

INDIGENOUS HEALTH LEARNING LODGE

McMASTER UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Mino Bimaadiziwin Mishkiki

Aapijshnik Gamik

The good life; medicine recovery healing lodge

Tsi nón:we ayakonniyóhake táhnon aonsayakota'karitehake

The place of good life and return to health.

Greetings from Dr. Bernice Downey,
Associate Dean, Indigenous Health



As we move into this time of the Solstice and reflect on the past year, there are many achievements to be acknowledged. For example, the approval of funding and the opening of our Indigenous Health Learning Lodge. We are most appreciative of the shared funding approach from the Faculty, all departments, schools and programs. A commitment of resources and structural enhancements are important elements in both reconciliation and the Indigenousization of the Academy.

Staff have worked hard in the creation of our new space in the Micheal DeGroot Centre for Learning.

While we are working through how to both attract and recruit Indigenous faculty, we have successfully recruited new administrative staff and one new faculty member, Dr. Jennifer Walker who is appointed to the Health Evidence, Department of Health Research Methods,

Evidence & Impact (HEI) and the IHLL as our Research Hub Scientific Lead. Kudos to HEI Chair, Dr. Alfonso Iorio, who demonstrated a committed Institutional Ally role in this recruitment effort.

Another important activity has been the development of our operational plan. Many individuals on campus and from local Indigenous communities and clinical partners contributed to the development of our Indigenous Health Initiative Strategic Plan. The IHLL team has undergone a process this past spring-summer to identify priorities and potential leaders/collaborators within the University. Our aim is to work in collaboration with all departments, schools and programs to achieve our targeted goals and objectives. Our implementation plan will be finalized and disseminated in early spring.

In the meantime, enjoy this solstice season, be well and come visit us in our new space in 2023!

MESSAGES ▶



Greetings from **Lori Davis Hill**, Acting Executive Director

Shekoli,

This fall marked the return to campus after two years of adjustments related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The resilience of faculty, staff and learners has been admirable. As we move into the winter season, it is a time to reflect on the past year and look forward to all that the new year will bring to our lives. Take the time to appreciate each day as a gift.

An important element in the work this coming year is the development of a comprehensive IHLL communications plan. The IHLL team has been collaborating with the FHS Communications team to identify opportunities for increased visibility of the IHLL on the FHS website and exploring how we can enhance knowledge sharing regarding our work. Innovative ways to inform all learners and faculty are being reviewed including the development of podcasts featuring current Indigenous clinical practitioners, Knowledge Helpers and Indigenous movers & shakers in our communities and the Indigenous health – research environments.

Watch our [website](#) and social media in the new year for news, events and activities available through the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge.

Wishing you a wonderful 2023. Stay well and stay safe!





Message from **Dr. Karen Hill,** Faculty Advisor

Shé:kon Sewakwé:kon **(Hello Everyone),**

As winter is looming it is our tradition as Onkwehonwe (original) people to begin to share our stories. Through our stories we share our traditional perspectives and teachings. These teachings sustain us through all times.

The teaching I want to share is one that recently unfolded in a dream. Yes, I am one of those people! I often dream answers, perspectives, solutions to things that I am facing in my waking life. The circumstance I was facing was an upcoming ceremony that I was asked to participate with. As an Indigenous physician it was very important to me to participate since the organizations involved were both intimately linked to my work role and my life's passion to see Indigenous knowledge return to the center of healthcare for our people.

In the dream I was shown myself giving a teaching on the Kaswentha (Two Row Wampum) and giving the College of Family Practice of Canada (CFPC) a replica of this wampum. The ceremony was to mark the signing of a declaration between the Indigenous Physicians and the CFPC. I dreamt this dream for two nights in a row, interfering with my sleep, but giving me clear instructions as to what my role was to be in the coming ceremony. During the zoom call to prepare for the official ceremony my spirit compelled me to share the teaching given to me in my dream at that very moment. As I shared the teaching it was a truth unfolding, entering my very being as I the words left my lips. This teaching of the Kaswentha was one I did not know prior to that day.

