

In this particular edition of the Grand River Post Secondary Board newsletter, instead of a student profile, we will be featuring a family profile and their unique family idea.

Wright Family Profile

The whole idea was initiated and carried out by Iris Wright.

Iris Wright is currently attending Laurentian University in Business Administration.

Iris was planning a gathering to recognize her son who had graduated from Laurentian University with a degree in Native Studies. When planning the gathering to recognize him, she realized how many of her cousins, sisters, nieces and nephews had also graduated or were in the process of earning a formal education. Many of them had never attended their school's graduation ceremonies and Iris felt it would be more meaningful if it came from their family rather than an institution.

As a university student herself, she knows that it takes a lot of determination, hard work and coping skills to earn a degree. It was through her own experience that she could truly understand and appreciate what her son and other family members had gone through. "Students need the support of family and friends. Financial support is always appreciated but words of encouragement and prayers are what will get them through".

The gathering was planned for an evening at the Six Nations Tourism Building. The Grand River Post Secondary Education Office was invited to attend and be the guest speakers at the family gathering to celebrate the family's recent and past academic achievements.

The family realized that the GRPSEO has played a significant role in helping to achieve the educational goals and they made the evening an opportunity to recognize and give thanks for the support received from the office.

The evening was started by welcoming the guest speakers. Carol and Norman Jacobs, Board members of GRPSEO offered words of encouragement to the students who have just begun their formal learning journey. This was followed by a meal.

After the meal certain members of the family were asked to speak. The theme that came out many times was that parents, grandparents and great grandparents are to thank for where they are today. "Without their value of hard work and dedication to God, we wouldn't be here today celebrating our success".

After the speeches, students as young as five year old (graduated from Day Care) and some older (40 and up), received personalized certificates imprinted with the two-row wampum symbol, representing the separate but co-existence of the native and non-native cultures. "As students we enter into another culture to learn and share our knowledge base, process the information learned, decide

for ourselves what is relevant, and then take this knowledge back to our communities and/or incorporate it into our own personal growth and development."

The GRPSEO was impressed by the initiative taken by this family and the uniqueness of acknowledging their own family educational achievements. This can only add to, not only the family pride but the individual pride that each person in attendance must have felt. It will also encourage the younger ones to continue with their education and strive for success.

The Wright family has decided that this was not a one-time event for their family. Every four years they will come together and celebrate their graduates and each year build on to the ceremonies.

<p>Congratulations to the Wright family members for their well deserved accomplishments. Thank you for sharing with us.</p>
