Daughters, Sisters, Mothers & Wives
An Anishinaabe Reader
Cover picture “Women Knowledge Keeper”

Mixed Media on wood panel, 24x30”

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Acknowledgements

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To all who contributed to the series of Indigenous Women’s Roles, educational kit, we also say Miigwetch.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Welcoming Address ........................................................ 5
- Introduction ......................................................................... 6
- Women: The Hub of the Wheel of Life
  by Mary Elliot—Empowering the Spirit II ............................... 9
- The Anishinaabe Creation Story
  inspired by Basil Johnson ................................................ 13
- Cultural Revitalization
  with Wahbzii Shognosh-Diaz ............................................. 17
- Cultural Framework
  with Amanda Aikens .................................................. 20
- The Seven-Star System,
  The Clans of the Anishinaabe People .............................. 24
- A Mother’s Teachings
  with Kyla Stonefish ...................................................... 29
- Biographies ................................................................. 33
This is a short speech used to welcome people into a home or to welcome guests from other areas during a gathering.

**WELCOMING ADDRESS**

*You have come far.*

*We have waited long.*

*You are weary.*

*Let us sit side by side,*

*Share the same food that comes*

*From the same sources to*

*Allay the same hunger.*

*Then let us grow in strength.*

*Let us stand side by side,*

*Share one same spirit,*

*Partake the same good thoughts*

*That bring us together*

*In friendship, unity, and peace*

*Once more.*
INTRODUCTION

These teachings, which we share, are sacred to many people of the Anishinaabe nation. Although the details of these stories may differ from region to region, the importance of these teachings remain the same. These teachings have been passed down orally for many generations, and are to be shared with all the Anishinaabe people. These stories are a testament to the strength and preservation of the people.

The medicine wheel is a teaching symbol for all Anishinaabe people. The four cardinal points are represented by the colours yellow, red, black and white, with the self located in the center of the wheel.

The significance of oneself at the centre of the wheel represents one’s journey through life as they travel through the four directions of the wheel.

The East is where we come from, and it represents the springtime. Our journey begins here, and this is where the Creator breathes life into us. The sun rises in the East, and begins its daily journey, much like the children of the Earth. This is where we give thanks with our sacred tobacco to everything that we will need on our journey through life.

The South represents the summer. It is where all life has been awakened, where everything is new and lively. The South represents youth, children who are constantly searching for their identity and they belong. The South reminds us to look
after our spirits. Our spirits must be nurtured, in order to find our identity. The gift of sweetgrass represents the South. The sweetgrass represents the hair of Mother Earth, and is braided into three strands that symbolize truth, respect, and honour. These traits are important for our children as they grow into the next cycle of life.

The West represents the autumn. It is where all of the summer growth has ended. The physical journey for most of creation is over, and it returns to the spirit world. We can breathe the scent of sage in the West, as the sweetness helps to alleviate the hardships of life. The West represents adulthood, and the constant changes and hardships that we experience as adults. It is one’s responsibility to be aware of these hardships, in order to move through them and continue on the journey forward.

The North represents the winter. It represents the slowing of the physical life. This is the direction of reflection, and represents the stage of Elders. It is where we prepare for our journey into the next life. The North is where we remember all the aspects of our lives, and use what we have learned to pass it on to the next generation. The gift of cedar helps us in this direction as it cleanses the body and soul. It also helps nurture the body to prepare for its journey to the next cycle.
The medicine wheel teaches us that all life is sacred and that all stages of life are important. It teaches us that life and death have meaning, and that the teachings of life must be shared with all people.
DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, MOTHERS & WIVES

WOMEN: THE HUB OF THE WHEEL OF LIFE

by Mary Elliot—Empowering the Spirit II

If we view the roles and responsibilities of women by going around the medicine wheel, we can trace how the responsibilities and roles of women change throughout their lifetimes. Each part of the medicine wheel represents a role or a responsibility. Here are some examples.

