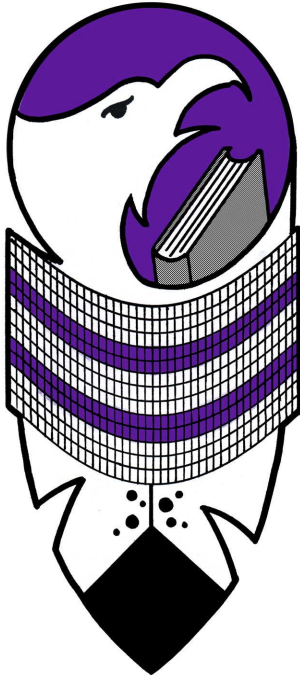


EDUCATION...A PATH TO TOMORROW

## GRAND RIVER POST SECONDARY EDUCATION BOARD NEWSLETTER



**Onkwehon:we  
with Grand River Territory  
lineage are empowered  
through higher education  
within available resources.**

Spring 2011

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**"SPECIAL EDITION"**

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**In Recognition of  
"National Aboriginal Language Day"  
March 31, 2011**

### **Grand River Post Secondary**

#### **Board Members**

Brenda Davis (Chair)

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Tom Deer

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Lewis Staats, Council Rep

**MOTIVATE . INSPIRE . EDUCATE . CHALLENGE**

On March 27th, 1989 a resolution was passed by The Assembly of First Nations to declare **March 31st National Aboriginal Language Day**. This is a day to promote the use of Indigenous languages in the work place and/or social setting.

In the "Declaration of National Aboriginal Language Day" it states that:

- Aboriginal Language is a birthright.
- Language is essential to culture.
- Aboriginal Language is an asset.
- Aboriginal Control of language is essential.
- Aboriginal Languages are equal.

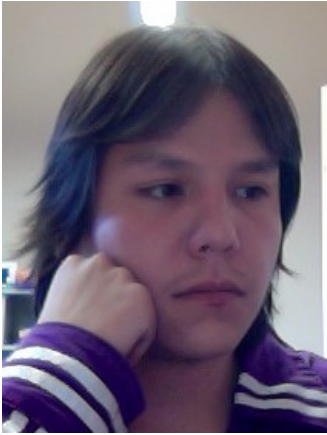
(Assembly of First Nations, Ottawa 1989)

So this March 31st, do your part and speak your Indigenous language with your friends, your co-workers and your family. If you don't know an Indigenous language, take the opportunity to learn one and the rich and diverse culture associated with it. There are many resources available in the form of school texts, story books, tapes, cds, numerous online sites and the radio station.

The Grand River Post Secondary Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the GRPSEO Staff and all members of our community in their efforts and work towards the revitalization of the languages of the Haudenosaunee people at Six Nations. We encourage you to keep up the good work and always share with each other.

Ronatsteríhston ne GRPSEO ron':nehre tahonwatirenhsarónnion ne raotihná :tshera ne ó:ni ne akwé:kon tsi niiiá:kon onkwaná:takon rotio'ténion ená shatiriwahní:rate nonkwawen':na ne ken:tho Ohswé:ken. Kwahretsá :rons, ó:ni shé:kon ensewawkwíhson tanon tiotkon tensewaiá:khon nahó:ten sewatewaienstonhatic. (Mohawk translation)

Honahsdí:sdqh GRPSEO hq:né: da:hqwadínóhonyo:' hodínha'tra', ne'hni' sçh ni gá:gq: qgwanadá:gq: godí:ho'de' çgac:wahní:ya:t sçh nidá wawçnó'dç:s nç:tho hç:wch Ohswç:ge'. Egwahsgyaç:nyo' ahsçh çswá gyadahni:ya:t çswájago: ne hni' gyotgq:t deswáyakq' dçho'dç' swadéa wayçhsdqhç:gye'. (Cayuga translation)



Tehawannahkwa (Wesley Miller) is of the Onondaga Nation, Beaver Clan.

Wesley has been working in the field of the Mohawk language for approximately 10 years. He started taking night classes at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa Mohawk Immersion Program and continued into a year of full time immersion. This is where he is currently employed. Also he is enrolled in the Ogwehoweh Language Diploma Program at Six Nations Polytechnic. His future goal is to study linguistics full time and teach languages.

He has taken many courses in teaching methodologies utilized in aboriginal languages. He has training in: Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA), Rassius Method, and Total Physical Response (TPR). He

has also participated in many other short teacher workshops.

