

Laotsyá:n

The Messenger
(On[^]yote'a:ka')

Enoondaajgaazad (Anishinaabemowin)
Peetaachiimuw (Lunaapeewak)



She:koli, Aanii, Koolamalsihmwa, Greetings.

Welcome to a new academic year. The past 12 months have been an exceptionally busy and productive period for us at the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII). In November of 2022 we opened the Wampum Learning Lodge, and in June of 2023 we hosted the eighth annual Building Reconciliation Forum, an initiative of Universities Canada. These two events have laid a solid foundation for advancing OII's mandate of decolonization and Indigenization at Western. The Forum gave voice to Indigenous perspectives on campus, and the insights it provided will help us in executing Western's commitment to advancing Reconciliation. The Lodge's steady expansion of programming will elevate our voices and presence on campus and help educate the Western community about Indigenous worldviews. Together these initiatives point the way ahead, and we look forward to a new year of growth and progress.

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Welcome to the new month known as *Waatebagaa-giizis* or *Leaves Turning Moon* in Anishinabemowin (Ojibwe). It's exciting to welcome everyone back to Western at the start of a new academic term.

Message from the VP-AVP (Indigenous Initiatives)

There is no question that this past summer has been turbulent, with frightening environmental disturbances. As we face the growing climate crisis, I hear the words of Elder Bruce Elijah, a traditional chief in the Oneida longhouse, counseling us. He has said that Mother Earth is warning us about our behaviour, but many haven't been listening so she is now speaking with greater urgency. We are steadily becoming more aware of the precarious state of the world around us. Unfortunately, it often takes a major crisis to bring about long-needed change.

As I pause to assess our world, I find myself reflecting on the teachings of Indigenous ancestors that speak to the critical importance of stewardship of the Earth. For example, I recall my father teaching me about the importance of things such as controlled burns to help protect the land from overgrowth and risk of wildfires. He learned from his ancestors about how intentional burns can help the land, plants, and animals become stronger and more robust. Through land-based education, I was taught about the importance of living in balance and achieving outcomes that benefit everyone.

Today, I am so appreciative of Western's new Wampum Learning Lodge, where ancient Indigenous wisdom and knowledge still prevail today. We share that knowledge through many exciting programs and land-based learning initiatives, all of which you can learn about by visiting the OII website. Also, I want to encourage everyone to sign up for an award-winning course on climate change developed at Western that is informed with Indigenous knowledge. The course is offered for credit through the Department of Geography and Environment, and is also available online for free through Coursera, a global platform offering online learning from leading universities. For more information about the course and how to register for the next session, please, see [page 12](#) in this Newsletter.

My hope for us all is that we heed the wisdom of our ancestors, who taught us to observe stewardship and sustainability and to "take only what we need for today," so that those living seven generations from now can thank us for thinking about them. *Miigwech* for your help in making Western a place where we honour and implement time-honoured Indigenous wisdom and knowledge, by safeguarding the Earth through our mindfulness of those who are yet to come.

Miigwech,

Christy R. Bressette

(*Neta Noo-Ke Kwe* – Hard-Working Woman)

Welcome Back from the Wampum Staff!

The Staff of the Wampum Learning Lodge would like to issue a heartfelt “Welcome Back!” to everyone as we ramp up for the new academic year. We look forward to seeing familiar faces with the return to classes, and we are especially excited to welcome first-year undergraduate students. Drop by for a visit and introductions, and learn what “the Wamp” is all about: the centre of Indigenous life on campus, a space dedicated to Indigenous ways of knowing and being, a meeting place, a home to classes and lectures, a space where you can study or catch up with friends, and an all-round beautiful building that gives voice to Indigenous cultures.

We have planned a full programme for 2023-24, and you’ll be sure to find activities and events that meet your interests and needs. We also wanted to give the entire Western community advance notice that we are coming up on our one-year anniversary! The Lodge opened in November of last year (hard to believe it’s flown by that fast...) and that means a celebration. On **November 10** we will be hosting an Open House and Round Dance/Social to celebrate the occasion. Details to follow on our website and in social media, but for now, **SAVE THE DATE!**



Farewell to Amanda Myers!

Over the summer we said *Baamaapii* to Amanda Myers, *Kitaay bizhe-Kwe*, the Director of the Indigenous Student Centre, and we’d like to publicly thank her here for the outstanding job she did over the past six years.

