

Nyawenhkówa! Thank you so very much!

Celeste Tookoome-Hill

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Dear Learning from the Past,

Nyawenhkówa for your generous support! I am so thankful that I received Indspire's Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards for my language program! Celeste niwaxsennò:ten, A'nowara niwakitarò:ten, Kanyenkehá:ka tahnnon Othorekéhrono niwakonhwentysò:ten, my name is Celeste, I am turtle clan, and I am Mohawk and Inuit nation. Kateweyenhstha ne Kanyen'keha tsi Onkwawennahne, I am Studying Mohawk at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa in Six Nations, this is my first year in the language program. It is a full immersion Mohawk language program that has been running since early 1990's. I enjoy learning and speaking Kanyen'kéha lately, it has been a great learning experience so far, it is a 3-year program.

I am a recent graduate at Six Nations Polytechnic, I have my Bachelor's degree in Onkwehonwe Language in the Mohawk stream. I would like to help revitalize the Mohawk language here in Ohsweken and possibly help other Mohawk Communities by creating more resources in the language so more people can hear and learn the language. I would like to make animations or cartoons all in Mohawk, so that everyone not just kids can hear the language outside the classroom and more at home. That is one of the challenges when it comes to revitalizing Indigenous Languages alongside the number of 1st language speakers dwindling, there needs to be more language outside of school and out in the community. Through resources like books, pictures, videos and audio it can help speakers and learners hear and see the language more.

I wanted to learn more Kanyen'kéha because I want to be able to understand the Thanksgiving Address and give thanks in Mohawk since it is a huge part of Rotinohshonni culture, our culture. When I learn more and more words, it is easier for me to understand when someone does the Thanksgiving Address in the morning and

before a meeting. I also want to learn conversational words in Mohawk so I can speak about my day, my family what is happening what I like etc. That is what Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa does for me, I get to learn those. It helps me connect further into my Indigenous Identity, and it helps me think differently than our western thinking from English. There are so much more specific words in Kanyen'kéha that English cannot express. So not only am I learning the language I am learning history through old Kanyen'keha words, I am learning cultural words and their importance and significance. Onkwawenna teaches root word method and so we get one huge long word but those have many words inside that describe something in detail and in those words are old cultural or historical significance to us Onkwehonwe.

Thank you for this generous support! It really means a lot to me because 2021 has been financially difficult for me and my family of 4 at home. Covid made it hard for me and my sister to find a job, so we sold our art and baked goods this year. Your generous support means I could afford groceries, pay overdue bills not only for me but for my mom as well. We try our best to get by each week but it isn't enough with my school's stipend. So, your generous support has helped me and my family eat each week, afford to pay off some bills, as well as gas and basic necessities. This year has been extremely difficult in terms of financial support and so it really helps me focus more on school rather than worrying about my family. It also helped me buy school supplies and pay monthly internet bills: since it has been mostly on zoom so far.

Again Nyawenhkówa! A huge thank you for awarding me this Indspire's Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards for my language program from Learning from the Past. Your generous support allows me to focus on school and learn Kanyen'keha.

Nyawen,

Celeste Tookoome-Hill