



Language and Cultural Centre

Sénha yoyánere ón:ton tsi ohwentsyá:te
ahse'kén Kanyen'kehá:ka tsi niyonkwarihò:ten,
onkwateryen'tarà:tshera táhnon tsi
niyohtányon yonkwateryèn:tare.

The world is made better by Kanyen'kehá:ka
culture, knowledge and ways of knowing.





SUMMARY

Since its founding, Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na (TTO) has developed and delivered language and cultural educational programming for children, youth, and adults out of several spaces in the Mohawk community of Kenhtè:ke (Tyendinaga).

With a young and growing population, the time has come to invest in the infrastructure required to preserve and revitalize our language and culture for generations to come.

To take TTO's programming to the next level, we propose to create a dedicated, purpose-built facility that enhances the learning experience for all Kenhtè:ke and ensures our children are raised as Kanyen'kehá:ka.

We have long recognized that we as a community need to move from language acquisition to regular language use: when we're learning, when we're shopping, and when we're living our daily lives. Providing a dedicated hub where those working to revitalize culture can work together is an important next step in the transition from language survival to language growth. Saving our language entails rebuilding a speaking community.

Our proposal, summarized in this booklet, is a uniquely Kenhtè:ke facility that would meet the growing needs of our community, make a statement about who we are as a people, reflect the importance we place on stewardship of the land, and give our children and community as a whole a place they can be proud of.

Please reach out if you have questions.

Callie Hill

Executive Director, Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na





FACTS

The Mohawk language is considered endangered, with less than 2,500 speakers in Canada and the USA. To reverse the decline of Indigenous languages in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report called for the establishment of more education and cultural spaces such as this one.

The time to build and invest in a next generation of speakers is now as the number of first language speakers is declining across all Mohawk territories.



The population of Indigenous Peoples in Canada is growing four times faster than non-Indigenous populations – meaning the time for investment in the education of Indigenous children is now.



QUOTES & TESTIMONIALS

Karen Lewis

Board Chair, TTO

Board Member, Southern Ontario Library Service

“My wish for our people is to grow up secure in the knowledge and worth of their identity, beliefs, history and world view inherent in Kanyen’kehá:ka. This project ensures present and future generations, Indigenous and otherwise, have the opportunity to learn.”

Chief Don Maracle

Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

“TTO was established to combat the decline in knowledge of our language and culture that was evident at the turn of the century. Thanks to your efforts since then, many children and adults have been able to reconnect with their culture and grow in pride and appreciation for their identity. We are certain that TTO’s new facility on Salmon Road will help you take your mission and purpose far beyond your current capabilities.”

Karen Sandy, MPA

Language Coordinator, Six Nations Language Commission

“Our language is integral to our well-being and connecting our youth to language and culture promotes positive health and self-esteem. It is an expression of who we are. The work that Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre does encourages the community and supporting them is the right thing to do.”



WHO ARE WE?

Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na believes the world is made better by Kanyen'kehá:ka culture, knowledge, and ways of knowing.

Each day, we work to share and preserve our culture for generations to come, creating a better future for all.



We welcome Onkwehón:we, settlers, and everyone to learn about our past, experience our present, and join in our bright future.



Based in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, we currently operate a nursery school, Totáhne, and a primary school, Kawenna'ón:we, working with many children and their families annually.

Additionally, we deliver a community-based post-secondary accredited Certificate in Mohawk Language and Culture program in partnership with Queen's University.

TTO was established in 2000 by a group of community members concerned with the revitalization of the Mohawk language in Tyendinaga. TTO is dedicated to raising the integrity of language and culture in the community by ensuring the worldview of the Kanyen'kehá:ka is passed down for future generations to connect with.



FACTS

We share our language and knowledge with Indigenous Peoples and settlers through our programming partnerships with Queen's University, research partnerships with the University of Victoria, and collaborations with The Onkwehón:we Language Cooperative, The Woodland Cultural Centre, and many other organizations.



With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Languages Initiative, we have published education videos, books, audio books, and games to help share and preserve our culture.





QUOTES & TESTIMONIALS

Patrick Deane

Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University

"I am pleased to offer my support for a new school and cultural centre in Kenhtè:ke. This community project is not only vital for the health and well-being of those that live in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, it is essential for those communities nearby. Our institution still has so much to learn about Indigenous culture and language and we have a responsibility to ensure that what historically has been systematically attacked to near extinction is rebuilt with strength, dignity and the respect previously denied. All of Southeastern Ontario needs a school and cultural centre in Kenhtè:ke. The impact such a centre could have is exponential."

Melinda Auten

Parent in Tyendinaga

"As the parent of a graduate of Kawenna'ón:we, I believe raising children to understand and appreciate their heritage is essential to their well-being. This new language and cultural centre will help change the course for so many young people in our community, helping us to reclaim our language and identity."

Amos Key Jr.

