

**Kontinónhstats ne Kanien'kéha – Mohawk Language Custodian Association
(MLCA)**

Our Site Recommendation for a Kanehsatà:ke Heritage Centre in Kanehsatà:ke

Ohiarikhó:wa 19, 2018

UPDATE: during the 1990's, the Cultural Center moved to La Mennais and it is during this time that we were inspired by the beauty of the site to have a heritage center here for our community. We worked on a proposal which was accepted by the Mohawk Council of Kanehsatà:ke in 2005. For the past 12 years Kontinónhstats ne Kanien'kéha / MLCA has been working on making this project a reality for Kanehsatà:ke to have its own Heritage Center which will house our artifacts and promote the language, culture and economic development.

Kontinónhstats ne Kanien'kéha / MLCA strongly support:

1. A Mohawk Heritage Centre; and,
2. That it be constructed at the former La Mennais School Site.

Residents of Kanehsatà:ke cannot point out to one clearly visible building throughout the territory that tells a visitor or traveller on Route 344 - that *this is a Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) community*.

- There are no facilities that proudly show that we have been living here for centuries.
- There is no special indoor space where we can celebrate and share our proud history, culture and language with tourists and other visitors.
- There are no economic opportunities or a building for our talented artists and craftspeople to demonstrate and sell to tourists and visitors, the many ancient and contemporary arts and crafts that are still practiced today in Kanehsatà:ke.

The time for action is now. Together, we can leave a beautiful legacy for our children and grandchildren. We suggest that we meet soon and respectfully discuss the great economic, language and cultural opportunities for our community of Kanehsatà:ke .

FINDINGS FROM A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The First Line Services Advisory Committee distributed their **“Summary Report on Community Assessment, June 2011.”** Over 500 individuals from the community responded that **to address social issues** they recommended

- * Revitalizing Mohawk language * Increasing economic opportunities and employment
- * Increasing recreational and social programming * Encourage traditional farming and gardening

Our Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) vision for a healthy community. Our Heritage Centre located at La Mennais would:

BE ACCESSIBLE:

- #1 PRIORITY - For our schools, students, teachers, parents, Elders and our community. And a clear message that “We are still here!”

- To our traditional gardens, medicine walks, language, art/music and cultural workshops, economic opportunities to demonstrate and sell unique art and crafts, and more.

BE UNDER OUR FULL JURISDICTION AND CONTROL

- Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawks) determine our own policies concerning our Kanehsatà:ke history, traditional art forms, culture and language revitalization. All other Indigenous nations in Canada are regaining their heritage languages while Kanehsatà:ke's fluent speakers are declining. Why?
- By working closely with our community schools, we can ensure our children, youth and adults have every opportunity to learn and to teach others our true history and culture that has been omitted from all schools.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES – Based on Culture and Language as Foundation of Pride and Strength

- Our local talented artists and craftspeople – demonstrations and meaningful interaction with tourists – sharing their pride in their Kanien'kehá:ka heritage.
- Employment – our teachers for the next seven generations as many of our youth become tri-lingual speakers like our parents and grandparents were – fluent in Mohawk, English and French. Jobs will be available in **our tourist industry, in schools**, and create other spin off businesses in **Kanehsatà:ke**. **We have to believe in ourselves that we can do it.**

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

Hilda Nicholas, Director of the Cultural Center, has worked for over 26 years and has conducted several proposals that support the realization of a Heritage Center. It is with her strength and dedication that we respectfully ask for your help to support our recommendation of the La Mennais location:

1. A Joint MLCA & MCK Community Consultation – A simple survey won't do since this is our economic, language and cultural future. We need Face to face Focus Groups of Youth, Elders, Adults to discuss:
 - Support for a Heritage Centre
 - Location recommendation of La Mennais - Heritage Centre and Traditional gardens, Medicine Walks
 - Organizing a Planning Committee

Kontinóhstats ne Kanien'ke:há Board of Directors

Niá:wen - Hilda Nicholas, Ellen Gabriel, Linda Cree

Tel: 450-479-1651, ext. 701, 702, 703

Email: hilda@kanehsatakevoices.com Website: www.kanehsatakevoices.com

"If you no longer speak your language and no longer practice your culture, then you have no right to demand Aboriginal rights from us because you are assimilated with the ruling power."

Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1983 First Ministers Conference