East

The East is the place of new beginnings. Women have the ability to create life. They carry each new life within them for nine months. That is why women must be careful about what they put into their bodies. Everything they put into their bodies affects their unborn child.

As the first teachers of the children, women must walk in a good way. Everything a woman does will imprint on her child. For example, if a woman raises her voice continuously, so will the child. Women must conduct themselves in a positive, healthy manner if they want to raise positive, healthy children. Women are the first teachers and first role models.

Nurturing children requires patience, understanding and kindness. Teaching them these things gives them the basic skills they need to sustain themselves when they go off on their own.

South

The South illustrates the direct correlation between women and water, unconditional love, compassion and open-mindedness. The connection between women and water is very significant. Women are responsible for the water because water
represents life. Our children grow in the water of the womb. Our bodies are made up mostly of water. Because of these connections, it is important to encourage our children to drink plenty of water. During traditional puberty rites, girls would fast for the water. This sacrifice honours the water, which we often take for granted. This is why women are responsible for the water.

Mothers love their children unconditionally. If a child makes a mistake, mothers should stand by the child. This shows the child that love should be given without any conditions attached. By showing compassion, women acknowledge life as sacred and precious. This teaches a child to treat his or her own life and all living things with respect and kindness. Being open-minded allows women to listen to a child’s opinions and thoughts. This allows children to use his or her own mind and makes their own journeys, as the Creator intended.

**West**

The West is a place of maturity. Intuition and insight are the qualities associated with this direction.

Although most people possess intuition and insight, women must often rely on these things following the birth of children. There will be times when a woman must follow her instincts regarding the well-being of her children. This is often referred to as a mother’s “sixth sense.” Failure to heed this intuition may result in harm or danger coming to the children. Like an eagle with his keen eyes, women must use their keen sense of intuition to protect their offspring.

Women are often referred to as the backbone of the nation.
They are the keepers of the culture and language, and they hold the people together during difficult times. Without women’s inner strength, the culture would not survive. Our men would not be men without the teachings that come from women. Women act as midwives during birth and, in many cultures, prepare the bodies of the dead for burial. These roles and responsibilities explain why women are the backbone of the nation.

It is often said that women stand between men and the Creator. This is because the Creator gave women the gift to create life, a power of the Creator. In that sense, women are the link between men and the Creator. When a man speaks with his mother or partner, he is, in a sense, speaking with the Creator through her. Therefore, women must be highly respected by men.

North

As we look at women from this direction, which symbolizes wisdom, we come to understand why they are knowledgeable and wise: they take on a great responsibility for their nation. As grandmothers, women must ensure that the culture and traditions of their people remain strong. They must teach the young mothers the customary practices of child-rearing and how to conduct themselves as women. They also help guide men toward becoming strong and healthy. For this reason, women are often considered the leaders behind the leaders.

Because women purify themselves on a monthly basis through their menstrual cycle, they have a very strong connection to Mother Earth and Grandmother Moon. The connection is symbolized by the fact that the moon’s cycle also
takes twenty-eight days. This time of the month is a good time to remain alone and quiet, and to maintain some distance from husbands or partners. It is a time for women to cleanse, and to take the time to re-establish their connection to Mother Earth and reacquaint themselves with Grandmother Moon.

Women hold a lot of knowledge about culture, spirituality and traditions. They hold this knowledge so they can pass it along to their people, their children and grandchildren, and to others who may ask them to share the wisdom they have gained over a lifetime. Thus, women are constantly thinking of the well-being of the people. Women do not think only of the present, but of the past and of the future.

For a nation to remain strong, the women must be cherished as keepers of wisdom and knowledge and as givers of life.
THE ANISHNAABE CREATION STORY

Inspired by Basil Johnston in Ojibway Heritage

These stories have been passed down through generations by the oral traditions of Anishinaabe people. The story of creation can vary by location, and from person to person. This is just one interpretation.

In the beginning there was nothing, only darkness. In this darkness there was no sun, moon, stars, or life. In this endless darkness one being emerged. No one is sure where or how he came to be, but his being made everything a possibility.

