

Indigenous Teachings Guiding You Through Kingston Campus

St. Lawrence College Kingston campus is located the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and 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 Kaianerekowa (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 SEVEN GRANDFATHERS

Across the Kingston Campus you will find stories of The Seven Grandfather Teachings that date back to the beginning of time and are a set of guiding principles given to the Anishinaabe people, providing them with the tools to live a good life. They have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years through stories and ceremonies.

Many Indigenous organizations and communities have adopted the Seven Grandfather Teachings, adapting them to align with their own values. The Teachings encompass the values and morals that all human beings

should aim to live by and provide guidance in living in harmony with each other and with all of Creation.

The Seven Grandfathers were Spirits who were given the responsibility of watching over the Anishinaabe people by Creator. They sent a Messenger down to earth to find someone to learn the Anishinaabe way of life and teach Anishinaabe values to others.

After seven years of teaching a young boy, the Grandfathers each gave him a principle to share with the Anishinaabe people. These principles, known as the Seven Grandfather Teachings, are Love, Respect, Courage, Truth, Honesty, Humility, and Wisdom.



Amik (ah' - mik) | Tsiani:to (Ja-KNEE-doe) | Beaver

Wisdom is taught to us by the beaver, who use their natural gifts wisely to ensure their survival. They alter their surroundings in an environmentally friendly

and sustainable way for the benefit of their family and their community. They find purpose and satisfaction in doing what they are meant to do. The beaver reminds us that we all have gifts and a purpose in this world.

Wisdom is the combination of all the Grandfather Teachings and our life experiences. Wisdom is the ability to make decisions based on our gifts of knowledge and experience. We should treasure these and use them wisely. We should appreciate the gifts of others and respect our limitations and those of all our surroundings.

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Ma'iingan (my - in' - gun) | Okwáho (Oh-GWA-ho) | Wolf

Humility is taught to us by the wolf. The wolf is strong and powerful alone but finds its greatest strength when part of a pack. Every wolf in the pack is equally important, and no role is more important than another.

The wolf teaches us that humility gives strength to families and communities. Humility is to know that we are a sacred part of Creation. To live with humility is to live life selflessly, respecting our place and feeling pride in our people, generously praising their accomplishments.



Migizi (mi - gee' - see) | :kweks (Ah-gweeks) | Eagle

Love is taught to us by the eagle. The eagle flies the highest of all birds and thus is closest to Creator. From its lofty vantage point, the eagle sees all of Creation.

Love is one of the hardest Teachings, especially if one has been hurt, but love brings great peace. When we live by the Seven Grandfather Teachings and see ourselves as the eagle does, we are able to love who we are. And once we love ourselves, we can love others. We will then be at peace with ourselves, with all life, and with Creator.



Miskwaadesi (mis-kwa - day' - see) | A'nó:wara (ah-NO-wah-la) | Turtle

Truth is taught to us by the turtle, who was here when all life was created and carries teachings related to the beginning of life on its back. The turtle reminds us that all life is sacred.

We know who we are in our heart. By knowing that, we also know the truth. We must understand, speak, and feel the truth, and respect its power. Our emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual gifts will guide each one of us in our journey of truth.

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Bizhiki (bi' -shi - kee) | Tsihstekeriià:kon (gee-stay-Lee-YA-goon) | Buffalo

Respect is taught to us by the buffalo. No animal was more important to Indigenous people than the buffalo, who provided everything they needed for survival, including hides for warmth and shelter, meat for food, and bones for tools. By giving their life and every part of their being, the buffalo showed respect for the needs of others. In turn, the people showed respect for the buffalo. The buffalo reminds us to be attentive to the balance of all living things, to share and give away what we do not need, and to honour Mother Earth and all Creation.



Makwa (mah' - kwa) | Ohkwá:ri (Oh-GWAH-lee) | Bear

Bravery is taught to us by the bear. Bears are known to valiantly confront danger. Overcoming challenges can be difficult, but we should meet them with the same bravery and strength as a mother bear protecting her cubs. We should rely on our inner strength to be ourselves, stand up for what we believe in, and do what is right for ourselves, our family, and our community. Facing our fears with courage enables us to live a full life.



Sabe (sah' - bay) | Sasquatch

Honesty is taught to us by the sabe (a mythical giant like the Sasquatch) who is believed to be closer to the spirit world than humans and reminds us that we must be true to who we are, living every day with honesty and integrity.

Being honest with ourselves first allows us to be honest with others. We must be truthful and trustworthy in words and actions, and accept and act on truths through straightforward and appropriate communication. Elders say that when we live this way, our spirit is the size of a sabe.