Wesley was an instructor/ student mentor/camp coordinator at a two year diploma program in Mohawk Immersion, accredited through Trent University at Tsi Tyonnheht Onkwawenna which is located in Tyendinaga. He helped university students learn Mohawk, and instructors to teach Mohawk.

A major accomplishment of Wesley was as a teacher's assistant at Karonhianonhnha School in Kahnawake, Quebec in 2004. This experience **forced him** to successfully accomplish his goal of becoming more disciplined in the Mohawk language, gave him great listening skills, and reinforced his already strong reading and writing skills.

Another major accomplishment for Wesley was coming back to Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa and teaching the first year immersion program, four years after he was a student in the very same program.

A recent challenge for Wesley in his education and career is as a single parent with shared custody and finding the time to be with his son while working full time and being a full time student.

Living in different Mohawk communities was also a great challenge that he is proud to have overcome as well as the dialect difference, which proved to be the most difficult to overcome. Wesley feels every challenge he faces makes him a **stronger person**.

As an Onkwehon:we the values or principles that guided him throughout his education and career has been **Kayanere'kó:wa – The Great Law**. He believes the basic principles of Good Mind, Peace, and Strength and values the ancient tradition of oral storytelling.

Wesley believes it is important to begin learning in the language by listening. For example: babies don't learn English from a textbook. They learn to speak naturally before they learn the grammar, spelling, and punctuation. He follows that principle when teaching, and when advising community members on how best to learn the language. First of all **form a solid foundation** and then develop literacy skills. He also is a firm believer in the **evolution** of our language, and the importance to **coin new terms** in our language rather than resort to using English. He believes that if people continue bor-

rowing English words, in the future, our language will be a mixed language no longer true to its nature. He encourages people who are learning language to **circumlocute** which is a process which a language learner “goes around” what needs to be said, and describes it using simpler terminology (due to lack of vocabulary), rather than resorting to English. Avoiding English altogether is instrumental in teaching people **discipline** when speaking a new language.

Wesley sees himself contributing to our community and society at large, as a result of his education through language, knowledge, wisdom, discipline, and guidance. Mohawk teachers and students have at times asked him questions about vocabulary or terminology.

Another way he's contributed to the community is through the Longhouse, and through his knowledge of the “**Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen – The Thanksgiving Address**” which he has recited many times, for many different functions in this and other communities. He participates in the Longhouse by helping to put through speeches, and helping others to learn the speeches, as well as ceremonies, the opening address, the Great

Law, the Code of Handsome Lake, the creation story, sky world, prophecies, and our history.

Whenever there are names given at the Longhouse, he is usually one of the speakers asked to confirm the pronunciation and meaning.

An important contribution one can make to their community is to **learn** their history, language, culture, traditions, ceremonies, creation story, other aspects of our culture and then continue to teach it to others. Only by **informing and educating** the community can we ensure the survival of our ancient teachings. Our **identity** as a people will be lost unless more people start learning and teaching our ways.

One challenge that needs to be addressed by Six Nations and the world in the next generation is the need to get **back to our old way** of living in harmony with mother earth, speaking the language handed to us from the Creator, and honouring our ancestors by carrying and sharing their knowledge with the world. Only by speaking our respective languages, and relying only on ourselves to feed our families, can we become truly sovereign again. Wesley believes that when a nation has negotiations with

another nation, they make use of an interpreter. This confirms each **nation's individual sovereignty**. Using English in negotiations with Canada by our leaders is bowing to the needs of the foreign entity, which is forbidden in the Great Law. To be truly sovereign all of our leaders need to speak our language and make use of an interpreter when dealing with foreign governments.

Wesley is happy to see Longhouse families sending their children into immersion, taking language classes themselves and working as families to put in a garden and then harvesting everything together, while speaking their language. He hopes the new generation of Six Nations people will realize the need for this, and will do what needs to be done to **stick to our ways; to honour our ancestors and the creator for what we've been given**.

Wesley encourages and advises young people, to be **proud** of who you are as an **Onkwehonwe**. "Walk in the world with your head held high. Don't let others intimidate you. Carry our language, culture, and songs with you on your journey through life. It's the only way to have **true identity** in this world. **Bring back** anything you learn from the outside world to benefit our peo-

ple.”



Wahsonti:io Hill (Deneen Hill) is Kanien'keha niwakonhwentsio:ten, A'no:wara niwaki'taro:ten (Mohawk Nation, turtle clan).