A Western alumna, Amanda was hired as Director in 2019, and she led the Centre with passion, kindness and humility. She and her stellar team delivered quality experiences for Indigenous students over the years, through many trials and tribulations, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time Amanda advocated fiercely for the health and wellbeing of Indigenous staff and students, reminding us of our teachings and how to care for one another.

Always striving to ensure Indigenous student voices were heard in the places they were most needed, Amanda advocated strongly for Indigenous students, and helped deliver an outstanding Indigenous student experience at Western. We are so grateful for her leadership, and she will be missed.

Amanda has relocated to the west coast to take on new challenges. We know that the entire Indigenous community at Western joins us in wishing her all the best and much luck in the next chapter for her and her daughter!

Miigwech Amanda!



Alumni Corner

As the new Indigenous alumni chapter begins to grow, we want to recognize our many Indigenous alumni and encourage them to stay connected with Western through ongoing engagement with OII. As per Indigenous traditions, it is important that we honour our Indigenous Western graduates and acknowledge how they have blazed a path for others following in their footsteps. In this edition of *Laotsyá:n* we feature Class of '72 graduate Jessica Hill, *K[^]nikahluya*.

Jessica is Wolf clan from Oneida Nation of the Thames. She completed a bachelor's degree in sociology at Western, as well as a master's degree in education leadership. To these accomplishments she also added certificates in community economic development and conflict resolution.

Not surprisingly for someone with such a wide-ranging education, Jessica has enjoyed an exceptionally varied career. She has worked in culture, manufacturing, economic development, public policy, and governance, and she has put her extensive experience at the service of First Nations communities and Indigenous organizations looking to empower themselves. She encourages her clients to draw upon not only their worldviews, but also their traditional and academic knowledge. Her aim is to help communities build consensus, through such avenues as conflict resolution, cultural competency, and policy and program development.

Jessica has also held challenging political and executive positions in Indigenous not-for-profit organizations, and for over two decades has been a successful entrepreneur. Much of her success is rooted in having learned hard work and perseverance at an early age, values that she has transmitted to her family. As we welcome alumni back to campus for Homecoming, we recognize Indigenous alumni like Jessica who have done so much to advance their communities.



New Indigenous Artist-in-Residence

With the new academic year we bid a fond farewell to Kelly Greene, our inaugural Indigenous artist-in-residence, and simultaneously welcome her successor for 2023-24, **Leith Mahkewa**.

Leith attended Brescia University College and is a member of the Oneida First Nation of the Thames, so her arrival at Western constitutes a return to a place she knows well. She currently lives in the *Kanien'kahá:ka* (Mohawk) community of *Kahnawake*, Quebec, with her husband and four children.

Leith has been creating beadwork in the Haudenosaunee raised-beading style for over 16 years. More recently she has begun incorporating Hopi motifs into her creations as a way of honouring her father's side of her family. In the past seven years she has been recognized at the Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market and the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market, and she has also exhibited at the *Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa* Language & Cultural Centre in Quebec and the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford. Her beaded mask titled "*I am protecting you from me*" was featured in the First American Art Magazine in 2020 and was acquired by the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art for its permanent collection.

Leith believes that bead work transcends the generations, and she is dedicated to ensuring that the patterns and styles created by our ancestors continue to thrive. She is looking forward to mentoring members of the arts community and creating opportunities for outreach to Indigenous students in the London area. For more about Leith, check out this [article from Western News](#).



ReconciliACTION Speaker Series Kicks Off

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) will be observed at Western on September 29 as a non-instructional day. As part of our observation, the Wampum Learning Lodge will be launching our ReconciliACTION speaker series with a panel discussion entitled Beyond NDTR.

The ReconciliACTION series is a partnership between OII and [Atlohsa Family Healing Services](#), and will feature speaker events into next year. This inaugural event will be transmitted virtually between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m., and all are welcome to join. To access the discussion remotely, please [click here](#). And stay tuned to this Newsletter for the full ReconciliACTION schedule in 2024.

ReconciliACTION

SPEAKER SERIES

Beyond NDTR

Guest Speakers >>

Join us for a powerful conversation on what it means to truly reconcile, build good relations, and make space for collective healing, reclamation and reparations. This session will have interactive elements.