Gitchi Manitou (The Great Spirit) envisioned a sky filled with stars, a sun, a moon, and most importantly, Earth. In his vision, he saw Earth filled with mountains and valleys, islands and lakes, plains, forests and even oceans. He envisioned trees and flowers, grasses and sustenance. He dreamed of walking, crawling, swimming and flying beings. He witnessed the beginning, growth and the death of things. At the same time, he saw other things continue to live. Amid change there was constancy. Gitchi Manitou heard songs and stories. He felt wind and rain. He experienced love and hate, fear and courage, joy and sadness. Gitchi Manitou meditated to understand what his vision meant, and he knew this was the way it was supposed to be. Gitchi Manitou knew he had to bring into being and existence what he had seen, heard and felt.

With his great power, he made the elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—and to each one he breathed the breath of life. To each, he breathed a different essence and nature. Each breath had its own power which became each element’s soul-
With these four elements, Gitchi Manitou had the tools to create the physical world of sun, stars, moon and Earth.

To the sun, Gitchi Manitou gave the gifts of light and warmth. He gave the Earth growth and healing. To the waters he blessed with purity and renewal. To the wind he rewarded music and the breath of life itself.

Gitchi Manitou sculpted mountains, valleys, plains, islands, lakes, forests, rivers and oceans into the Earth. Everything was in its place; everything was beautiful.

Then Gitchi Manitou made the plant beings: flowers, grasses, trees and sustenance. He gave each a spirit of life, growth, healing and beauty. Gitchi Manitou knew that these beings would belong in this world of his, and placed them where they would lend to the greatest beauty and harmony and order.

After plants, Gitchi Manitou created animal beings, and gave each special gifts and abilities. There were two and four-legged animals to roam the Earth. There were winged ones to watch over the skies and swimmers to protect the waters.

Last of all, he made humans. Though they were last in creation, they were independent. Although they were the weakest in bodily powers, they had the greatest gift – the power to dream.

Gitchi Manitou then created The Great Laws of Nature for the well-being and harmony of all things and all creatures. The Great Laws governed the place and movement of sun, moon, earth and stars; the powers of wind, water, fire, and Earth; and
the rhythm and continuity of life, birth, growth, and decay. All things lived and worked by these laws.

Gitchi Manitou made his vision a reality.

After some time the people of Earth had forgotten their teachings, and the people began to misbehave. Gitchi Manitou was disappointed. He brought heavy rains until the mountains were covered, all men perished, and all that was left was a vast sea. In the heavens lived a women spirit with no husband. She was sad and lonely, so she asked Gitchi Manitou to provide her with a companion. Gitchi Manitou took pity on the lone women and sent a sprit to join her.

For a long time the two were happy, and Sky Woman became pregnant. Before she gave birth, and with his duty complete, her consort left. Sky Woman gave birth to two children: one of pure spirit and the other a pure physical being. The two beings hated one another and fought for supremacy. Sadly they destroyed each other and perished, and Sky Woman again became sad.

The swimmers below sensed Sky Woman’s sadness and invited her to rest on the back of the giant turtle. Sky Woman accepted the invitation and left Sky World. Sky Woman told the animals that, if they swam down to the old world and brought back some dirt, she could use it to create someplace to live. The animals all tried to dive to the depths of the ocean to retrieve the soil, but, alas, all failed. Muskrat, the smallest of the animals, announced that he would retrieve the earth from the depths of the ocean. The other animals laughed at him stating he was too small and weak to swim to great depths. With a giant breath, Muskrat descended into the water, and was gone for many
hours. Fearing the worst, Sky Woman began to regret letting the smallest creature try when all the others had failed. When bubbles began to break the surface, Muskrat rose to the surface nearly dead, and in his tiny hands was a bit of earth from the old world.