Deneen has completed the Native Teachers Education Program (NTEP) through Brock University, Foundational Studies in Anthropology Waldorf Teacher Training at the Toronto Steiner Centre, completed the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization certificate, a Linguistics program through University of Victoria, completed Year II of Onkwawen:na Kentyohkwa Adult Mohawk Immersion and two years of Master Apprentice in Mohawk Language. She is presently in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Onkwewehon:we Languages Diploma program at Six Nations Polytechnic as well as continuing in a double ma-

yor in Indigenous Studies and Anthropology at McMaster University.

A major accomplishment for Deneen has been her growth in knowledge of the Mohawk language and culture, while **playing a role** in the development of culturally based immersion education.

A major challenge that she had to deal with throughout her post secondary education and career is **soldiering through her post secondary studies** while working full-time and parenting eleven children, including making sure they had sports opportunities year round. She has had two children since she began her post secondary studies and another one is due in June. She had to **learn how much of a study load she could carry to be successful** with her studies and her family life. It's a challenge that needs to be consistently assessed but it is very possible. If not for the support and understanding of her older children she couldn't be a student, worker and parent.

As an Onkwewehon:we the values or principles that guide Deneen throughout her education and career is being **open minded, humble, patient and understanding of her own abilities**. Also having the courage to **self-reflect** and make the changes within herself

that are conducive to developing traditional ideologies.

To contribute to our community and society at large, presently or in the future as a result of her education, Deneen has dedicated her career to language and culture in education.

She has many ideas, as many others

do, who work and study in the same field. To see these ideas realized are goals for the future of her career.

A key challenge that needs to be addressed by Six Nations and the world in the next generation is that an **all encompassing** language and culture based education system for all our languages with **serious support** by the community and the political bodies.

A permanent body of knowledgeable individuals is needed to guide the process -understanding that time is of the essence. **Aggressive work** is a must for a language and culture on the brink of extinction.

The words of encouragement or advice that she gives to young people as they make decisions for their futures is to know that success is defined by you. If you choose to take an active role in the maintenance of the Longhouse practices or seek a career in the larger society, both are benefi-

cial to our people and a success in her mind. **The way you achieve academic success needs to be molded to fit it into your life.**

Have patience with the process to keep your mind and body healthy. Strength of mind, body and spirit can carry you through anything.

Working towards a **balance** within yourself affects your perspective of life. Your outlook on life is passed to your children.

Your ideas and actions will affect the future of our community.

Deneen expresses *nia:wen* to her family for their support. *Nia:wen* to the many teachers, (who have been of all ages) she has had throughout her learning experience. Some of the most impacting lessons have come from knowledgeable people who helped her see and understand the philosophies embodied in the language and culture.

**“Language and culture defines** us as a unique society. If you appreciate your Indigenous rights, support, language and culture revitalization and retention. The ability to assert our rights is directly hinged on the **maintenance** of our traditional nationhood.”

## Application Calendar 2011

- May 17** Winter Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.  
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.  
Application Deadline for Fall or Fall/Winter semester(s) **Apply on-line!**  
Summer course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.
- July 1** Official Transcripts due from students with any assistance following the previous July. For fall applicants, funds will be decommitted if the transcript is not received.
- Sept 17** Summer Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.  
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.  
Application deadline for Winter semester – **Apply on-line!**  
Fall course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.
- Jan 17** Fall Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.  
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.  
Application deadline for Summer semester **Apply on-line!**  
Winter course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.

**\*Late applications will not be processed. Please apply before the deadline.**

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### Other Post Secondary Dates and Events

- Feb 1** GRPSEO Funding Information Night 2012
- Feb 20** Office Closed: Participation in Family Day 2012
- Mar 18** Semester contact required from all students – check with your Counsellor
- May 23** Participation in Bread and Cheese Parade
- June 1** Summer Office Hours: Open from 8 am to 4 pm
- June 21** Office Closed: Participation in Solidarity Day
- July 15** Norm's Golf for Grads, Sundrim Golf Course
- Sept 1** Back to Regular Office Hours: Open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Oct 31** Graduate Photos due for publication
- Nov 2** Post Secondary Information Day **TBC**
- Nov 18** Semester contact required from all students – check with your Counsellor
- Dec** Recognition of Graduates and Award Recipients For 2011
- Dec** Office Closed **December 23** and Reopens **January 3, 2012**

Check the local newspapers and our website at [www.grpseo.org](http://www.grpseo.org)  
or give us a call at (519)4452219 for more information