EVENT DETAILS

Friday, September 29, 2023
 10am - 12pm
 Wampum Learning Lodge, 1137 Western Rd, London ON

CHIEF JOEL ABRAM
GRAND CHIEF, AIAI

JODY NOAH
POST-SECONDARY DEPARTMENT MANAGER, SFNS

ALIZABETH GEORGE-ANTONE
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY LIAISON ADVISOR, CITY OF LONDON

JOE ANTONE, MSW RSW
DIRECTOR OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH, ONTARIO HEALTH WEST

HOST:
TAMMY JOHNSON
LIBRARIAN, EDUCATOR AND HELPER

REGISTRATION

Scan the QR code with your smartphone and register to join us in person! Can't make it? Don't worry, we have an online option available.

Indigenous STEM at Western

Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)—huge fields that are changing the world and shaping our future. Western is one of Canada's leading universities for STEM specializations, which offer great job prospects and rewarding careers. And now the University has developed a special program to encourage more Indigenous students to join in!

The Indigenous Students STEM Access Program (ISSAP) was launched over the summer with the aim of providing an alternative pathway for Indigenous students to pursue a degree in science, math or engineering. It has been specifically designed to provide new Indigenous students with a supportive and inclusive environment, empowering them to excel in these challenging fields. The Program provides a preliminary year for high school students transitioning to postsecondary studies, helping them acclimate to university life, courses, and lectures while completing their prerequisite courses (equivalent to Grades 11 and 12) for either engineering or science.

Eligible students must have completed Grade 11 with a minimum average of 70%, and upon completion of ISSAP with a minimum average of 75% they can then transfer into either the Faculty of Engineering or the Faculty of Science at Western. As ISSAP students they can also register with Western's Indigenous Student Centre, where they can access additional services, supports, and programs that provide a sense of community and help them navigate the university system.

Applications for the September 2023 term were closed in August, but a new cohort of ISSAP applicants will be welcomed to apply next year. For further information, as well as future application deadlines, check out and bookmark [Brescia's ISSAP](#) page. You can also connect with [Arielle Bressette](#), Indigenous Recruitment Coordinator at the Faculty of Engineering.

White Pine Planting to Promote Healing

On September 20, OII planted a white pine, the Great Tree of Peace, on campus as part of our observation of NDTR. The tree is located on Lambton Drive, near the University Tennis Centre, and replaces the great oak that stood on campus for over three centuries that finally succumbed to disease. Cross-sectional cookies from the oak can be found in the Wampum Learning Lodge, as a reminder of the many gifts this ancestor provided over the centuries.



White Pine planting (Photo: Douglas Tulett)

