

## Tehya's Response to *The Rabbits*:

*"Why is it important to be responsible to others on a personal, local, global and digital level?"*

*I think this topic is one that is controversial for our nation right now. There have been occasions in Canadian history when the Europeans came and took over the land from the Native Americans who lived there, and we are still dealing with those decisions and repercussions to this day. The whole debate and argument over Residential schools and the treatment of First Nations people by the Whites is something that touches home for me, too. My Kokum and Moosum (grandma and grandpa) both have resentment towards the education system because they were both taken from home and sent to a residential school where their culture and way of life was stripped and they were punished for speaking their Native tongue, Cree. *The Rabbits* really speaks to me and my family. School is not always a priority because of my Kokum and Moosum's background: the system failed them so if I didn't want to go to school, they didn't force the issue. I think if I were one of the original residents of the land in *The Rabbits*, I might have a similar attitude. If my culture was punished out of me, I would be confused and angry and wouldn't care if my children or grandchildren followed the rules of the outsiders who came and overtook everything. If my culture weren't being respected, then why would I respect theirs? I think that we have a responsibility to be respectful of others and not expect people to become like us, but expect that people are different and that's okay.*

*Any person who is new to a community has the responsibility of learning that place's culture and customs. But learning about them doesn't mean you have to incorporate them as your own, it just means that you are respectful of those around you. I am constantly getting e mails about how immigrants to Canada want us to change the culture in our schools: no religion, no holidays, no whatever. And the e mails are always encouraging me to take a stand against this. I find it exhausting, really, and would like to think that I am more open-minded than that. I think that if immigrants to Canada are coming here because it is safer, then that's great. But, I also think it's their responsibility to be respectful of the Canadian culture. We are not asking immigrants to become Christian or either French or English speaking: we are respectful of the immigrants' religion and language and culture. We don't try to force them to become Canadian. And, I think, that should be a standard practice regardless if you are coming into a country or a community. Learn the rules and culture of that place, and be respectful of it. Don't try and force others to be like you but work within the parameters of your own culture and the new community.*