

# Danika Warkentin

*2023 Bursary Essay*



*Last year, I wrote about my appreciation for CMU’s emphasis on interconnectivity. Throughout this past year, I have developed an intense gratitude for the ways which my professors value my own voice within class subjects.*

In my “Cultures of Violence, Cultures of Peace” course with Wendy Kroeker, many guest speakers visited our class. Two Palestinian men told us stories about the conflict scene in the Gaza strip, an Indigenous woman talked to us about the Sixties Scoop, and another Indigenous woman talked to us about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The speakers brought personal stories to the conflicts which I had often heard about in the news. We were strongly encouraged

to ask questions and integrate experiences from our own lives into the discussion. At the end of the course, we were given the opportunity to share a “peace song” with the rest of the class. I took the opportunity to write a song about what we in Canada can do. The song is entitled “Eyes on You,” assuring the oppressed that they are seen and supported, and assuring the oppressors that they are seen and held liable.

At CMU, I am not an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge. I continue to choose this Mennonite institution because it recognizes the youth of the Church as valuable voices to include in critical conversations. It is a place where I am welcomed to write and share a song to add impact to the stories of others. If I had not felt welcomed into contributing my own ideas, I would not have had the courage to share my thoughts and perspectives in class, much less a heartfelt, original song.

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[CLICK](#) to listen to Danika’s song