Connecting for Climate Change Action—Online or Credit Course

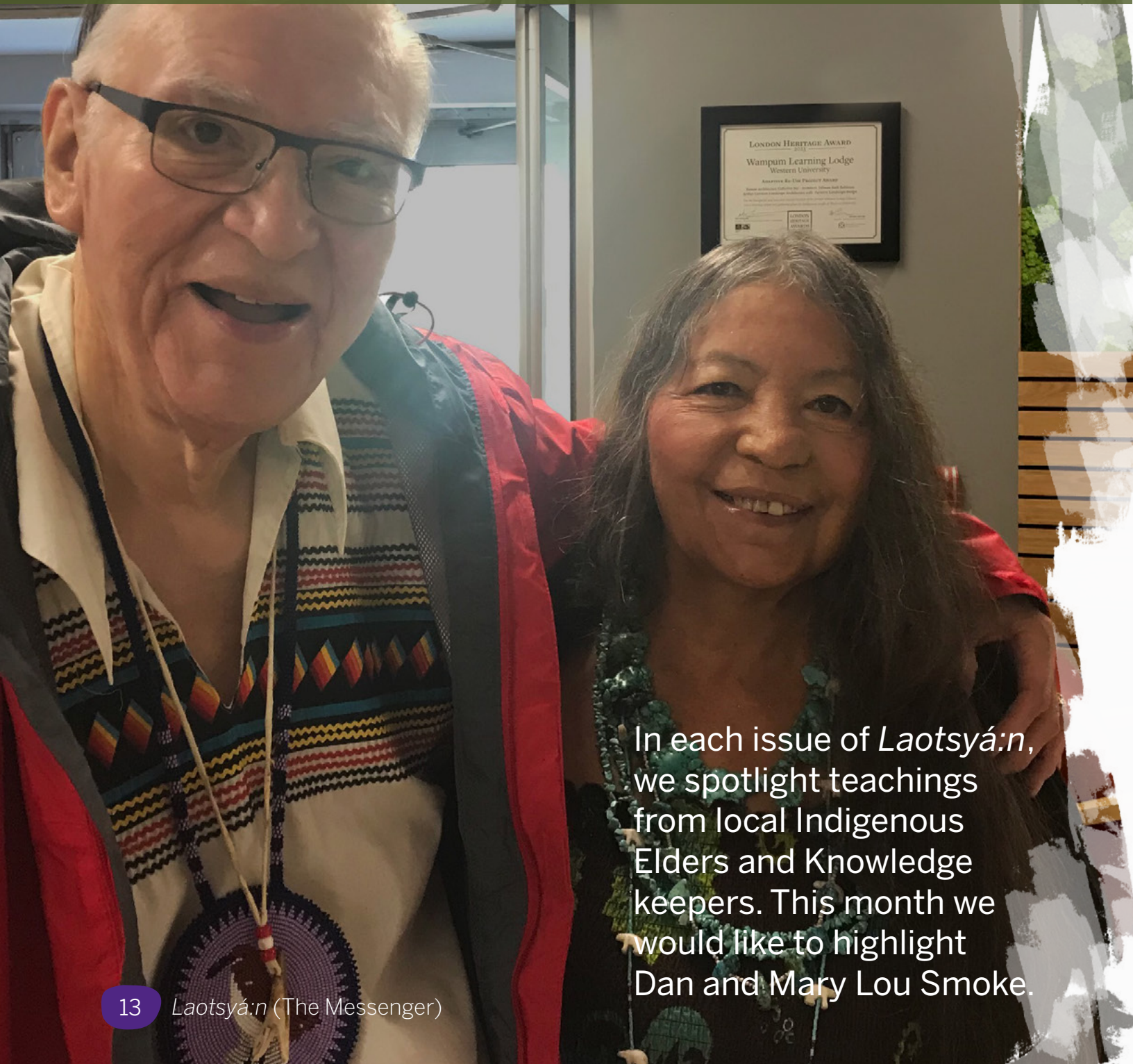
The Department of Geography and Environment is offering a new course this fall, [Connecting for Climate Change Action](#). As we noted in our last edition, this course was developed at Western with the assistance of OII, and was offered in a summer pre-release in June. It also comes with a [course trailer](#), to give you a taste.

The link above will take you to the relevant Department of Geography and Environment page, where you can choose to enroll in the course for credit (Geography 2133a) or take it online. It requires about 2-3 hours per week of online videos, readings and related activities, and comprises seven modules:

1. Ways of Knowing that Climate is Changing (1 week)
2. The Earth, Climate and Connections (2 weeks)
3. Why is the Earth's Climate Changing? (2 weeks)
4. Emissions, Responsibility and Reimagining Economies (2 weeks)
5. Climate Pathways from Data and Experience (2 weeks)
6. Exploring Climate Action (2 weeks)
7. Connecting for Climate Change Action (1 week)



ELDER SPOTLIGHT



In each issue of *Laotsyá:n*, we spotlight teachings from local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge keepers. This month we would like to highlight Dan and Mary Lou Smoke.

Mary Lou and Dan Smoke

Mary Lou and Dan Smoke are an exceptional couple. Mary Lou is Ojibwe Nation, from Batchawana First Nation on Lake Superior, and Dan is Seneca Nation from the Six Nations Grand River Territory. They met in the 1970s and were married in 1977 in the Onondaga Longhouse, in a traditional Haudenosaunee wedding ceremony. They are now closing in on half a century of happy matrimony.

Dan and Mary Lou have hosted *The Smoke Signals Aboriginal Radio Program* on Western Radio since 1990, offering interviews with Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and covering an enormous range of issues related to Indigenous cultures, histories and present-day realities. From 1999 to 2019 they worked with London's local CTV station, and they have collected an extensive archive and books related to their decades of work as journalists and advocates.

Mary Lou and Dan received honorary doctorates from Noble International Environmental Peace University and from Western, and are adjunct assistant professors in the Interfaculty Program in Public Health, Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. In 2006, they were invited to teach a course at Western's Faculty of Information and Media Studies.

Over the years they have won several radio and TV awards, a teaching award from the University Students Council, and

the Atlohsa Peace Award for their work in Truth and Reconciliation. Their courses have included *The Representation of Indigenous Affairs in the Mainstream and Alternative Media*, and *Introduction to Indigenous Spirituality* at Brescia University College. They are frequently called upon to perform Indigenous ceremonies and teach Indigenous protocols and ethics.

