

LANDSCAPE OF NATIONS 360°

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Landscape of Nations 360° launches Phase Two: Professional Development Teacher Training Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Six Nations of the Grand River — The Woodland Cultural Centre is pleased to announce the launch of Phase Two of the Landscape of Nations 360° Indigenous Education Initiative. Following the successful implementation of Phase One, that organized a roundtable of academic scholars, master teachers, and Indigenous culture and language specialists to research, produce, and publish the *Framework For Essential Understandings About Indigenous Peoples of the Niagara Region*, Phase Two will focus on the development of a professional teacher training program designed to increase competence and confidence among educators responsible for teaching Indigenous subject matter.



The LON 360° Indigenous Education Initiative is part of the ongoing work being done to convey and enhance the meaning and messages of the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial that was dedicated on October 2, 2016 in Queenston Heights Park, and through other important Indigenous historic sites and installations within the region.

“In the work that we do as a museum and educational resource institution, we believe it’s vitally important that the full context and content of Indigenous history be incorporated into educational systems within Ontario and across the

country,” said Melanie Fernandez, acting executive director of the Woodland Cultural Centre. “In this regard, the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial serves not only as a reminder of Indigenous contributions to the defence and shaping of Canada, but also as a prompt for exploring contemporary issues of reconciliation.”

LON 360° Phase Two will again bring together scholars, educators, and Indigenous cultural specialists to workshop a series of training components that will directly enhance teachers’ abilities to learn and appropriately incorporate Indigenous subject matter into the existing Ontario curriculum.

The serious nature of this effort is underscored by the unique and substantial partnership network that has been established to resource its implementation. These partners include Ignite the Spirit of Education Foundation, District School Board of Niagara (lead educational sponsor), Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Ridley College, and other organizations that supported the construction of the memorial. Royal Oak Community School will be providing in-kind support and Friends of Laura Secord, which developed the First Nations Peace Monument in Thorold, designed by Douglas Cardinal, will continue to serve as an affiliate. Additionally, for its innovative reconciliation attributes, the project is sanctioned by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

“We’re delighted and encouraged by the broad-based support this Initiative has received from the premium educational systems and schools within the Niagara Region,” said Tim Johnson, director of LON 360°, “not only because attaining the highest quality of educational content and instruction is our standard, but also because these organizations educate the vast majority of students across the Niagara Peninsula.”

Until recently the inclusion of Indigenous history — and Indigenous content integrated within other disciplines — was virtually absent from school texts and tutorials. And when some level of information was present it often lacked the full 360° perspectives that fostered critical thinking skills that are vital to arriving at a balanced and accurate assessment of events and outcomes. There was little evidence in classroom materials of important historical and contemporary events involving Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and perspective, and little or no integration of those events into the larger narratives of Canadian history.

Landscape of Nations 360° intends to help shift that paradigm.

“The District School Board of Niagara is proud to partner with the Landscape of Nations 360° project to support both teacher and student learning in this critical area,” said JoAnna Roberto, superintendent of curriculum at the District School Board of Niagara. “As a learning institution, we believe that education has a tremendously important role to play in fostering understanding, respect, and promoting Indigenous pride and healing.”

“The Niagara Catholic District School Board welcomes this opportunity to participate with our local partners in the development of culturally appropriate curricula as we all work together in the spirit of truth and reconciliation,” said Ted Farrell, superintendent of education, alternative programs, planning, and secondary schools. “Providing professional development for teachers to train and assist them in integrating Indigenous content into their lessons, with competence and confidence, is exciting.”

The integrated approach advanced by LON 360° in its *Essential Understandings Framework*, that includes themes such as “global connections,” also appealed to educators at Ridley College, the private international boarding school in St. Catharines.

“At Ridley, we endeavour to provide our teachers and students with diverse and purposeful learning experiences and view this initiative as one adding significant value to our International Baccalaureate programme,” said Headmaster Edward Kidd. “We’re anxious to see our teachers participate in the development of a comprehensive Indigenous Teacher Training Program and for our students to become the beneficiaries of this essential knowledge.”

The establishment of the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial as a public art exhibit has created an engaging and experiential learning space, helping to make Indigenous history real for students and visitors alike.

“Niagara Parks is proud of its role in helping to steward and showcase the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial, which recognizes and celebrates the significant contributions of Indigenous peoples to this area, including their sacrifices and efforts made during the War of 1812,” stated Niagara Parks Chair Sandie Bellows. “This memorial serves not only as a reminder of our shared past, but also acts as a symbol; inspiring us to look to a future where we work together with Indigenous communities and partners to renew and strengthen our long-lasting friendships. That is why we are so pleased to be part of the Landscape of Nations 360° project.”



Photography by Alex Heidbuechel, flashboxphotography.com. The bundle of arrows in the image on the left symbolizes the combined strength of the partner organizations joining forces on this project. Our shared goal is to improve education on Indigenous subject matter for children by honouring history and recognizing historical figures such as that of John Brant, Haudenosaunee war captain, seen in the photo on the right.

LON 360° emerges as an innovative collaboration involving the Woodland Cultural Centre and a powerful network of education, civic, philanthropic, and business leaders who helped establish the Landscape of Nations Memorial. The Initiative involves educators and students in the learning process by providing them with interactive, hands-on, quality educational experiences, and aligns with the Ontario curriculum to ensure accuracy and foster greater awareness of the heritage, histories, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. For more information contact Tim Johnson at 519-774-2014 or Michele-Elise Burnett at 905-933-1915.



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