

## Running for Mayor

I stare out the window and watch the falling rain. My mind is busy thinking about issues affecting my city. For one thing, the parks are not being kept up. There is broken equipment in almost every park, and I worry that one day someone is going to get seriously hurt. Lots of snow falls here in the winter, and the streets are not cleared quickly. There are also lots of people out of work here because companies have moved to new areas. I love this city and it makes me sad to see these problems. Something needs to change!

I didn't hear my husband, Gary, enter the room until he said, "Alita, you've been sitting here for an hour. Why do you look so down in the dumps?" He refilled my cup of tea.

I thanked him for the tea before answering. "I'm unhappy with what is happening to our city. I can think of at least three major changes that I would like to see. I'm just not sure what I can do about it."

Gary smiled at me and patted my hand. "You're a smart woman and a great leader. Maybe you should run for mayor."

I started to laugh, but stopped when I realized Gary's words made sense. I am a member of the Oneida Tribe, which is part of the Iroquois Nation. In our history, women have always held positions of leadership. Women select the male leader, and if the man chosen does not do a good job, they remove him from the job. The current mayor seems to be putting minimal effort into solving our city's problems. I think he is doing a poor job. He should be replaced, and I should run for mayor!



Gary saw that I needed some time to think. Before he walked out of the room, he said, "If you need to talk, I'm all ears."

I thought about Gary's suggestion for a while longer. I have been a leader before. I was in charge of the group that raised money for the local homeless shelter. I organize volunteers for litter cleanup on the highway. I know how to take charge and get things done. I begin to like Gary's idea.

I called my mother. I wanted to know what she thought about the idea. Should I run for mayor?

"I think that is a wonderful idea," she said. "You come from a long line of women leaders. Your grandmother and great-grandmother would be proud. What do we need to do to get the ball rolling? How do you get your name on the ballot?"

After I said good-bye to my mother I felt like a million bucks! I had my mother's support and know that she will help me in the run

for mayor. I know I have Gary's backing, too. Instead of feeling hopeless about the problems in my city, I felt energized. Things will get better, and I want to be the one to start the changes.