Grateful, Sky Woman took the soil and breathed life into it. The soil began to grow and formed an island on turtle’s back. Now Sky Woman had a place to call home. Sky Woman gave thanks to Gitchi Manitou by creating life. She soon gave birth to two children: one was a man and the other was a woman. They were unlike the first children who had destroyed each other. They had a purpose. Each had a physical nature and spiritual soul. The new man and woman were called Anishinaabe Original Beings, because they were not made of the elements earth, water, fire and wind—but were spontaneous creatures. And so life came full circle: creation, destruction, and recreation.
Wahbzii graduated from Wallaceburg District Secondary School in 2015, and was honored as valedictorian for her outstanding academic achievements. Wahbzii explains that she owes a lot of her success to her cultural heritage:

“Being valedictorian was a huge honour. It took me by surprise. I didn’t know that I could be thought of that way. In my culture, the teachings that were instilled on me is always listen and be respectful. When you’re able to listen, I think you’re able to learn a lot more and that really helps in anything. While I was giving my speech on stage, I felt like we can really do anything as a people. I really felt like I was doing something good for my people and I think anyone can do it.”

Wahbzii says she was very fortunate to be able to learn her culture early on in her life and describes that cultural exposure as something that has helped mold her into what she wants to become:

“I think a lot of the time we really take our language for granted,” says Wahbzii about her cultural background. “We have Elders who are fluent in the language, and I don’t think we utilize
them enough. Even I don’t know everything, but I can always try to learn, sometimes, just by going and sitting down with an Elder. I think that we as young people need to learn our culture because it can be really empowering: it isn’t easy because there is so much going on around us, but it is up to us to pass what we know onto our children and to keep our traditions alive.”

She encourages others to learn what they can. There are people who know our culture and are willing to educate others:

“We have a very supportive community filled with family and friends who help each other. It’s always been that way for our people.”

It has not been an easy road for Aboriginal people in Canada, after government measures such as enfranchisement that forced a Native woman to give up their Indian status if she chose to marry a non-Native man and the residential school system, which stripped children from their families and communities in order to “civilize” the Indian. Wahbzi says she is grateful that her people overcame these hardships:

“A lot of people didn’t want to see us succeed, but we can, and we do. To me, being Aboriginal means that we have to show what we can do. Some people don’t think to highly of us and can be ignorant of our culture, but I think that the more that we know about where we came from, the more that we will know about ourselves”

Being an Aboriginal woman is also something that Wahbzi says gives her strength:

“I come from a big family, and I was taught a lot about how
strong the women of our people were. The Creator gave women the seed of life. It was our job to care and nurture for the children. We were tasked with cooking and keeping our homes tidy. We were tasked with preparing clothes for our people and caring for the ill, and that was life. It really kind of shows the youth how amazing our people are. We survived because of the passion and dedication of our women, and I hope that continues to be a trait among our people.”

Wahbzii now plans to further her education and hopes to be the first person from the Walpole Island First Nation to complete paramedic training at Lambton College:

“Somebody told me that a few people have attempted this program and they all failed. It gives me a lot of motivation. I think that if the women in my culture were able to save lives and take care of our people, then I should be able to as well. I think it would be really cool if I were to be the first person from my reservation to do this program.”
CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

with Amanda Aikens

Amanda Aikens is an Ojibwa-Potawatomi of the Midewiwin Lodge. Amanda is the youth outreach Coordinator for Indigenous Services at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

Amanda believes the traditional clan system that her people used is still useful in contemporary living:

“The clan system is very important to us. In our culture, we have seven clans that make up our traditional governance system, and those clans are all born with different traits and attitudes that can be applied to modern jobs such as policing and social work.”

Traditionally, these clan families would be responsible for completing certain jobs for the community, so that each clan would have a certain role that was important to keeping the village and its people sustained:

“Take the Crane Clan for instance, the Crane is a leadership clan. Many chiefs and spiritual leaders come from these families. The Marten Clan members are quick to think, and are very effective strategists and very good educators. The Bear Clan members are said to be short-tempered and are
known as our protectors. So you can see each clan had a role in our community, and that's how we, and especially the youth, would connect to contemporary jobs and identity, is through our clan systems, because it has to do with really foundational responsibility to your community, and so it can be easily applied. Today you can see many Crane Clan members in education because of their traits as good leaders. You also see members involved in education and social work because they are very family-oriented. There are Bear Clan members who get involved in police work because it is just what comes natural to them and generally feels like a good fit.”