The Kaswentha wampum belt is an agreement, a treaty, in which the two parallel purple lines represent each nation's vessel that holds all that is their way of life intact and whole. Separating the two purple lines are three white lines. The white lines represent the shared waters in which each vessel resides. These white lines represent the wholeness and healthiness of each nation. Known as Skén:nen-Peace, Kahsatenhsera-Power, Ka'nikonriyo - Righteousness/Good Mind. Peace is in the spirit of the people within each nation, the power is in the physicality of our being, and Righteousness is in the Good Mind. These "waters" are the health and wholeness of each nation and must be fully upheld and realized in order for the parallel relationship between the nations vessels to continue. It is not one vessel taking up the role of healing the other, it is supporting each other through and out of our own health and wholeness - a very different approach than what we are often taught in our health science studies.

Apply this to our systems of healthcare in Canada and the professions we train for. We all, Indigenous and Canadian, have the responsibility to pick up your own Peace, Power and Righteousness and bring that into relationships within the university, our profession, and the system as a whole. This is how we reconcile that which has not served any of us well and move toward realizing the relationship espoused within the Kaswentha as parallel and whole for all.

Ponder this as key to your education. Schedule time to be you. To do fun things, go outside, be with family and friends, enjoy life, pray, learn about your cultural and ancestral roots, work on those things that strengthen your Sken:nen, Kahsatenhsera and Ka'nikonriyo. In this way your education in the health sciences will be added to your identity - rather than becoming your identity.

Wa'kwanonweratons (love, greetings, and respect) to all of our people who are studying here at McMaster University. Blessings in your studies and as we move into the Christmas season.

Karena'onwe Dr Karen Hill
Faculty Advisor - Indigenous Health Learning Lodge

NEW STAFF ▶

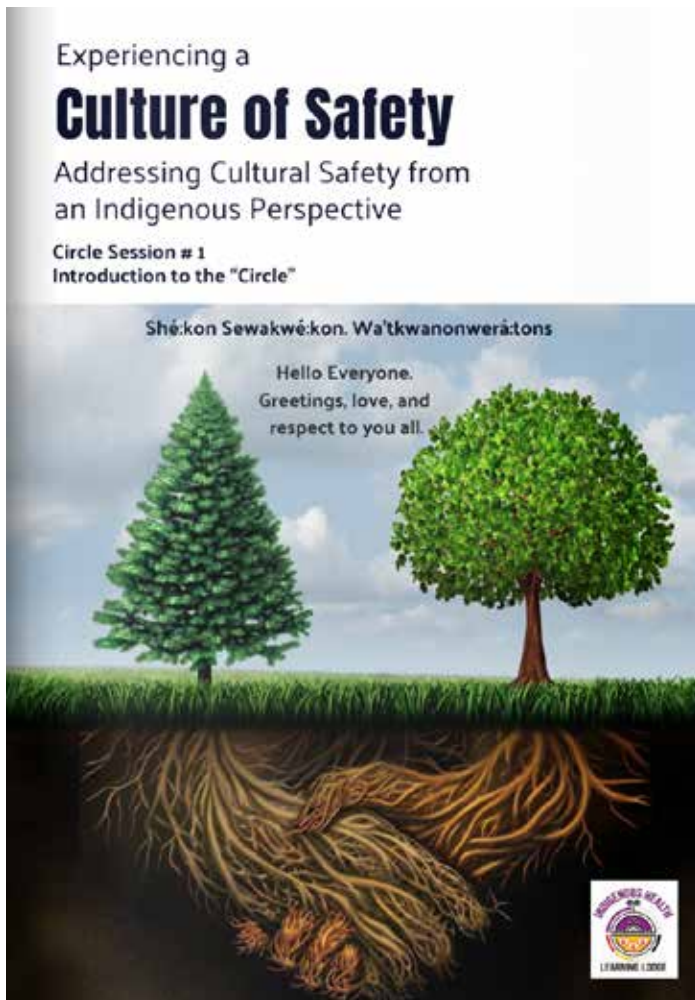
Introducing Sarah Thorne!