Mohawk, Six Nations of Grand River

Executive Director, CKRZ 100.3 FM Wadnrnota

"Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work alongside many community members to advocate, maintain, stabilize and recover their Mohawk Language and practices to hone their other artistic intelligences.

Now that they have made efforts to restore these traits and characteristics of their Kenhtè:ke Civilization, it is time to develop a Kenhtè:ke Civilization Centre to centralize and show case their collective efforts with a facility that teaches, interprets and showcases their unique Kenhte:he Indigeneity (ideology).

The concept and aspiration for such a civilization centre will truly capture the philosophy, psychology and intellect of the Kenhtè:ke."



OUR PROPOSAL

We propose to build a new Kenhtè:ke Language and Cultural Centre for the community. For the past several years, we have been working on a design and evaluating the feasibility of such a facility. For the first time, we are pleased to share our plans that have come together with community input throughout our planning process.

The Kenhtè:ke Language and Cultural Centre would house our school programs, an outdoor playground for the students, and a traditional replica Longhouse. The new Cultural Centre has been designed to accommodate current and future needs for delivering our educational and event programs.

The building is approximately 13,000 square feet and consists of classrooms, administration offices, adult education learning rooms, a teaching kitchen, an art studio, a rooftop medicine garden, and a gathering space for up to 300 people for community events and celebrations.

This new facility has been inspired by input from the community, the dreams and aspirations of students from the Haudenosaunee Opportunity for Personal Education (HOPE) program (an alternative learning program located in Tyendinaga), and TTO staff and board members.

The facility is intended to be a state-of-the-art net-zero carbon educational building that reflects the culture and value of Kenhtè:ke.

This project would unite Indigenous architects and artisans, Indigenous youth, and the community to create a lasting and timeless educational centre for all things Kanyen'kehá:ka. Our proposal also strongly aligns with five recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report.

In particular, this centre will help close the significant infrastructure gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and support the TRC's call to build schools in First Nations communities and grow post-secondary Indigenous language programs.

With significant support from our community and Band Council, we believe our Centre will provide cultural education and economic benefits to the surrounding Bay of Quinte community through space rentals and cultural training and workshops.



FACTS

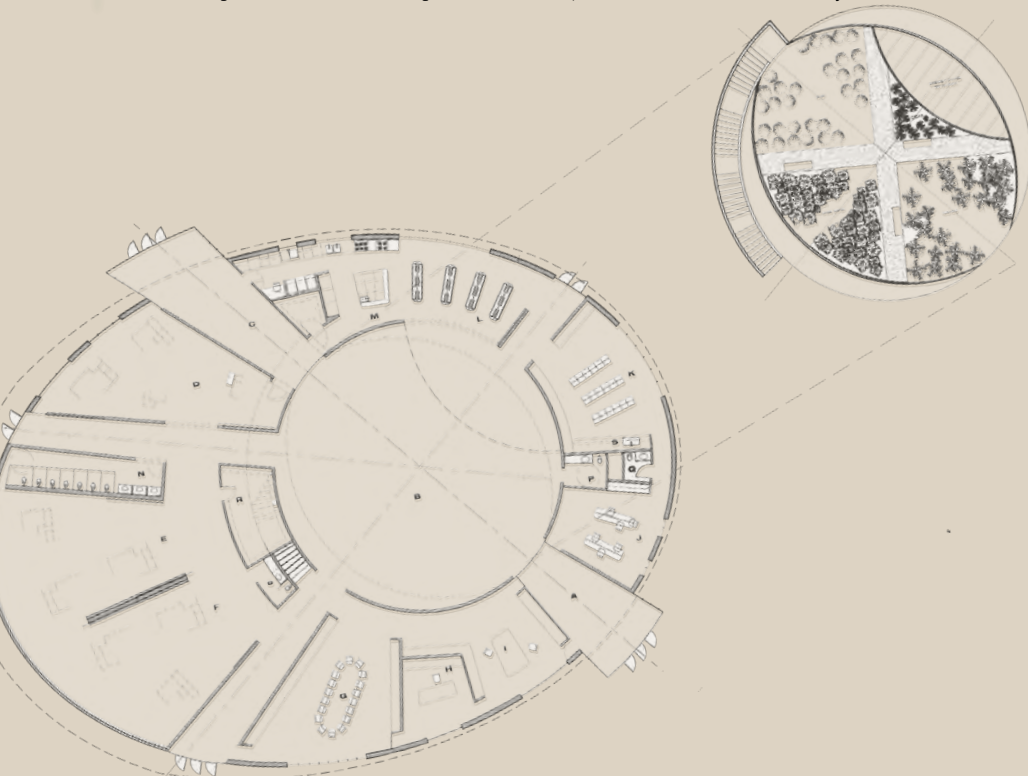
The campus would be built on an 8.32 acre site located on Salmon River Road in Tyendinaga.

