



**For Immediate Release**

October 15, 2020

## **CCNC-SJ Supports Action Against Racism After Assault of 80-year-old Vietnamese-Canadian Grandmother in Pembroke**

October 15/2020/Toronto / The Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice supports the family of Thi Nga Doan and the Pembroke Mayor in responding effectively to a racist attack on an 80-year-old Vietnamese Canadian in Pembroke on August 20, 2020. On October 5, 2020, the Ontario Provincial Police announced assault charges against three youths.

Cindy Tran, the granddaughter of the assault victim, has written a moving piece about the experience of growing up as a racialized person in a small town (<https://kcindytran.com/feature/hold-yourselves-accountable-racism-and-discrimination-in-pembroke-on>). Racism is a sad reality that occurs in both big cities and small towns – regardless of whether there are lots of racialized persons in the community or only a few. Victims of racism and their families need support from community-based services, allies and leaders, no matter where racism happens.

CCNC-SJ appreciates Pembroke Mayor Mike LeMay for his public support of the Doan and Tran family. Leaders have an important role to play in these situations. In addition to the first meeting of Pembroke’s new Diversity Round Table on October 19, we look forward to ongoing meaningful and systemic responses, including reviews of policies, staffing, communications and education.

The OPP charges against these youth will hopefully lead to positive changes for them and the community. At the same time, CCNC-SJ is concerned about an overly narrow approach to hate crimes. The OPP’s news release stated that the “OPP Hate Crimes/Extremism Unit was consulted and it was determined that, while there may have been a racial aspect to the situation, it was determined not to be a motivating factor in the incident.” Something seems wrong when racial slurs are used but the police don’t want to label it a hate crime. While the alleged offender’s intent is important in matters of criminal law, there needs to be more focus on the victim of racism and the disproportionate trauma that they experience, regardless of the offender’s subjective intent or motivation.

Gary Yee, CCNC-SJ Director, says, “I can empathize with racialized persons who may sometimes feel excluded or different when they are in a community without much diversity. One measure of our humanity is how we deal with persons who may be different from us, or not as powerful or privileged as us. All of us have a responsibility to avoid excluding or marginalizing “the other”, and to confront racist attitudes or behaviour.”

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