Mary Lou is also a gifted traditional and contemporary singer and has been long involved with the Indigenous music scene. She is a founder of the Association for Native Development in Performing and Visual Arts (ANDPVA), Canada's oldest Indigenous arts service organization, and was inducted into the Forest City London Music Hall of Fame for Lifetime Achievement—prompting a congratulatory message from acclaimed singer Buffy Sainte-Marie! We are indeed fortunate to have Dan and Mary Lou provide their insight as Elders to OII and the entire Indigenous community at Western.

Teachings About the White Pine

As noted above, on September 20 a white pine was planted on campus in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. The tree is marked with a plaque that reads in part:

The planting of this sacred Being honours the traditional teachings of the Haudenosaunee Nations about the critical importance of peace needed for progress. Peace comes through respect and honour when care is afforded to the work of truth and reconciliation. This pine will serve as a daily reminder about the importance of living respectfully with each other and with all of Creation. It also marks the commitment of everyone at Western University to do their part in support of healing and rebuilding.

The white pine was chosen with intentionality, as it is a symbol of peace. In the Haudenosaunee tradition, the cultural role of the white pine began with Peace Maker, the leader and diplomat who helped create the Great Peace (*Kayanerenh-kowa*) between the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca Nations. Traveling between these Peoples, who were at war with each other over a thousand years ago, Peace Maker spread a message of peace, friendship, and unity. He brought the leaders of the five nations together under the branches of a white pine, which became a metaphor for peace: like the tree, peace provides protection, delivers comfort, and offers a place for gathering and renewal. Its roots extend in the four cardinal directions and rise out of the ground, providing a path for people to trace the journey of peace to its source. Today, the tree acts as the centrepiece of the great seal of the **Haudenosaunee Confederacy**.

In recognition of the many gifts it provides to us, and of the symbolic teaching of peace that it represents, we plant the new tree to remind us of the importance of mutual support and unity as essential to everyone's future.



NDTR at Western

September 30 marks the third annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) in Canada. At Western, we will observe NDTR as a non-instructional day on September 29, and OII has planned a variety of related events:

Date	Time	Event	Location
September 20	10:00 a.m.	Tree planting	Lambton Drive
September 25	10:00 a.m.	Flag raising	Concrete Beach
September 25-30	Dusk-Midnight	Orange illumination of buildings	Campus
September 29	7:00 a.m.	Opening ceremony, sacred fire	Arbour at Wampum Learning Lodge
September 29	10:00 a.m.	ReconciliACTION panel discussion	Online



In addition to the above initiatives led by OII, there will be other NDTR-related events led by faculties, departments and various offices on campus throughout the month of September. For a full list, please visit the [OII website](#) and mark your calendars.



Alumni Chapter is Gaining Momentum

Our Indigenous alumni chapter is now up and running, and we're delighted to serve as a hub for Indigenous alumni to reconnect with classmates, each other and the University.

We started off with our first event on June 8, a gathering at the Wampum Learning Lodge that drew over 40 members. In addition to providing us with ideas about how the chapter can best serve Indigenous alumni, graduates from a variety of classes shared stories, memories and experiences—and, most importantly, they developed connections that will enrich their lives and help boost their careers.

With the return to school in September it's time again to welcome alumni back to campus. We invited all Indigenous Western

graduates to join us for Homecoming from September 22 to 24. The centrepiece of our welcome was a special event for the Indigenous chapter, with a drop-in style pancake breakfast at the Wampum Learning Lodge on September 23. The breakfast ran from 10:00 a.m. to noon and attracted a solid turnout. Many new alumni came by to introduce themselves, and they shared that they are looking forward to our next event.

And if you're not a member of the Indigenous chapter, it's time to join! Simply sign up here, and we'll put you on our mailing list to keep you advised of news, upcoming events and everything related to Indigenous alumni. Spread the word to your fellow alumni, and we look forward to seeing you on the 23rd.



EDID Awareness Week in October

EDID Awareness Week 2023 will take place between October 2 and 6. The Awareness Week is a collaboration between Western University and Brescia, Huron, and King's university colleges. Its goal is to model unity in the work of EDID and bring a week of powerful learning and awareness to our campus communities and the City of London at large. Its focus is on decolonization, Indigeneity, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and this year's theme is Honouring our Ancestors by Coming Together to Work Towards Reconciliation and Equity.