Amanda says that being a woman in this clan system is very important. For the Anishinaabe people, the women are the keepers of the water and all things whether it be ceremonies or feasts—must be brought to the attention of the woman first:

“I guess it would depend on what you were doing, but if you needed something done, you would always approach a water carrier first, because for us, water always comes first. I would say that water is our biggest role as women of the Anishinaabe people.”

Because many of the leadership roles are shared between men and women, the women’s leadership over water is very important. Water provides the spirit of life, and only women can possess this leadership over water.

For women, Amanda says it is very important to learn not only women’s roles in the community, but also men's roles as well:
“I think it is really important as women that we learn both gender roles. Since a lot of our duties were shared with men, sometimes when food was scarce the women would have to go out to hunt and fish as well, sometimes we would have to help build our homes, and other times we would need to venture off to go and grab supplies.”

When it comes to learning, the women are not only responsible for themselves. As future mothers they are also responsible for learning men's roles, in order to possess the knowledge for their future sons, as well:

“It’s a woman’s job as a future mother to know not only how to do her own roles but men's roles as well. If the men perished on a hunt or if they died from sickness, the responsibility of teaching the young boys of the community would fall on the women, so many of the females are taught how to build and hunt, as well, in order to have that knowledge”

Many women of the Anishinaabe people continue this tradition today by learning all aspects of their culture and community.

Maang/Loon—Honesty/Gwayakwaadiziwin—To be honest in any situation is to use bravery. Be honest with yourself first and it will be easier to be honest with others.

Kitaay Bizhikikwe/Amanda Aikens
These two paintings created by Kitaay bizhikikwe/Amanda Aikens are a part of a collaborative effort inspired by the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabeg. There were other inspirational teachings and symbols from Indigenous nations incorporated (after consultation with local teachers and Elders) into the space of Indigenous Services at the University of the Western Ontario, which houses these works and is intended to support and welcome learners from all nations.

Painted in acrylic paint on canvas, 2013.
The clan system is very important to us. In our culture we have seven clans that make up our main traditional governance system, and these clans were said to be born with many different traits.” - Amanda Aikens

Many stories and teachings are related to the clan systems of the Ojibway people, and depending on where you live, some of these teachings may differ. This is just one of those teachings. It is important to understand the message of the teachings and not so much the details.

Long before humans existed on this Earth, the Elders say, the Creator spoke with the animals and asked them to help the first people as they began their journey to this earth. The first people were pitiful creatures, who were reliant on the animals to survive. Not only did the animals help the people survive, they taught them to live in harmony and balance with all of creation. The animals taught them how to maintain order among the people, and how to govern within an equitable social and political structure.

Each clan has a purpose. All clans are equal, even though their duties may be different. Depending on where a nation lives, clan names may differ. For example a Crane Clan may be the Heron Clan in a different region, and the Deer Clan may be the Hoof Clan in another area. If you look deep into the oral history, many of these clans took on sub-clans as communities grew, spread and dispersed. They say the Marten Clan spawned the Otter Clan and Beaver Clans, and the Fish Clan spawned the Sucker Clan. It is possible that many clans originally descended
from the seven clans or were brought from intermarriage with other tribes. First, we should look at the seven clans and their traits, to fully understand their significance.

**Crane Clan:**

When you look at a crane standing in the water, you will see it observing the world above the waterline. The Crane is known as the ‘Outside Chief’ because it observes everything from the outside world, Cranes are responsible for communicating with outsiders.

**Loon Clan:**

When you look at a loon out on the water, you can see it riding the waves, and diving into the water to see what is happening underneath. Because of this behavior the Loon is known as the ‘Inside Chief’, and Loons are responsible for settling internal issues within the community.

