

Minjimendandaa gaa-gikinoo'amaagoowiziyang



Sharon Howes

Minjimendandaa gaa-gikinoo'amaagoowiziyang
"Let's keep in mind what we have been taught"
Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, 2020
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“Let’s keep in mind what we have been taught”

As the world copes with the global COVID-19 pandemic, Anishinaabe teachings of mutualism and environmental symbiosis resonate loudly across Indian country.

It is prudent at this time to remember that our first, original treaties were agreements with every order of creation. Anishinaabe epistemology reiterates that we as humans were placed on this earth last. Each order of creation—from the four-leggeds to the plants—stood up for Anishinaabeg and agreed to lend us the sustenance needed to live a good life.

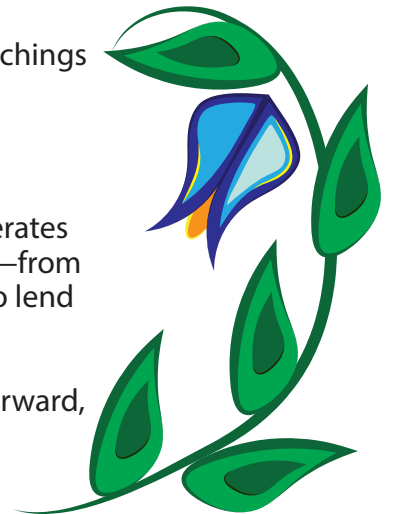
As the earth and humans attempt to create a new relationship moving forward, these original teachings lay the foundation for realizing true balance.

The original clan animals remind us that we are not the only beings that exist in this world and that we all have responsibilities to take care of the environment. Our traditional doodem (clan) teachings hold the capacity to reconnect all of us to our purpose and our responsibilities. Among many things, it is the clan system that has played a great role in Anishinaabe governance and strength as a nation.

Today in many tribal communities this strength and nationhood emanates across Turtle Island as people draw from blood memory. They are returning to the landscape, returning to the medicines, and returning to the ceremonies that have always been vital for survival. These many returns are a homecoming to a way of life that has been calling out to us to remember it for some time.

Ojibwe artist Sarah Howes of the Fond du Lac Band created this year’s poster in hopes of inspiring and providing a sense of optimism for those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It serves as a raw reminder that when we remember our teachings, we receive the gifts of strength and clarity. The other orders of creation have helped us to survive, and they will continue to help if we remember these important relationships.

Dr. Michael Sullivan, an Ojibwe linguist and immersion instructor at the Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Institute pondered the notion of Anishinaabe clan teachings and the current pandemic, remarking “Minjimendandaa gaa-gikinoo’amaagoowiziyang—Let’s keep in mind what we have been taught.”



18" x 24" posters are available from the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission at PO Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861, by phone (715) 685-2108 or email lynn@glifwc.org.