

ONJISAY AKI YOUTH STATEMENT

Turtle Lodge, September 19, 2016

“We are grateful to be on the land today. We are very grateful to the Turtle Lodge and the Knowledge Keepers for gifting us with the teachings and space to receive knowledge in a safe and loving way. We acknowledge we must always begin with the Spirit. We reach out to the highest source of power and influence, found in the spirit and the land. We strive to make an alliance with Mide Aki (the kind-hearted Mother Earth), an alliance that begins with our Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This alliance will ensure the survival of all our children.

We identify ourselves, and our brothers and sisters, as resilient and adapting spirits to all facets of life. We know the answers are to be found within our own people when we are nurtured and grounded in our own identity, languages, ceremonies, traditions and teachings.

We are committed to grounding ourselves in the respectful relationship between Mide Aki, Knowledge Keepers, Youth and the teachings that are being passed down.

We have heard our Elders speak, we have received our direction and inherent responsibility to live Mino-Bimadisiwin, which means to live the good life.

We recognize ourselves as messengers of the knowledge to inspire other Youth to do ceremony and join us in honouring, recognizing and celebrating the ones who have passed, the ones that are here and the ones yet to come. We commit ourselves to reaching out to Youth from our home communities to join us.

Water is life, the blood of our beautiful Mide Aki. This water, this blood of the earth, will unite us as her children, as we, the Indigenous People, speak with the voice of the land herself. The water will carry our message. Once the offerings are made the water will carry our love to all waters of the Earth. As we drink the water we can be healed with Mide Aki.

We are walking in the footsteps of our ancestors as loving and kind spirit warriors – Vision Walkers. Acknowledging the spirit, we honour the knowledge and accept the privilege and gift of sharing this beauty for the betterment of our people, our Creator and most importantly Mide Aki – our kind-hearted Mother, the Earth.”

The Onjisay Aki Youth Statement was originally written by Onjisay Aki Youth Climate Summit Co-Chair Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie and Summit Co-Coordinator Janell Jackson, on behalf of the Youth, at the sacred fire at Turtle Lodge on Saturday September 17, 2016. Its message was inspired by the ceremonies, teachings and guidance from the Knowledge Keepers at the Onjisay Aki Youth Climate Summit led by the First Peoples (Sept 16-19, 2016). Co-Chair Lavoie took the statement into a sharing circle with Youth and Knowledge Keepers on Sunday September 18, for their input and consensus. After the document was finalized, it was taken into ceremony and, with the help of Grandmothers Florence Paynter, Mary Maytwayashing and Sherry Copenace, spiritualized through a water ceremony on Lake Winnipeg on September 19, for its message to be carried by the water and shared worldwide.



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