**Canada Day 2016!**

Canada Day is the national day of Canada celebrating the anniversary of the July 1, 1867, enactment of the Constitution Act, 1867, which united three colonies into a single country called Canada within the British Empire.

As we celebrate this year, we need to remember that we are the ‘Settler’ Canadians and that while we celebrate we must also remember that we are in a time of Reconciliation with our Indigenous friends who are the only native Canadians because we occupy their lands and territories.

This year, as we move into our 31st year in service, DAWN Canada is celebrating the launch last week by Minister Carla Qualtrough, our Minister for Sport and persons with disabilities of a major consultation with Canadians for a [National Accessibility Act](http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/what-does-an-accessible-canada-mean-to-you-government-of-canada-launches-consultation-on-planned-new-accessibility-legislation-583942601.html).

Women with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world. We experience the highest rates of unemployment, poverty and violence.

For women and girls with disabilities, their experiences of violence often [remain hidden and unaddressed](https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/05/include-women-girls-disabilities-anti-violence-efforts) due to the multiple barriers in accessing supports.

Earlier this week Bonnie Brayton, National Executive Director of DAWN Canada was appointed by Minister Patricia Hajdu, our Minister for the Status of Women, to her [National Advisory Council](http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/newly-formed-advisory-council-to-help-shape-federal-strategy-against-gender-based-violence-584603821.html) to develop a Federal Strategy to end Violence against women in Canada.

Brayton says she is pleased with the appointment. “We need to move beyond toolkits and project funding and to link a national strategy to the work that many women’s organizations are already doing,” she said.

On this Canada Day we are more hopeful than we have been in a very long time that women and girls with disabilities and Deaf women and girls can look forward to living safely in a respectful Canada - one that includes all its citizens equally.