The main building would aim to be a net zero facility, designed to fit in with the land and providing opportunities for 'learning on the land'.

Through our partnership with Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth, we will include Indigenous youth and volunteers with the construction of this campus and the interior furnishings.

The non-profit design firm No. 9, who is responsible for the initial concept design, will continue to be involved in design, both interior and exterior.

This campus will create up to 11 new jobs in the community.



QUOTES & TESTIMONIALS

Andrew Davies, MArch, MSc, MRAIC

Executive Director, No.9

“Having had the opportunity to work along-side TTO in the development of the feasibility study for this project, it is clear that both the community support and organizational governance are in place to make this project a success.

The Centre’s need was identified in a series of planning studies done for TTO as far back as 2014. Through great commitment from the TTO team, under the strong leadership of Callie Hill, this project has been diligently and carefully guided forward to its current inspiring vision...

I look forward to seeing this project get built as part of our collective responsibility and commitment to reconciliation.”

Evan Veryard

Founder and Chairman, Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth

“Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth (FFFIY) is excited to support Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawéna:na’s plan for a dedicated Language and Cultural Centre in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. FFFIY is a national charity working with Indigenous communities on self-determined community projects that empower youth through experiential learning opportunities.

FFFIY is looking forward to working together on this project and providing local Indigenous youth opportunities to get involved in the construction of the Centre through paid employment, skills training, employment readiness workshops, and potential apprenticeship hours and/or high school credits.

The partnership between TTO and FFFIY will expand opportunities for youth in Tyendinaga to participate in the project, build a critical community space for language and cultural education, and engage in language revitalization efforts in their community.”



QUOTES & TESTIMONIALS

Brian Maracle

Program Coordinator and Instructor, Onkwawén:na
Kentsyóhkwa, Ohsweken, Ontario

“Learning does not happen only in schools. It is a life-long experience. Especially so when it involves learning languages, whether it’s someone’s first, second, or third language that they are learning or enhancing.

Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na’s plan for a Language and Cultural Centre is especially commendable in this regard because it will bring students of all ages together around the language and the culture with which it is inextricably bound.”



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Opening:
2023-2024
school year.

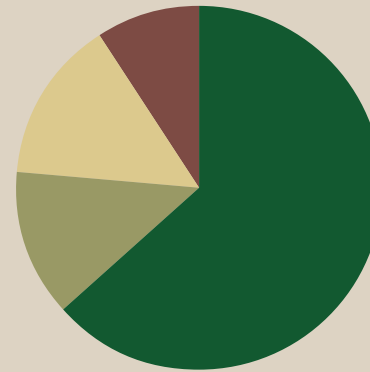


Enrollment targets:
Four classrooms
60 nursery and
primary students
20 adult learners



Building on success:
128 learners have
already completed
Shatiwennakarátats,
the adult language
program.

Total Cost for Phase One of the complex is estimated at \$9,110,000



- Building Costs: \$6,373,000
- Site Development: \$1,307,000
- Operating Costs Year One: \$1,430,000
- 10% Contingency: \$911,000





QUOTES & TESTIMONIALS

Elaine Gold

Director, Canadian Language Museum

“Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre has been at the forefront of Indigenous language teaching and revitalization. It is essential that they have adequate facilities to allow them to provide high quality language education programming for future generations.”

Ted Hsu

Former MP for Kingston and the Islands

“The Mohawk community at Tyendinaga are custodians of a unique intellectual heritage, the core of which is the Kanyen’kehá:ka language. It is part of any complete picture of human language and culture in Canada. As with all of Canada’s First Peoples, the effort to preserve and nurture this heritage requires ongoing, non-paternalistic partnership with the wider community primarily in the form of funding. Every region presents special challenges and opportunities, and Southeastern Ontario is no different. For several years now Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na has run well-organized language programs for both adults and children, so that its administrators have acquired, from this experience, a picture of their particular needs for the future including physical infrastructure.”



James Brian

President, Douglas Cardinal Foundation for Indigenous Waldorf Education

As our founder, Douglas Cardinal, says, “If you’re going to dream, why dream small?” This facility represents a great dream for the Tyendinaga community and brings with it the possibility of a great leap forward for Mohawk culture and language preservation. The time is now to work on closing the infrastructure gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadian youth.





Perry Bellegarde

National Chief, AFN

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) fully supports Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na (TTO) in pursuing funding for their vital community project in Kenhtè:ke. All First Nations have the inherent and Treaty right to receive an education that is in accordance with their culture, values, and languages and free from prejudice and discrimination.

The AFN supports all efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and normalize Indigenous languages. This includes the Kanyen'kehá:ka language and efforts to establish a language nest in the Kenhtè:ke community.

The AFN supports First Nations rights and title holders, language experts and language entity (organization or institution) pursuing activities aimed at revitalizing our languages, and we encourage partnerships and investments in this area.

Contact Us:

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