**Bear Clan:**

When you look at the mother bear in nature, you will see her fearlessly protecting her cubs. She is strong and knowledgeable of her surroundings. This behavior is identical to the Bears, who are known as protectors of the village. Bears protect the people. Because they are familiar with the healing properties of plants available to them, Bears are also medicine people.

**Deer Clan:**

If you look at a deer in its natural environment you will notice its gentle nature and its agility. The Deer is responsible for looking after the well-being of the
community. Ceremonies, celebrations and all other social aspects falls, under the responsibility of the Deers. It is their job to ensure the community is socially stable.

**Bird Clan:**

When you look at birds flying overhead, you will see them observing the world from every angle. Birds are closest to the Creator, and can access that wisdom from the sky to the world. The Bird Clan are keepers of knowledge, and their responsibility is to teach that knowledge and expand that knowledge, in order to help their people.

**Marten Clan:**

A small marten is limber, quick-tempered and ferocious. It has excellent reflexes and is a fantastic hunter. The Martens carry these qualities and characteristics and, as a result are known as the warriors in their communities. They are also excellent strategists and good builders.

**Fish Clan:**

Fish constantly watch the sky while they swim in the currents of rivers and streams. The Fish have knowledge of the sun, moon and stars. The Fish Clan are the peoples philosophers. They hold an abundance of knowledge and are respected advisors to the Chief Clans.

The Seven-pointed star is a representation of how the clan system was utilized during a political dispute. When a problem arose, each clan had a responsibility to two other clans. When a
When a major issue arose, the responsibility fell to all of the clans to come up with a solution.

Thus, when an issue was raised by one of the clans which affected one or more of the other clans, a representative from each clan would gather for a meeting of all seven clans. For example, if an issue (requiring clarification) arose within the Loon Clan, a Loon Clan representative would present this issue at the meeting of the seven clans. The Loon Clan would begin its presentation, first, to one of the two clans sitting opposite and to the left, which is the Fish Clan. The Fish Clan would discuss this issue, and, once the entire clan came to a consensus, the Fish Clan would send its determination to the Crane Clan (opposite and to their left). This cycle of discussion and determination would go on, flowing in a clockwise direction, until the discussion worked its way back to the Loon Clan.
If the Loon Clan was not satisfied with the unbiased consensual decisions made by the other clans, the Loon Clan would present their updated response to begin the whole decision-making process again. This process would be repeated (sometimes again and again) until the Loon Clan received a response the Loon Clan was satisfied with.

This cycle of discussion and determination, would happen whenever an issue arose among the seven clans. This cycle was used so that every member of the community would have a chance to speak. The ultimate goal was to attain a consensus of respect and agreement by all clans and community members.
A MOTHERS TEACHINGS

with Kyla Stonefish

Kyla is a member of the Sucker Fish Clan and a Ojibwa-Potawatomi from the Walpole Island First Nation. She has journeyed to many places over her lifetime in attempt to learn her traditional heritage and culture. Kyla is a registered nurse and a mother of two children, a nineteen-year-old daughter and a fourteen-year-old son.

Kyla states that mothers and grandmothers of Anishinaabe people share a strong bond with one another:

“I think that because our families are so big and intertwined that it makes parenting easier. While the parents have responsibilities to go to work and pay upkeep, the children are usually taken care of by their grandparents. The grandparents usually show more calm and patients in raising the children because they have already had that experience in raising their own kids, and they have more time to teach kids how to do things properly.”

Whereas parents are seen as role models, Kyla says it’s that time, experience and patients, that our grandparents possess, that makes them such successful and positive mentors.

Kyla remembers her teachings. As a little girl she would go to her grandmother’s house to learn different things like cooking, and sewing.
“My grandmother taught me all about cooking, sewing and how to clean. She taught me a lot about how to relate to children. She would tell me things, like if I were to ever have a child, then this is the way I should clean them or feed them, and she would show me how to properly nurture a child.”

