

School takes down social innovation challenge

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THE EASTERN DOOR

The First Nations Regional Adult Education Centre's (FNRAEC) food sustainability project picked up the first place prize at United Church of Canada's Social Innovation Challenge last weekend.

The challenge brought together change makers, mentors, and funders focused on bettering society across Montreal.

"The Social Innovation Challenge is something that we've done now in four city-centres across Canada. It's basically a Dragon's Den for social ideas," said Carla Leon, manager of new initiatives at the United Church of Canada.

"Our challenge is making less a competition and more of a collaboration because everyone in the room wants to make a difference in the world."

On May 12, Jasmine Esdon-Gauthier, a resource teacher at FNRAEC, had 60 seconds to pitch the school's multi-year food sustainability project to a room of judges and 34 other contestants.

"The idea is to bring culture back into the education system that we're offering and to encourage participation on the part of the students and community," said Diane Labelle, director of



COURTESY PERCOLAB

Jasmine Esdon-Gauthier, a resource teacher at the First Nations Regional Adult Education Centre, pitched the winning idea at the Montreal Social Innovation Challenge.

the Kahnawake campus.

The project is something they started last year with the creation of a garden and chicken coop.

"It's kept our students very interested in what they're doing. They understand that this is a different way of learning. Instead of sitting in a classroom learning about science, they're learning about food sustainability, climate

change, biology, and all kinds of different things," said Labelle.

The project is now going to be extending into beekeeping to harvest organic honey in the coming weeks.

An additional component of the project is proposing to have students teach elders in the community how to use social media.

"The elders are actually going to come into our centre

two-three times a week and our students will teach them," said Labelle.

"While they're doing that, we're hoping to get this interaction between the students and elders as they tell them stories about growing up in Kahnawake and how things have changed."

Esdon-Gauthier's pitch helped moved the project onto the second round of the challenge

the following day, and she had the opportunity to connect to resources and leverage support from fellow participants.

"What I liked about what they did was that it is obviously a social impact on an inter-generational basis. One thing that we always think is the most important is actually the relationship that's starting from a place of trust and stories are the best way to form trust," said Leon.

"If you can start having those inter-generational relationships and that relationship of social justice so that they're both linked to each other – that's a great foundation to be able to do more in the future."

The first place win earned them \$2,000 cash, a website valued at \$2,500, a Datawind tablet, \$1,200 worth of legal templates from Clausehound, \$500 value social media course from CanadaHelps.org, and business coaching from MNP Consulting.

"It's exciting," said Labelle. "It is wonderful to see that people were excited about our projects and how different it is in terms of a school for the students and a different way of learning. That was a big plus, over and above the prizes that were won."

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Attention Kahnawa'kehró:non!

The recent gas tax trial, which boils down to a fight for everyone's right to conduct business in Kahnawake without interference from the outside, is coming to the most important part of a battle that has been waged for many years.

1. The Quebec Court of Appeal decision of April 21, 2016, rejected the Kahnawake Gas Retailer's argument that they have the right to conduct business within the Territory of Kahnawake, and are not the tax collectors of any outside Government.
2. The Kahnawake Gas Retailers maintain their argument is based on the Constitution Act of 1982, that gives us the right to trade freely and openly protected by section 35. Although the appellants did demonstrate a pre-contact tradition of exchanging (Orenda), rare and precious objects to which they attributed a spiritual or symbolic value, this practice was of a ritual or diplomatic nature and cannot be relied upon to establish an overarching modern right to commercial trade.
3. The Kahnawake Gas Retailers maintain their argument is based on the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which clearly gives us the right to free and unfettered trade. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is properly understood as a unilateral act of the British Crown that sought, among other things, to protect Aboriginals from the abuses of certain unscrupulous merchants but it did not create an Aboriginal right to trade free from regulation or hindrance of any kind.

The Court of Appeal has basically rejected all of our arguments based on the inherent rights that we as Onkwehón:we have, do not exist in the commercial field, and that any business has to be treated as a business, which has the rights and responsibilities to collect and remit taxes on behalf of the Federal and Provincial Governments. This means businesses within our Territory of Kahnawake.

On behalf of the Kahnawake Gas Retailers, **we are asking if anyone from the Community of Kahnawake has any old documents or newspaper clipping from the past that can possibly assist our fight against the Government's Tax Regime**, imposed upon us Kahnawa'kehró:non.

In the 1960s the Late Eileen Marquis had a newspaper going and other people collected and saved all documents related to Kahnawake, perhaps if anyone has them, we want to borrow, copy and return them to the owner as soon as possible.

Please contact Peggy Mayo-Standup at 450-635-9253

Ní:wen'kó:wa