Throughout the week there will be day and evening events and activities aimed at promoting education and raising awareness of decolonization, racism, disability rights, and faith systems, as well as celebrating our 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and shining a light on other equity-denied groups. For more information and the full schedule, check out the [EDID Awareness Week page](#).



White Corn Harvest: Update

This year will witness the second harvest of the White Corn Project, a joint venture undertaken by OII and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. And we're proud to report that Phase 2 has been an amazing success!

There are ongoing challenges to growing a sustainable future, ranging from seed viability to weather conditions, and every season offers something different to experience. But we are making progress, and the Project has been a true learning experience for our team.

Thanks in part to the Project, planting, growing and harvesting Haudenosaunee White Corn is slowly but surely making its way back into local Indigenous communities. This year's fall harvest will take place toward the end of October, gathering ten rows of approximately fifty corn stalks each. Each stalk will produce at least five ears...which translates into a LOT OF CORN! Once the harvest is complete, we will invite community members to drop by the Wampum Learning Lodge to join us in processing. We will be hosting a workshop to process and prepare the corn for drying. Stay tuned!



Get Ready for our Second Annual Winter Market

Even though it's only fall, the time has come to plan for our annual Winter Market. This will be the second year of our market, which we will again be hosting in the Wampum Learning Lodge. The market is a wonderful social occasion where people can meet, visit and renew old friendships. And it's also a great opportunity to find crafts, handmade gifts, foods and traditional items produced by local Indigenous artists and artisans! If you're looking for gifts during the holiday season, then drop in and say hello.

The Winter Market will take place this year on Saturday, December 2 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and admission is free. We are looking for vendors, so if you are looking for an opportunity to showcase your creations, consider joining us. Application forms for vendors will be available in October—keep an eye on our social media next month!



Student Scholarships and Bursaries

Congratulations go out to all our Indigenous scholarship winners as we embark on a new academic year. A strong cohort of scholars from local communities is joined by others from different parts of Canada, bringing more Indigenous voices and perspectives to campus and academic life at Western. All the best to the winners in your studies, now and in the future!

If you are a student looking for additional funding, you should know that there are many different sources at Western. It can be a bit complicated to figure out sometimes, but the Indigenous Student Centre is here to help. Just contact Donna Noah, Financial Aid Coordinator in the Indigenous Student Centre at dnoah@uwo.ca.

Local Indigenous Scholarship Winners

Arielle Bressette (Kettle & Stony Point First Nation)
Nick Keller (Bkejwanong Territory)
Nola George (Kettle & Stony Point First Nation)
Mackenzie Deleary (Deshkan Ziiibiing)
Velma Noah (Eelunaapeewi Lahkeewiit)
Angela Simmons (Oneida Nation)
Faith Oliver (Aamjiwnaang First Nation)
Maggie Parkinson (Aamjiwnaang First Nation)
Kamryn Whiteye (Elunaapeewi Lahkeewiit)
Shana Elijah (Oneida Nation)
Allison Burch (Deshkan Ziiibiing)
Abigail Feather (Aamjiwnaang First Nation)
Nya Elijah (Oneida Nation)
Karsyn Summers (Deshkan Ziiibiing)
Danual Deleary (Deshkan Ziiibiing)

National Indigenous Scholarship Winners

Eric Sainnawap (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug)
Jadon Brabant (Métis Nation of Alberta)
Jaycee Cote (Six Nations of the Grand River)
Michael Wyatt-Stoffman (Chapleau Cree First Nation)
Mickenna Ryll (Rainy River First Nation)



Building Reconciliation Forum Wrap-Up

It was proud to host the eighth annual Building Reconciliation Forum in June, an initiative of Universities Canada. For three days we provided a forum for educators, administrators and students in the postsecondary sector to share promising practices and innovative ideas for advancing Reconciliation in the academy.

The event was a great success. We had attendees from across the country, visited two local communities and enjoyed insights from a great variety of speakers, presenters and panels. We also conducted a short survey after the Forum, and we're pleased to report that the entire event was highly rated by participants. Fully 94% of respondents were satisfied with the presentations, and a similar number felt that the Forum advanced their understanding of Reconciliation in postsecondary education. More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that the number of presentations was just right, with the rest divided between feeling there were too many or too few. The Vendors Market and Evening Concert proved to be the most popular events of the Forum, and on a scale of 1-10, the average likelihood of recommending the Forum was 8.6.

