duty to uphold the law.

Prime Minister Harper and Premier McGuinty, you are in a position of great influence and responsibility. You have a moral obligation to use your position's authority and power to end this intolerable situation. Band-aid solutions have been unsuccessful and key strategies must be implemented immediately to restore law and order to our community.

You assumed we were a small community with little voting power; you did not take into consideration the courage of the people or the support from across Canada. The people of Canada know this could be their backyard next. We, the residents of Caledonia, will no longer bend over to have pink smoke blown up our posteriors. Our demands are simple and realistic

- We demand a public apology from Premier McGuinty, Monte Kwinter, David Ramsey, Gwen Boniface, Prime Minister Harper, Diane Finley.
- We demand the immediate and unconditional restoration of the rule of law to Caledonia and the surrounding area, this includes enforcing all court orders, arrest warrants and the absolute enforcement of anything occurring on or around the currently occupied area.
- We demand constant and unfettered information sharing from the Federal, Provincial, Municipal governments and minutes of the negotiations meeting to be released. This should occur weekly and maintain an open and transparent consistency as it is we the people of Caledonia who are being affected and our hometown bartered with while being kept in the dark. Anything less is unacceptable!
- We demand the immediate removal of the OPP from the town and surrounding area and their replacement by an appropriate force who will provide us with the safety and security that has been non-existent. The institution of Fantino is great for the OPP however it comes as too little too late for the people of Caledonia, the marked shift in policy and operational action that is required cannot be reasonably expected to occur until Fantino has had a considerable period of time to change it from the grass roots up... We have been burdened long enough, Commissioner Fantino remove your force until you can get your house in order at which time you can apply to come back and have said force try to make amends for it's betrayal of this town and it's own mandate under the law.
- We demand the immediate inclusion of citizens from the community particularly those closest to the occupation (residents bordering DCE on Thistlemoore, Braemar, MacCrae, Argyle and Sixth Line) in all negotiations formal and informal. These citizens to be nominated by the community alone at public meetings scheduled for multiple days and times to allow all who wish to the ability to attend based upon their work / home life schedules. These citizens will no be asked to sign secrecy agreements not to release information. No politicians or those with a political agenda are not welcome. We also demand that we have a vehicle of communication to report back to other residents, at this time, we request that Gary McHale communicate any information, so that all people have equal access.

The people of Caledonia are being used as pawns in this political game of chess. We demand negotiations cease immediately until the occupiers have left DCE and all barricades are removed. We demand the return of normalcy to our community. A community, where our children (the most

defenceless people in society) are able to play in their backyards and the streets, where they are able to attend school and live without fear. This is our right as people of Canada.