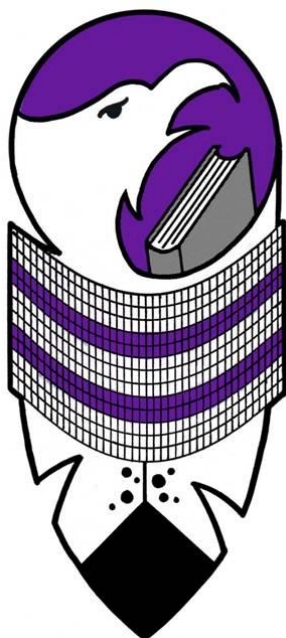


EDUCATION...A PATH TO TOMORROW



**GRAND RIVER
POST
SECONDARY
BOARD
NEWSLETTER**

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

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MOTIVATE ♦ INSPIRE ♦ EDUCATE ♦ CHALLENGE



Holly Smith is Mohawk Nation, Turtle clan.

Holly completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) with a Bachelor of Health Science with Honours Specialization in Rural Health.

She used this education and experience to earn a job at the Six Nations Birthing Centre as the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Child Nutrition Coordinator. It was in this position that she became interested in pursuing a degree as an Occupational Therapist (OT).

She graduated in November 2011 with a Master of Science in OT from Queen's University, Kingston.

Holly considers her greatest accomplishment as actually making it through the OT program. **She faced numerous personal struggles** and considered deferring from the program however; **she persevered**

and overcame these challenges feeling a great **sense of pride for sticking** with it and **completing** the program.

More recently, she is very proud of earning her first full time position as an OT working on the Concurrent Disorders Ambulatory Team with Regional Mental Health Care London. It is a great feeling for her to know that she is able to make possible positive change and recovery in people **using both her educational and personal experiences.**

One of the major challenges that Holly had to deal with throughout her post secondary education was **the struggle with her identity as a First Nations person.** She has always been very **proud of being Onkwehon:we** but at the same time she felt shame and guilt that she didn't know her culture, language or traditions having not been raised in a traditional environment. She felt there was a palpable disconnect from her culture, which caused her a great deal of stress. When she moved to London however, the lack of connection grew exponentially. She could not relate to her fellow students, the majority of whom, came from very affluent, well to do backgrounds and had values very different than her own. She felt extremely lost and alone **and didn't really know where she fit in.** She felt the disconnect from her First Nations culture and also she didn't know how to relate to the community of UWO

and London. The first two difficult years of her undergrad she managed to work through and found enlightenment through other sources such as the **First Nations Student Centre, family, and friends.**

As an Onkwehon:we person the values or principles that guided her throughout her education was **learning that she was not alone in the challenges and experiences** that she faced. Many other First Nations students that she met at the Student Centre were going through similar issues and together they **shared their stories and learned from each other.** What Holly came to realize was that she was **proud to be Haudenosaunee** and that there wasn't a set of rules, a list of expectations, or doctrine that she needed to live by in order for her to **have that identity.** Having this realization, she **wasn't afraid to speak** her mind and feel proud of who she was, because she wasn't speaking on behalf of the Six Nations community, Haudenosaunee people, or First Nations people in general. **She began speaking for and representing herself.**

Holly sees herself contributing to our community and society at large, as an OT is a huge need within the Six Nations community and she hopes to one day be a part of providing these services. Presently, she is working at St. Joseph's hospital which sees a large population of First Nations

clients from across southwestern Ontario. She hopes to have an impact on these clients as well by **integrating her educational background with her personal experiences living and growing up on reserve.**

ONE key challenge that Holly feels needs to be addressed by Six Nations and/or the world is the **value and importance of higher education coupled with cultural and traditional teachings** which needs to be better instilled in our future generations." Children need to learn from a young age the **importance of education**, the impact education will have on themselves as well as its ability to **influence positive change.**" That being said, she feels it is also important to have a **traditional foundation of knowledge.**

The words of encouragement or advice Holly gives to young people as they make decisions for their futures is "to **find your passion and do what you love to do.** Whatever you choose make sure you **do it for yourself** and no one else. Challenges may arise along the way but we, as Onkwehon:we people, **are strong, resilient, and we persevere. Find your voice and don't be afraid to talk to others or ask for help.** You'll probably be surprised to know that there are **others facing the same challenges and difficulties** that you are going through."

2012 Application Calendar & Other Important Events

- May 17** **Application Deadline for Fall or Fall/Winter semester(s) *Apply on-line!***
Winter Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.
Summer course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.
- 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** **Application Deadline for Winter semester – *Apply on-line!***
Summer Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.
Fall course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.
- Jan 17** **Application Deadline for Summer semester *Apply on-line!***
Fall Marks/Progress Reports due for all continuing students.
Winter course registration/timetable and detailed tuition fees due.
Levels 3 & 4 provide Letter of Good Academic Standing.

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

Other Post Secondary Dates and Events 2012

- Feb 1** GRPSEO Application Information Night
- Mar 16** Winter Semester Contact required from all students (check with your Counsellor)
- May 21** 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 1** Accepting Graduate Photos for Publication
- July 20** 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** Deadline to Submit Graduate Photos for Publication
- Nov** Post Secondary Information Week **TBD**
- Nov 16** Fall Semester Contact required from all students (check with your Counsellor)
- Dec** Graduate Promotion/Graduate Photo Publication
- Dec** Office Closed **December 21** and Reopens **January 2, 2013**

Please, check the local newspapers and our website at www.grpseo.org or give us a call at (519) 445-2219 for more information.

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