



DRYDEN

Media Release

Roy Napish Sr. is the recipient of the 2024 Leonard Sky “Building Bridges” Award

DRYDEN, ON – May 31, 2024 – The Working Circle presented Roy Napish Sr. with the Leonard Sky “Building Bridges” Award, which recognizes an individual, business, or organization who has demonstrated leadership in enhancing diversity, respect, harmony, equality, and humility for others.

With the award, he also received the special gift of a Star Blanket. The blanket demonstrates great respect, honour, and admiration for the recipient. The giver of the blanket holds the individual in very high regard, and when placed on the recipient, it is wrapping them with respect and admiration. The Star Blanket also brings good dreams, prosperity, and protection.

The Leonard Sky Building Bridges Award was conceived in 2015 to honour Leonard Sky, a long-time teacher, and Elder in the Dryden Area. His Anishinaabe Heritage and Language courses at Dryden High School opened many students’ eyes to their shared history, increased their pride in their culture and language, and began building bridges and better understanding in Dryden and surrounding area. The award was previously sponsored by the Dryden Area Anti Racism Network (DAARN) and as of 2023 has transitioned to the City of Dryden Working Circle to be administered.

Roy Napish Sr. has assisted Indigenous and Non-Indigenous individuals on their path through sharing cultural teachings. Roy is a survivor of the Residential School system, and often shares his oral teachings. He has worked in correctional centers to assist inmates and encourages them to walk the red road without discrimination or stigma. He also assists many young individuals within his First Nation community Migisi Sahgaigan. He believes that “if you want to live in peace with All Our Relations, you will be able to do so when you treat all creatures alike with respect. Give them all the same kind consideration. Give them all an even chance to live and grow.”



Roy is an Elder and mentor to many. He has a passion for assisting others while here on earth to ensure teachings, traditions, and more are passed down to the next generation. Roy currently works as an Indigenous Studies Instructor at Confederation College, giving students the opportunity to understand the colonial affects of Residential Schools.

He provides space for reflection and learning to occur in both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students, working towards establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships with those he walks with in his professional and personal life. He often holds sweat lodge ceremonies for those within the area, allowing a space for healing. He walks the red road of recovery, and values lifting others up to do the same.

Roy also walks in the Seven Grandfather teachings: he walks in honour by showing respect and love to others and the earth, he walks in truth by carrying the knowledge of the cultural teaching and walks in humility as he considers himself equal to everyone. These guiding principles make it easy for Roy to build rapport with those he assists on his path and gives him courage to not only do the right thing, but also say it honestly!

The members of the Working Circle would like to thank the community for all the nominations received and recognize the many people who work to make our community a better place.

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