Sarah is the new Learner Services Coordinator (formally known as the Assistant Program Coordinator) for the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge. Sarah is a woman of Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) from Tyendinaga and mixed settler heritage. She is a Wilfrid Laurier Alumni with a HBA in Criminology and a Minor in Indigenous Studies. Sarah is also a Mohawk College Alumni with a Graduate Certificate in Concurrent Disorders. She brings over 5 years of diverse experience working with vulnerable and underserved populations. In her spare time, she enjoys crafting, socializing with friends and family and rooting for the Toronto Blue Jays; all while being a devoted pet parent to her hairless rats, skinny pig, and hedgehog. Sara is here to support all Indigenous learners at McMaster through the various programs run by the IHLL office, please feel free to stop by the office and welcome Sarah to the team.



Welcome Sam Yousefifard!

Sam is the new Educational Lead (Curriculum) Developer at the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University. He holds a master's in media and Technology Education from UBC. Sam was involved in a significant number of projects involving curriculum design, instructional technology design, and digital media and communications projects at the University of British Columbia. As a multiple award recipient working with Canada Research Chairs, he tried to connect research to practice, he has published papers and book chapters by Springer and other publishers. He also has around 50 conference presentations on learning technology, decolonizing pedagogy, curriculum design, media, inclusive education and leadership in Canada, US, Australia, UK and other countries.



The Indigenous Health Learning Lodge is in the process of developing Indigenous Culture of Safety Modules. This unique module program will be available to all students, faculty and staff that are interested in participating in this exciting learning opportunity. A unique feature of the modules is that they will showcase regional Indigenous Peoples' socio - cultural perspectives and worldview.

The Culture of Safety modules will bridge the knowledge gap and serve as a resource for self-education, anti-Indigenous racism training and curriculum enhancement thus, addressing existing systemic barriers for all learners, educating non-Indigenous faculty, raising awareness and harmonizing Indigenous cultural knowledge into educational and research programs.

The models will complement an experiential component that will be available for those who wish to participate in a facilitated circle learning process that focuses on the embodiment of Indigenous Knowledge, values and teachings through experiential learning. This aspect of the program is in a pilot phase at this time.

In the meantime, we recommend that individuals take advantage of existing digital and print resources to aid in learning more about the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples. For example, you can enroll in the **San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program (Core Health)**. Many learners and faculty have already taken the training here in the Faculty. The Indigenous Health Learning Lodge has pre-paid spots available to interested students, faculty, and staff. For more information about this opportunity and the San'yas program, please visit their website: sanyas.ca.

If you are interested in enrolling in the program, please contact lhll@mcmaster.ca to reserve your spots as they are limited.

EVENTS ▶

September 23 | **Welcome Gathering**

On September 23rd, the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge hosted a Welcome Gathering event at the LR Wilson theater. The event served as a bringing together of the Indigenous community, the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge, faculty, staff, and learners to demonstrate the wholistic Indigenous perspective of health through the arts. The gathering was attended by Chancellor Santee Smith who was presented with a soap stone sculpture for her achievements in advancing awareness regarding Indigenous Peoples and culture within the University.

JP Longboat, Mohawk and member of Six Nations and Artistic Director and performer of Circadia Indigena weaved together several interpretive dance performances, Elders' teachings and storytelling that enraptured the audience.

To learn more about Circadia Indigena and all the fantastic work they do please visit their website.

[Circadia Indigena Information](#)



December 6 | **Red Dress Day**

Dec. 6th is a day of mourning and remembrance for the victims of the 1989 Montreal massacre, the thousands of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, and members of the McMaster community and those around the world who have been harmed by gender-based violence. Please see the following link below for more information on how McMaster is commemorating the day.

