



Indigenous Development  
~Conference~

*"Breaking Down  
Barriers & Developing for  
the Future"*

~ June 21, 2019 ~

Pier 4 Park, Hamilton ON

*Join us in a Day of Professional Development Learning*

Hosted by ~ Branches of Native Development ~

# Table of Contents

- Preamble ..... 3
  - Branches of Native Development ..... 3
- About the conference ..... 4
- Sunrise Ceremony and water Ceremony ..... 4
- The panels ..... 4
  - Poverty ..... 4
  - Education and Employment ..... 5
  - Health Wellness & Justice ..... 5
  - Indigenous Arts ..... 6
  - Indigenous Culture, Land & Language ..... 6
- Awards ..... 7
- Feast ..... 7
- Community Informational, Native Art & Food Fair ..... 7
- Live Entertainment ..... 8
- Closing ..... 8
- Soaring Spirit Festival ..... 8

# Preamble

## Branches of Native Development

Branches of Native Development (Branches) was established in the late eighties (88), to provide Indigenous artistic cultural and social setting to the Hamilton Indigenous Community and to encourage cross cultural and enhanced understanding of the Indigenous way of life, to understand our values and connection to Mother Earth and Turtle Island. It accomplished this by providing cultural events over the years, providing healing circles, sweat lodges, pow wows to name a few events. In the years between 2012 - 2014, it was recognized that Branches was growing beyond its capacity and needed restructuring. Part of that restructuring over the course of 2 years <sup>(2016)</sup>, committee and community meetings were held, with the outcome that Branches would need its own identity through incorporation as a non profit corporation. It was decided that an incorporation as a charity would also benefit the organization. The decision to register as a charity, allowed us to revamp our mission statement to be more comprehensive on what the organization does for the community.

Thirty years after its inception <sup>(2018)</sup> as an Adhoc committee, Branches started the process of its incorporation. Early in 2019 draft by laws were developed along with its charity purposes. Its new mission statement was released that best reflects what Branches does and what it will do for the future.

The new Mission Statement - Providing assistance to the development of Indigenous people, through the knowledge of cultural arts by providing a public gallery, assisting with education in all forms of arts to benefit Indigenous Development. To assist Indigenous People to grow by providing the basic necessities of life. To provide a public place for development and to further the Cultural and spiritual teachings of the Indigenous way of Life to Indigenous People and to the general public. To seek out assistance and maintain partnerships with all levels of government, the community and other Indigenous agencies, -The Branches of Native Development

Branches of Native Development will seek to reduce poverty for Indigenous people, advance the public appreciation of Indigenous arts, promote the advancement of Indigenous culture, promote advancement of Indigenous education and to establish and maintain an Indigenous arts gallery/facility for the public.

In order to bring awareness and promote the new structured organization to the community year after year, it was decided the best way to accomplish its mission was to hold a conference. The first ever conference will be held in conjunction with the Soaring Spirit Festival and will be titled Branches of Native Development Conference 2019 Indigenous Development – Breaking down barriers and developing for the future.

## About the conference

The purpose of this conference is to bring together experienced educators, elders and knowledge carriers, working in the field of education and employment assistance, Indigenous arts, health wellness and Justice, culture awareness or education, and poverty reduction. This could include teachers or educators, lawyers, law enforcement, social workers, Indigenous language speakers, Indigenous lodge and ceremony carriers or knowledge carriers but is not limited to those specific persons. We want to discuss the past, present – and the future of Indigenous Development, the advancements in indigenous learning models and to identify the historical barriers and how to eliminate them. To touch base on the Truth and Reconciliations Calls to Action and how its implantation can assist in future development of Indigenous people. To further develop networks within communities that expands existing Indigenous organization networks to ensure open dialogues are established and maintain between non-Indigenous organizations and partners.

The first ever Conference will focus on the Mission Statement and its objects to develop five panels of 3 or more speakers and the choice of an interactive Lacrosse Demonstration or a Tour selection. Giving each participant the opportunity to attend 3 workshops throughout the day, with culture being the main focus.

## Sunrise Ceremony and water Ceremony

The day will begin with a Sunrise Ceremony and Water Ceremony. These Ceremonies makes for an opportunity of learning of traditional values and a place for prayer and meeting new people that may have the same holistic views or to obtain different views in a spiritual place. Above all it is a time to give thanks for the day that is given and appreciate life to the fullest.

**The conference will open with Key note speaker on Branches of Native Development – Co Chair, Yvonne Maracle.**

## The panels

### Poverty

Poverty is one of the main barriers that limits the development of indigenous people, by tackling this barrier we can move to better Indigenous people. Branches of Native Development endeavours to reduce Indigenous homelessness as part of its goal to reduce poverty for Indigenous people.

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition, not defined as the common colonialist definition of homelessness. Indigenous homelessness is best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and

dispossessed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories.

Indigenous people experiencing homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Summarized from the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

### **Poverty panel will look at:**

- Historical barriers
- Advancements in indigenous housing, poverty reduction, food (Basic needs of Life)
- TRC – calls to action
- Promoters of Indigenous poverty reduction

### **Education and Employment**

One of the most significant barriers for indigenous people is education, most Indigenous people have not surpassed high school. In this day education is a key component to survival. Success in education will lead to better employment, furthering the development of Indigenous people.

According Statistics Canada Labour force characteristics by Aboriginal group and educational attainment Survey, in 2016 79.2 % of Indigenous people who have graduated high school aged 24 – 64 in Canada have completed a post secondary education, compared to 85.7% of non Indigenous people in the same age category have completed a post secondary education with 44.5% percent of the Indigenous population aged 25 – 64 completing less then a High school Diploma.

Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0359-01 Labour force characteristics by Aboriginal group and educational attainment

### **Education/employment panel may discuss:**

- Historical barriers
- Advancements in indigenous learning models
- TRC – calls to action
- Promoters of Indigenous education/employment

### **Health Wellness & Justice**

Through everyday life we could address Health and wellness amongst our people in our way. Health systems, the justice system was and is different for Indigenous people, that has been taken away for a better system. Part of the health and justice system, included sport, being able to compete and to be active was a way of life. It has been said that the game of lacrosse was once used to make decisions between nations.

Lacrosse

“Creator’s Game” was started by Indigenous people. This game took place over several days, from sun up to sun down, over huge open areas several miles apart between villages. It had any number of players and the ball was not to be touched by a player’s hand. Lacrosse was played to toughen up young warriors and as part of ceremonial thanksgiving to Creator.

**Health wellness and Justice panel will look at:**

- Health, Sport and healthy Living and Indigenous Justice- are well being
- Historical barriers
- Advancements in indigenous health and Justice
- TRC – calls to action

**Indigenous Arts**

Promoting Indigenous art helps to express the spirit of Indigenous people, in some ways letting go of the hurt and trauma that has been kept inside. In like other forms of arts and crafts, Indigenous art has always encompassed everyday life as a way to express identity, not in just some people but by all. We could identify with each other across nations, just through Indigenous art.

**The Indigenous arts panel will look at:**

- Historical barriers
- Advancements in indigenous arts
- TRC – calls to action
- Speakers – approach Indigenous artists established/up and coming

**Indigenous Culture, Land & Language**

Culture is the accumulated teachings of our ancestors. It is the basis of traditions, customs, protocols, values, spirituality, ceremonies, language, ways of knowing and being, and connections to the land- the life-sustaining resources of the land. Culture permeates all aspects of life and is essential to the overall well-being of Indigenous communities and individuals. For Indigenous People, culture is the essence of who they are, who they belong to, where they are from and how they relate to one another.

**Indigenous Culture, Land & Language panel will address:**

- Language, Land and ceremony- Roots to who we are
- Historical barriers
- Advancements in indigenous learning models
- TRC – calls to action
- Promoters of Indigenous culture

## Awards

In the Past 23 years or more Branches of Native Development has been building bridges with the Indigenous and non Indigenous community, to be able to provide venues for local artists, musicians cultural performances and Pow wows to urban Indigenous people in the Hamilton area, that they may have not had a chance to see or take part in anywhere else within the city.

We have provided a place for community members to take part in cultural teachings by storytelling, cultural Song and dance within the Pow wow component, Branches has provided a place to share in the celebrations in the success in our children, from pre-school to High school. Branches of Native Development has been able to help the Hamilton Indigenous community to honor our most valued members by the gift of an eagle feather, which has been the highest honor that any Indigenous person can receive. Branches will recognize one person who has significantly contributed to the Indigenous community without question, selflessly, this person shall be recognized for a significant amount of years of service who has not be recognized, as determined by the committee. The ceremony will take place during the conference and we ask attendees to attend this ceremony, as this honor is a gift from the community at large.

## Feast

Conference attendees will be welcomed with a morning continental breakfast style and buffet lunch as well as a closing Traditional Feast.

Feasts are a way of expressing gratitude for whatever one has been given. The committee will prepare the food to be offered after the conference, as their way of saying Thank you. The essence of a feast is to express gratitude and is a common way to say thank you for all the people who have attended.

## Community Informational, Native Art & Food Fair

Throughout the conference and the weekend, attendees will have access to Community Informational, Native Art & Food Fair

This event is open to the whole Indigenous community as well as the public community of Hamilton. It gives organizations a chance to meet potential clients or employees by exhibiting their projects at our fair. It places all organizations underneath one umbrella and gives them the chance to network with like- minded people and meet the greater Hamilton community. This is also a great opportunity for Indigenous artists to showcase and sale of their work, an opportunity for Indigenous Chefs and artisans to bring their traditional foods to different communities. Above all it is a place where Indigenous people can come and enjoy art they can understand, foods they can enjoy and information that is familiar and benefits their lifestyles.

## Live Entertainment

Conference attendees will be welcomed to stay for a live performance of Indigenous musicians, who will be confirmed at a later date.

“Music is a powerful part of Indigenous culture and is part of every day life as well as being a vital part of sacred ceremonies. Traditional music is still practiced and performed widely; and there is also a very strong and lively contemporary music scene.”

This year’s event is comprised of Local Indigenous talent and or Award-Winning Indigenous Artist from abroad.

## Closing

**We will close with Key note speaker on Branches of Native Development - Bond Co-Chair, Luke Johns**

## Soaring Spirit Festival

The Conference takes place during the start of our National Indigenous Day Festival on June 21, and will lead into the weekend for the ~Soaring Spirit Pow Wow~. It is intended that all may attend the Soaring Spirit Pow wow as it will be free for attendance.



Catherine Dallaire is the artist that designed our Logo for Soaring Spirit. “The first thing I thought of when I heard the words "soaring spirit" was of an eagle, not only because they are champion soars' but also because they are the embodiment of spirit. I wanted to try to convey that image in a way that would echo the inspirational theme of Soaring Spirit. Bringing a circular element into the design made it feel whole and complete. I hope the image succeeds in lifting the spirits of people as much as the theme does.”