Thank you to everyone who contributed

We want to take this opportunity to publicly thank the many people who helped us stage the event. *Chi-meegwech, Yaw^ko, Anushiik* to the **firekeepers**, our **Elders**, **staff** and **faculty** from Western and **Affiliates**, the **Faculty of Education**, **volunteers** and the **planning committees**.

A very special thank you also to the Western Conferences Team—THANK YOU **Cliff Fielder** and **Myeng-Jin Lee**!—as well as **TAP Resources**, who helped to make the event run so smoothly. In addition, we would like to thank our **2023 Head and Heart Fellows** for documenting what they heard and saw; **Emma Richard** for capturing the event in graphic recordings; and the **Western Comms** team.

Finally, we would like to say *Chi-meegwech, Yaw^ko, Anushiik* to **Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN)** and **Oneida Nation of the Thames** for your hospitality; to **Munsee-Delaware Nation** for your support; and to all our community partners. They helped make the event one that was truly warm and welcoming. Their support was complemented by community caterers **Candice Elijah**, **Maryanne Kechego**, and the **Oneida Log School staff**, as well as **Great Hall Catering** and the entire **Ontario Hall dining** team; and we extend a further thank-you to Indigenous musicians **Murray Porter** (Six Nations) and **Genevieve Fisher** (COTTFN) for the music concert on June 27. *Chi-miigwech* and *yaw^ko* for bringing your songs and stories to the Forum guests and community members.



NDTR in Community

While we will be observing NDTR at Western on September 29, we would also like to remind the University that local Indigenous communities will also be hosting events, and they welcome everyone to visit and join in. On September 30, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation will be at the Western Fair District Agriplex to present a schedule of events that will run the full day:

Time	Event	Additional Information
10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Artist Market	For more info: visit COTTFN website or call 519-264-2500
12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	<i>Wear Orange, Speak Truth</i> , a gathering in unity and reflection	In partnership with Atlohsa Family Healing Services
5:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	<i>Gawii Wiikaa Ga-Nendmisii, Never Ever Forget Me</i> , a benefit concert with Northern Cree, Digging Roots and DJ Shub	Tickets \$30; for more info: visit COTTFN website or call 519-264-2500

September 30 will also feature the **Third Annual Nibi Walk and Youth Relay**, sponsored by Oneida Nation of the Thames, Nshwaasnangong Child Care & Family Centre, and N'Amerind Friendship Centre. The event organizers are calling for jingle-dress dancers and youth runners, so if you're interested in joining in, please contact Gina Doxtator, Oneida Nation of the Thames, at **519-520-1903**; or Kym Burke, City of London, **519-672-0131**.

Learn Oneida or Anishinaabemowin this year!

Fanshawe College, which provides over 200 educational programs in a wide range of disciplines, has launched a new offering this fall: the *Paswe'atigook* Anishinaabemowin Language Immersion program. *Paswe'atigook* means "echoing amongst the trees" in Anishinaabemowin, and the name was gifted to the program by Richard Assinewai, Anishnaabe from Wikwemikong First Nation.

Paswe'atigook is a two-year accelerated diploma program, located in community at the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation. It provides a culturally immersive learning environment and will teach cultural as well as language skills. As part of the program, students will also follow courses in sharing the language with others, teaching children, and adult education theory.

Paswe'atigook joins Fanshawe's existing Oneida - Language Immersion, Culture and Teaching program. The Oneida offering is also an accelerated diploma program and is delivered fully online. It includes immersive language learning that prepares students for a variety of language-related careers, including teacher of Onyota'a:ka as a second language, translator, language consultant, language specialist and storyteller. If you'd like to learn more or enroll in the program, check out the Anishinaabemowin [page here](#), or the Oneida [page here](#). You can also email admissions@fanshawec.ca.





IMAGINE

A BLITZ BUILD!

Housing in Oneida—You can get involved

There are few challenges more pressing in our society than developing affordable housing, as so many cities, towns, and communities face an affordability crisis. That's true even in smaller locales, and that's why we're giving a boost to an affordability project in Oneida Nation of the Thames.

Doug Tarry Homes Limited has undertaken to build a home for Knowledge Sharer Ray John Jr., and they are inviting everyone and anyone to get involved. As owner Doug Tarry notes, "My goal is to show respectful support for the greater Oneida Nation of the Thames community, while at the same time bringing the best of the best together to create something really magical."

The company is committed to building affordable, accessible homes with Oneida leadership under its Imagine Build branding, and it is now soliciting support for this specific build, dubbed the Blitz Build.

How Does the Imagine Build work?

