

At the Ontario Museum Association Conference in November 2016, Niagara Falls Museum and Chiefswood National Historic Site staff presented a session on a new educational programme called Discovering Kaná:ta, which explores the culture and history of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations).

During this presentation, museum professionals were asked to contribute their thoughts and promises on how they were going to engage the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their sites. The sheets of white and purple paper were then linked together in a chain symbolizing a wampum belt, mirroring the covenants created in the past between the Haudenosaunee and non-indigenous people (displayed above)

Here's what they said:

"Not be afraid to reach out to begin understanding"

"Become more comfortable talking to/asking questions in the community"

"I promise to read up on the TRC"

"Create a safe & nurturing space for knowledge sharing"

"Try to change museum policies from the ground up, start planning exhibits with inclusivity in mind, rather than as an afterthought"

"Get involved in a local First Nations centre"

"Reach out to the knowledge experts in my community so that the stories told are from the 'I' perspective rather than the 'They'"

"Open a dialogue with Six Nations, invite Six Nations Knowledge Holders to site to review our interpretation of site history compared to what and how Six Nations view it, create a program along with Knowledge Holders to tell the honest history not the white washed version"

"To create a safe space to have discussions and help resolve intercommunity conflicts between urban and non-urban, Metis, and two local First Nations"

"Include community members in building and running these educational programs"

"Ask the community how they would like to be represented"

"Create partnerships to promote learning and open conversation with community members"

"Find a local resource/partner that is authentic"

"I will reach out to potential First Nation partners to explore how to bring First Nation history and culture to Black Creek Pioneer Village (and read the TRC report)"

"Acknowledge the land we are on and explore partnership possibilities and devise a way forward together"

"Partnership with Cheifswood/Ruthven/Haldimand Museums to do an educational day together"

"Environmental sustainability"

"Work harder to see if any indigenous community members would like to be on our board"

"Expand my knowledge & understanding, making "them," "we," and "us""

"Display the works of indigenous artists and share their oral history"

"Providing more room for conversation and more time to include community"

"Listen"

"Connect with the local First Nations reserve"

"Enact Truth and Reconciliation throughout Brant County"

"Continue our community relationships with Saugeen Ojibway Nation"

"Work with the CMA taskforce to update the Turn the Page Task Force"

"Talk about Dakota"

"I will better educate myself on Indigenous issues and history so that I can spread awareness to others"

"Encourage partnership/develop relationships with the nations surrounding our city to better incorporate the inclusive narrative"

"Engage in conversation with someone who is First Nations in our community and learn from each other. Establish relationships that last and are meaningful to all"

"I can consult the community or create a committee to advise me and give suggestions as to how I can incorporate Curve Lake into or material"

"Facilitate a discussion on incorporating T&R recommendations at our museum"

"Refuse to do anymore Indigenous programming until we meet with a consultant and learn how to do it right"

"At Lang Pioneer Village Museum we have partnered with Curve Lake First Nation & Hiawatha First Nation, provided a space and supported their development of a First Nation Encampment, circa 1825"

when early settlement happened in the area. It is authentic, interpreted by them and enables us to hire local artisans, musicians & Knowledge Keepers to teach about their history, culture and language”

“Continue to further own personal knowledge and engage with communities to help myself & general community & museum audiences”

“Read the TRC and additional research to acknowledge”

“Reach out to ask for help developing our new exhibit, honour the knowledge keepers”

“Make connections with Six Nations – we are just down the road from Chiefswood”

“Continue to work with First Nation artisans and hear their stories, share with our visitors”

“Operate from a place of mindfulness and respect authenticity”

“Expand the OMA’s membership reach and benefits to make it accessible to Indigenous cultural workers”

“Community talking circles”

“Communicate and have discussions”

“Promise to have more contact with our local aboriginal community”

“Invite members of Six Nations to sit on volunteer committee”

“I promise to engage more with local First Nations”

“I promise to maintain open and safe dialogue with local indigenous communities”

“Actively seek partnership opportunities to expand programming”

“Have more programs & interactive activities to inform the community & spread awareness”

“Reading the Reconciliation Act”

“Engage with indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in meaningful ways”

“I promise to help gather/collect stories of both myth & legend as well as living memory”

“I must reach out to try and establish a relationship. I would like to find out what they would like to see, what they need...”

“To continue to learn & look for opportunities for others to learn & build relationships in my personal & professional life”

“Thank you for the presentation. I will look for more info about what we can do. It was great to handle the reproductions”

“I promise to be aware and respect the role of the indigenous peoples in their founding of our land”

“Learn more about specific regional indigenous histories and connect with community representatives”

