



héñle? Kawayá7 nsk<sup>w</sup>ést tuł he Nlaka'pamux tuł he tlekmcheen tuł he stagyn. My name is Kawayá7, my english name is Ecko Aleck, I am the daughter of shinqyap (Terry Aleck) and kwalegax (Robin Atkinson), granddaughter of the late Faith Frank and Nelson Henry (on my Dad's side) and Delight Jackson and the late Robert Atkinson (on my Mom's side). I am a registered Lytton First Nation member, I was born and raised in Lytton, BC until the age of 13, when I moved away from the lateral violence and trauma, in my mother's attempt to save my life as a suicidal, at-risk youth.

This letter is to fully embrace, uplift and support Jennifer (Swartz) Grenz and her ties to my Nlaka'pamux territory and community. I am aware of the recent and ongoing attacks to Jen's Indigenous identity and career. These are colonial, harmful acts of defamation happening from LFN community members who are supposed to be in leadership roles. This is deeply disturbing and concerning as a community member, given that Lytton needs the energy of their leaders to be focused on the healing and rebuilding of the land and people after multiple years of devastating fires and mudslides. Jen happens to carry a tool basket of knowledge and skills that can support this work. It would deeply benefit our community to welcome her home!

Jen has always shared truthfully her family history and her personal journey of working to reconnect after the assimilation process that tore her family from community, culture and the land. I have brought her name forward to my father and Aunty N'kixw'stn who were both able to separately locate her family name and locate her to our lands, just by understanding our community's oral and documented genealogy.

I have witnessed Jen's incredible impact with her work in supporting the healing of Indigenous lands through ecosystem rebuilding after wildfire devastation, relationship building with local Indigenous communities to support their own land stewardship, healing and ancestral restructuring, and the unforgettable feedback I heard from her Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at UBC. These attacks in the way they are presented appear (to me) to be acts of colonial lateral violence instead of relational ways and research into someone's documentation, community connections and family history.

I claim this phenomenal human as a family member, particularly through my own Aleck family connections to the Swartz family and locate her to my Nlaka'pamux territory. I encourage anyone who is challenging her identity to simply look at the documentation provided and just sit down to have a conversation as is the way of our ancestors.

Any challenges or questions, reach out to me directly.

*Ecko Aleck*

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