

Boozhoo people of Biigtigong.... As most of you know my name is Leah Michano..... First and foremost, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to my sister Chelsey Michano and cousin Ashley Fitzpatrick for nominating me for one of the councilor positions.

As a young woman who has been living off reserve for the past 15 years some may wonder what does this young inexperienced woman have to offer?

....Although I may seem like an unlikely candidate because I've lived a very quiet and private life and have spent most of my adult life out of the spotlight my focus for the past 15 years has been to build a strong and healthy lifestyle for myself.

....I had to build a solid reputation for me in order to be capable of influencing my fellow peers and younger generations in the most positive way possible.

I've always taken a keen interest in politics and although I am not the most experienced in this field I must say that my passion and heart for this has always been there.We all have to start fresh and learn from somewhere.I've always grown up in my family to be a respectful role model for my sister, cousins, godchildren, honorary nieces and nephews and anybody else who looks up to me..... I know that it will take more than being a healthy role model to be elected as a council member of this community but I can tell you right now that now is the time for younger generations and for women to step up and take on roles that have typically been taken on by men and I am living proof that any woman is capable of this.

For the past 5 years I have been employed at Williams gold mine and for 3 of those years my position there has been as an electrical apprentice.Throughout those 3 years I have faced many challenges..... I was under qualified, I am a woman working in a typical man's world and at times odds may have been against me I have always managed to come out on top, full strength and ready to take on any

challenge that my fellow coworkers have faced me with..... But mostly, the support and encouragement I received from my coworkers are evident to my success today.

What I am trying to say is that I need you as fellow community members to believe in me and believe that I am capable of this position because without your support my campaign is basically pointless..... I admit I lack experience in this level of expertise but at one point I ran for youth council chief and was successfully elected..... If my peers believed in me enough way back then I sure hope that today they would still believe in me to take on this leadership role as a councilor.

My friends and family would tease me about being bossy but in reality, they said that because I've always been a natural born leader..... As cheesy as it may sound this to me is my destiny.To be a leader of this community and ensure that each and every one of you continue to have a voice whether it be on your own or on my behalf.I have always taken pride and respect in where I come from.I am proud of my people..... I am proud that we are so culturally involved and connected to the land.I am proud to know each and every one of you because I know one way or another we have influenced each other along the way.

My main focus of being here right now is our youth..... I've always been a strong believer that it takes a whole community to raise a child and our community is evident of this.

Our land and education has always been a priority to me and I support the fact that our community involves our young people's education with culture and the land.Being culturally connected and involved with the land are one of my priorities because this is who are we.We are people of the water and the earth and we've

fought hard to be who we are today.The young people of our community will eventually be the very individuals standing here giving these speeches and I feel very strongly that a person of my age being elected into a council position is the step in the right direction to not only obtain the experience from our current leaders but to be able to lead our future generations of our community in the years to come.A community that is not only strong but resilient and very well respected.

At this time, I would like to give my gratitude to current and former members of chief and council for paving the way and building such an amazing community to be proud of.I wouldn't even consider accepting my nomination if I didn't feel that our past and present chief and councilors didn't do so such a great job in leading my generation and future generations to come..... I'm proud to be able to speak here tonight and hopefully give each and every one of you the consideration to vote for me this election..... I am by no means the smartest 31-year-old woman from this community but with the leaders we have now I am confident that I have learned enough from the best and will continue to learn from them.

Here are some of the issues I will advocate for and support:

- 1- **Education**....I believe we need to build a strong base in education so our children can compete in the outside world and build a strong economic base for our future children. I will also support the concept of land based learning. Our children need to know their own history and culture. We also need to put more focus on trades training and apprenticeships.
- 2- **Economic Development**....Along with a good education system I will support the building of a strong economy to give our future generations a place to work and to add revenue to our financial system to cover off shortfalls created by inadequate Government funding.

- 3- **Housing**...I will support and advocate for the idea of looking at new and innovative ways to provide housing for our people. The current system is controlled by INAC and does not properly serve the needs of our people.
- 4- **Land Claim..** I am not fully versed in the specifics of the land claim but I support it and will make every attempt to learn more about it. .. We need to get our land back...800 acres is not enough for future generations..

In closing I will support and become involved in all initiatives and programs that serve the common good and that will benefit our future generations....After all that's who we are here for.

I would also like to mention that I would like to become involved in a portfolio where I can be of most benefit....Perhaps in education and trades training....After all that's where my training is.

Miigwetch for listening to what I have to say and I hope that you all understand that although I lack some knowledge that we all have to start fresh somewhere.....
Have a wonderful evening.Ahow miigwetch!