[Red Dress Day](#)

STUDENT SECTION ▶



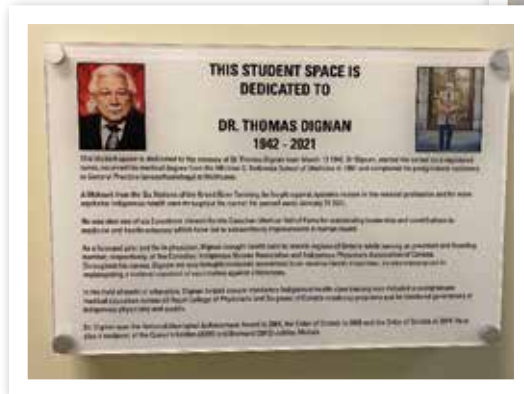
Amy Thomson
PHCNP Program

I'm a 24-year-old Indigenous Registered Nurse who graduated from McMaster University in 2020. I'm a Haudenosaunee from the Six Nations of the Grand River, Cayuga nation, and Wolf clan. I am extremely proud of my indigenous identity as I come from a long line of healers. As a result, I felt I could best serve my community in the healing field and choose Nursing.

I aspire to better my community's healthcare needs with the knowledge and skills I have developed through my professional nursing career. I have worked in an acute care hospital setting in various departments over the past two years. Most recently, in the Hemodialysis Renal services department. I am currently working towards my MSc course-based PHCNP at McMaster University. I will contribute to the care I provide to indigenous peoples by supporting and ensuring my delivery of care is of the highest quality. I hope to work as a Nephrology Nurse Practitioner once I complete school in hopes to bridge healthcare and indigenous cultures.

Learner Space

The Tom Dignan Student Lounge is currently open to Indigenous Learners 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access to the Learner Space is currently done through an access code, to utilize the Learner Space please email IHLL@mcmaster.ca and we will provide you with the code to access the space. The Learner Space is conveniently located within the IHLL office and learners are encouraged to visit the space to study, heat up lunch, make coffee or tea, and chat with fellow students and IHLL staff!





Dr. Jennifer Walker

IHLL Research Hub Lead
Associate Professor,
Department of Health Research
Methods, Evidence & Impact
Faculty of Health Sciences



Dr. Chelsea Gabel

Associate Professor
Department of Health, Aging and Society
Indigenous Studies Program

IHLL Research Hub

The Indigenous Health Learning Lodge is excited to relay that we are now developing our Research Hub. The recruitment of both Dr. Jennifer Walker, Research Hub Lead and Kristen Pelletier, our new Research Hub Program Coordinator will advance this developmental phase.

Kristen will work closely with Dr. Walker to advance the Indigenous Health Initiative Strategic priorities. Namely, to lead and inform Indigenous health research at McMaster, support Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers engaged in Indigenous health research, foster collaboration between researchers both on campus and with Indigenous community members, and work towards supporting self-determining, Indigenous health processes.

This semester, the Research Hub has been engaged with McMaster's research data management specialists to inform and update McMaster's institution-wide Research Data Management Guidelines with regards to Indigenous research. The Hub has also been supporting projects with Six Nations, on a palliative care evaluation, and Brantford General Hospital on an Indigenous medical services evaluation.

In other exciting news this semester, Dr. Jennifer Walker received a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health Data and Aging, and Dr. Chelsea Gabel, currently appointed in Health Aging and Society, received a renewal of her Canada Research in Indigenous Well-Being, Community Engagement and Innovation. Congratulations to both Dr. Walker and Dr. Gabel!

With the new semester approaching, we are excited to launch a guest lecture series highlighting Indigenous health research both in Canada and internationally.

