



**The Honourable Edna Ekhivalak Elias
Commissioner of Nunavut**

**Community Gathering
Kugluktuk, NU
October 23, 2013**

Good evening everyone.

Millie and Simon, our guests of honour; Dad; family; friend; relatives; Your Worship Mayor Nivingalok; MLA Taptuna; Elders and ladies and gentlemen;

Thank you all for joining us in this momentous celebration recognizing two of our very own residents!

This has been the hardest speech that I've ever had to write and will be to deliver. Tears flooded my eyes blurring my vision immediately upon hitting the keyboard. All last week I thought about what I am going to say to my nukak and ningauk. It is a very emotional one to do. But here goes...join me if tears choke me up again. We will honour them and celebrate through the talents of the youth and children which they inspired to make good choices in life. So to keep the emotions away, I chose to focus on "being and becoming contributing members of our community and the benefits to oneself and to many others".

We all know how much Simon and Millie have been helping our community, voluntarily helping. To mention their voluntary leadership: Nattiq Frolics, Northern Games, Christmas events, fundraising for my cancer walk, Christmas food hampers, Anglican church Ladies Auxilliary...to mention a few. Like I did many years before her, she voluntarily sat on the Alcohol Education Committee, which can be a tough job. Tough or not, the desire for a safer and better community for our children is a strong motivator.

Millie is very good at volunteering. But she is also very good at volunteering her family whenever she volunteered to help. Many events became family affairs. The family members then recruited their friends and so on...the volunteer numbers always grew. The kind act of helping rewarded them with good feelings and joy at the success of events; thanks to volunteers who joined them. I know on one occasion I had to defend and speak up for her family as they were exhausted, not to burn out volunteers! Remember (with a smile)?

Millie has taught her children and their friends the act of sharing, caring and volunteering by getting them involved.

They in turn will continue to contribute to Kugluktuk. I acknowledge them too!

From their volunteerism and the help of many other volunteers, you and I have witnessed many joyful and tear-jerking events. We have benefitted from the many gatherings which have brought our community together. We have danced together. We have feasted together. We have donated money together. We have cried together. We have lived together. We have loved together. We have laughed together. We must continue to live, love and laugh together!

You lived, loved and laughed together as a community! Thanks again to the voluntary work of Millie with the assistance of the Women's Group. Last spring's Live, Love and Laugh workshop for women benefitted many of you. It reminded you to that to be able to love others, one needs to love one self. It reminded you to love yourself to be able to love and live with your families. It reminded you to live healthy, happy lives to be contributing members of our community.

Millie has been an inspiration to many people in and outside of Nunavut. Inspiring us to be out there helping, sharing, living, laughing and loving in, for and with our community! Each of you have probably been touched in one way or another by her volunteer work. I know I have.

Her volunteer work March of 2012 helped me raise over \$19,000.00 for the Women in Action-Steps of Hope Cancer Walk! The Alberta Cancer Foundation could not believe and still doesn't believe, how caring and generous Kugluktuk is and how the leadership and volunteer work of many people can be so successful.

It is amazing what the leadership of one and the many hands of others can do! Thank you, Millie. Thank you, Simon. Thank you volunteers. This occasion is to honour your volunteerism as it is to honour Millies and Simons.

Besides your fellow Kuglukturmut honouring and thanking you, someone very special, honours you by sending this letter.

In closing, I would like to present you with these two notebooks in which many people have written messages to you. Open the pages when times seem tough, when homesickness kicks in, when you are feeling alone, when you are tired, read the messages to bring warmer happier thoughts and feelings.

I love you! Quanaqpiaqpakpuk! Quannaqpiaqquhilu!