All these teachings from grandparents is then reinforced by the actions of the parents at home:

“I think we get this kind of thinking from our history. Because we used to live in extended families, the grandmothers, mothers, aunts and great-aunts all had a role in taking care of our children. For us, a child wouldn’t say “You’re not my parents. I don’t have to listen to you.” Because everyone was respected in a parenting role, and, as a parent, you would expect the aunts and grandmothers to discipline a child for being disrespectful.”

That kind of multi-parenting style is still seen a lot today.

Our mothers nurture us with love and kindness, and Kyla says that those teachings are very important for her:

“As a mother, I was taught that as soon as you had a child your life doesn't just belong to you anymore. You’re no longer allowed to go out all night or carry on for days. I was taught that all of that has to stop. The responsibilities to that child is the new role that a mother has to take on, even if that mother might be young herself.”

When a woman is pregnant, the child inside her is growing
and is learning everything about its mother’s life. That child can influence its mother from the inside just as it will influence her when it’s born:

“You can tell what your baby likes” says Kyla. “When I was pregnant with my daughter, I would always have a craving for berries. After she was born she wasn’t a fan of meats or canned foods, but she always liked berries. Now that she’s older, she does enjoy eating other foods, but berries always comes first.”

Kyla also says that the baby has a developing personality while growing inside the womb:

“I remember going to a very loud movie while I was pregnant with my boy. I remember him kicking so hard I didn’t know what was going on. He must not have been happy, or he was scared, because when we left the theatre and he stopped again, it was something I won’t forget.”

The most important thing about motherhood is to show your children respect and understanding in anything they do:

“I try to be as understanding as I can.” says Kyla “I don’t want to jump to conclusions, but I would like to know why they would make that choice. I want my children to feel they can talk to me about anything, whether it’s their problems, their lifestyle or about love. It’s showing them compassion in all forms that helps guide them, and I want them to know that I support them.”
Although a parent might not fully understand the context of what their children are trying to tell them. It is important to stay calm and respect what they say, to be able to understand what and why.
AMANDA AIKENS

Amanda Aikens or Kitaay Bizhikikwe (Ancient Buffalo Woman) as she is known by her people, is an Ojibwa-Potawatomi of the Midewiwin lodge. Amanda is from the Marten Clan and has ancestral roots in northern Wisconsin, USA, as well as Sault Ste. Marie, Canada. Amanda is the youth outreach coordinator for Indigenous Services at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

Amanda describes herself as a person with many homes. She grew up near Blenheim, Ontario. Amanda tells people that she does not have a home community because of her non-status, but calls Deshkan ziibing (Thames River) home because she has always lived near the river.

WAHBZII SHOGNOSH-DIAZ

Wahbzii Shognosh-Diaz is a strong and independent woman with a strong spiritual connection to her past, present and future. Wahbzii (which means “swan” in the Ojibway language) is an eighteen-year-old Ojibwa-Potawatomi, of the Bear Clan, and comes from the Walpole Island First Nation in Ontario. Wahbzii graduated from Wallaceburg District Secondary School in 2015 and was honored as valedictorian for her exceptional academic status. Wahbzii plans on furthering her education at Lambton College in Sarnia, Ontario, in hopes of becoming a trained paramedic.
KYLA STONEFISH

Kyla Stonefish is an Ojibwa-Potawatomi Sucker Fish Clan, from the Walpole Island First Nation. She has journeyed to many places in an attempt to learn her traditional heritage and culture. Kyla is a registered nurse and a mother of two children, a nineteen-year-old daughter and a fourteen-year-old son. Kyla is always eager to learn more and has become very knowledgeable about cultural activities.
About The Author

Brennor Jacobs was raised in North Vancouver, BC and Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario. He says this gave him his interest in, and understanding of, multicultural behavior. He is twenty-four-years-old and by maternal lineage, is Turtle Clan of the Oneida Nation. He attended the Kawenni:io/Gaweni:yo Private School, where he was immersed in the Mohawk and Cayuga languages and the Haudenosaunee culture. Brennor is currently furthering his education at Brock University where he is majoring in business communications.
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