All funds raised for the Imagine Build go directly to building homes. Once a family has been identified through an application process led by Oneida Nation of the Thames Housing Department and representation from the Imagine Build team, it is responsible for paying the infrastructure costs, which comprise the driveway, septic tank and utilities hook ups. Oneida Nation of the Thames will provide a loan to the family to pay for these costs, and the monthly payments are dedicated to a fund that will pay for the next home's infrastructure—a neat way of creating a circular economy that multiplies benefits.

How to Get Involved

The project will be drawing on a range of volunteers, and they need to be fed. Donors can sponsor a meal for \$4,000 to pay for food, coffee, and snacks for 100 volunteers, as well as security for a 24-hour period. Where possible food will be purchased from Oneida businesses.

There are several meal slots still available for sponsorship, as per the table below. Any additional funds collected will be directed to furnishing the homes.

DATE	MEAL	AVAILABILITY
Friday, October 20	Breakfast	Sponsored
Friday, October 20	Lunch	Available
Friday, October 20	Dinner	Available
Saturday, October 21	Breakfast	Available
Saturday, October 21	Lunch	Available
Saturday, October 21	Dinner	Available
Sunday October 22	Breakfast	Available
Sunday October 22	Lunch	Available
Sunday October 22	Dinner	Available

Full sponsorship of a meal includes:

- 10 T-shirts featuring the sponsor's logo
- opportunity for sponsor's staff to be on site over the weekend to serve food from the food tent
- sponsor's logo featured in on-site signage
- sponsor's logo and website link on www.theimaginebuild.ca
- two social-media posts about sponsor's involvement in Imagine Build's progress

Making Progress

The initial goal of the project was to raise enough funds to build one home, but since January 2021, Imagine Build has raised over \$800,000 and currently has two homes under construction. It is hoped that by the end of the year, six families will be housed.

The project is always looking for help, either through donations or volunteers, and there is a lot of work to be done and a lot of ways to get involved! If you'd like to throw in your support, contact Kathleen Anderson at Imagine Build, **226-219-9452**, or Kathleen.a.a183@gmail.com.

BUB'Z Drop-in and Soup Kitchen

In the spirit of NDTR, we'd like to profile a cause that's close to our heart: BUB'Z Drop-in and Soup Kitchen, in Oneida Nation of the Thames territory, outside of London. BUB'Z was started by Anthony Ireland, a local chef who used to run a restaurant called Bubz Reztaurant. After closing that business he looked for somewhere else to channel his love of cooking, and in 2022 decided to open a soup kitchen for those in need.

It couldn't have come at a better time for many people, as inflation has rocked food prices over the last year. With more families and individuals struggling, BUB'Z fills in a gap by providing tasty, nutritious meals every

Monday for community members who might otherwise go hungry.

We dropped in on BUB'Z in the summer, as part of our visit to Oneida during the Building Reconciliation Forum, and we were struck by what a happy, positive space it is. BUB'Z runs on donations, and every little bit helps, so we also wanted to give Anthony and his kitchen a boost here. If you'd like to learn more about BUB'Z or make a donation, think about following on [Facebook](#), or get in touch via email at bubz.oneida@gmail.com. You can also learn more about BUB'Z from this [CBC article](#).



Mini-U Wraps Up for the Year

This past summer marked our return to in-person learning and orientation at Mini-University. This program is an important tool for reaching out to Indigenous youth and giving them a taste of university life—through academics, activities and social interaction. It also helps us in our recruitment, as Mini-U campers often enroll in Western after graduating from high school.

The program is located at Brescia University College, where the campers stay in residence with their mentors. For many it can be their first time away from home, but the program does everything to make them feel supported and encouraged as they step out of their comfort zones. For five days

they get to learn about what life will be like when they do eventually decide to pursue higher education—and that can help boost their confidence as they begin to imagine themselves as university students.

This year the campers enjoyed a wide range of Indigenous-led activities, including a sacred fire at the Wampum Learning Lodge; land-based learning, such as gardening and teachings from the world of plants; sports, including swimming and Haudenosaunee lacrosse; and Indigenous storytelling. The program ended with a graduation ceremony that highlighted the seven grandfather teachings.



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Office of Indigenous Initiatives

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives leads system-wide change at Western University in order to advance Truth and Reconciliation efforts and achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. It plays a lead role in championing Indigenous strategic directions; building collaborative and community-engaged partnerships; and supporting campus partners in implementing Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan.



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