We are also eager to expand our partnerships to researchers and community partners across Canada. We look forward to supporting the ongoing Indigenous health research occurring at McMaster and continuing to work with the university and community partners to bolster Indigenous health research.

If you are interested in Indigenous health research, looking for ways to collaborate, or want to learn more about the IHLL Research Hub, please reach out to Kristen at pelletkj@mcmaster.ca.



**Indigenous Allyship:
Spotlight on **Clare Mitchell, MHA**
Chief Operating Officer
Clinical Services
Faculty of Health Sciences
McMaster University**

How does the role of Indigenous Ally apply in your current role?

“The role of an Indigenous Ally is not to be taken lightly. It is determined by how the Indigenous community feels I have met my roles, responsibilities, and actions. In my current role, where I work in the intersection of healthcare and education, I must ensure that Indigenous voices and experiences are centred in anti-colonial ways. In particular, I am looking forward to working with Lori Davis Hill and the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge team (IHLL) to explore alternative physician payment models that may facilitate Indigenous provider participation and may ultimately increase specialty health care service access for Indigenous people locally.”

What is the most challenging aspect of trying to influence and change inequitable health systems towards being more culturally safe for Indigenous people?

“There are so many challenges to making health care more culturally safe for Indigenous people. One of the most challenging aspects is to engage the whole health care system to embrace the Canadian action plan to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as a self determined group to direct their own health care. Non-indigenous health care providers must listen more and educate themselves on the mistreatment of Indigenous people in health care. Additionally, we need to learn about how colonialization has influenced the many socio-economic factors that negatively influenced many of the health issues facing Indigenous people. Key resources to working together through this are my colleagues at the IHLL.”

How would you encourage your colleagues to become more involved in Indigenous allyship initiatives?

“First off, educate yourself. It is my role as an ally to educate myself about the history, culture and related issues and challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples. It is not the role of the indigenous community to do this for me. We are fortunate to have the IHLL in the Faculty of Health Sciences to facilitate this information journey. There are many validated sources of information readily available.”

OTHER NEWS ▶

The Indigenous Health Learning Lodge would like to congratulate Bertha Skye and Elva Jamieson on receiving their honorary degrees from McMaster!



Bertha Skye

Bertha Skye is a Cree Elder whose lifelong passion for food and cooking began in her childhood and took her all the way to the Culinary Olympics in 1992. There, as part of the Canadian Native Haute Cuisine team, she competed against thousands of chefs from around the world, using traditional Haudenosaunee ingredients and recipes and helping the team to bring home 11 medals, seven of them gold.

Bertha is much more than a respected chef: She is a cultural interpreter and teacher of traditional arts and crafts. She has taught traditional dance and cooking. She's a former member of the Board of Directors for the Six Nations Health Foundation and served as Elder-in-Residence at McMaster with the Indigenous Studies Program, Indigenous Student Services, and the Indigenous Students Health Sciences Office for more than a decade, sharing stories and knowledge and enriching the lives of hundreds of students, staff, and faculty.

Skye is also Elder-in-Residence with the Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support at Sheridan College, as well as a founder of the college's Indigenous Education Council. She has been Elder-in-Residence for Indigenous Education and Student Services at Mohawk College since 2010.



Elva Jamieson Faculty of Social Sciences

Elva Jamieson, who is from the Cayuga Nation of the Six Nations of the Grand River, has dedicated her life to protecting and sharing traditional Indigenous epistemology, language, and culture. A traditional healer and a Faith Keeper within the Cayuga Longhouse, Elva taught the Cayuga language and was vice principal of the Kawenní:io/Gawení:yo Elementary and High school at Six Nations before founding Juddah's Place, a collaborative care model clinic that offers primary care and Indigenous traditional services.

Jamieson has shared her knowledge with McMaster students and played a key role in the development of the University's Indigenous Health Learning Lodge through her participation in our Indigenous Knowledge Helpers' Working Group. Jamieson has also been a guiding voice in the Faculty of Health Science's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

