



Indigenous Teachings Guiding You Through Cornwall Campus

St. Lawrence College Cornwall campus is located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee & Anishinaabe peoples who continue to call these lands their home. As you navigate campus you will see directional wayfinding that incorporates elements from their practices and teachings.

THE TREE OF PEACE

The Great Law of Peace, also known as the Kai-anerekowa (guy-yaw-ne-let-go-wa), was created by Haudenosaunee people and is one of the earliest examples of a formal democratic governance structure. The Tree of Peace symbolizes the alliance of five nations and the binding force among the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca with the Tuscarora Nation joining later, making it six nations, known today as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

The Tree of Peace also symbolizes unity, peace, strength, diplomacy, governance, cultural identity, inclusivity, environmental stewardship and reminds us that all individuals within a community, belong, are valued and their well-being and growth are prioritized. The Haudenosaunee symbolizes these principles and others through the imagery of the great white pine tree often referred to as the Tree of Peace, or the Great Tree of Peace

THE TURTLE AND THE EAGLE

The Turtle and the Eagle both carry deeper meanings within the context of the Great Law of Peace and Tree of Peace symbolism. It is important to be mindful that within Haudenosaunee culture, Anishinaabe and other First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures, symbols and symbolism and their meanings are often multifaceted and layered. Just as in many cultures, symbols evolve and take on different connotations over time. Different communities and individuals may interpret symbolism about turtles and eagles in ways that resonate with their unique traditions, experiences, and cultures. It is important to respect and appreciate the multiple layers of symbolism and their cultural significance within each culture's teachings and society.

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A:kweks (Ah-gweeks) | Eagle

At the top of the Tree of Peace is an Eagle. The eagle is considered the guardian of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy – it is the belief of the Haudenosaunee people that the creator sees through the eagles' eyes and continues to watch over the people. Because of his strength, the eagle was chosen to be the messenger to the Creator. Because of his keen eyesight, it is the eagle's duty to watch over the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and warn the people when danger to the Great Peace is near.



A'nó:wara (ah-NO-wah-la) | Turtle

The turtle holds cultural and spiritual significance to many Indigenous, First Nations, and Métis people, including the Haudenosaunee people. In the Haudenosaunee creation story, the turtle's back is the foundation upon which the earth was formed, and that links the turtle to the very existence of their homeland and the land that sustains the people. The turtle represents the foundational relationship between the people and the land, the importance of co-operation, and the enduring lessons that guide their way of life. The turtle is a reminder of our collective and spiritual connection to our mother the earth, and the responsibilities we have as caretakers and protectors of the land.