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Photo by Alex Hamer

Chris Thomas, Onondaga, Beaver Clan, and Adah Shenandoah, Oneida, Wolf Clan, are all smiles as they share song and dance with the people at the opening of the Great Law of Peace Center.

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Learn About the Haudenosaunee: Great Law of Peace Center Opens [14 images]

ALEX HAMER | 12/1/15

Coinciding with Native American Heritage Month, Skä Noñh-Great Law of Peace Center celebrated its grand opening on the shores of Onondaga

Lake in Liverpool, New York on November 20 and 21. Skä Noñh, which means peace and wellness in Onondaga, is meant to educate people about the Haudenosaunee and the Great Law of Peace, the founding constitution between the Six Nations. There are interactive displays, art, and cultural items all on display at Skä Noñh.

The opening was celebrated by the Native and non-Native community with food, dancing, artists, and an opening address with words from Oren Lyons, Onondaga Faith Keeper.

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Onondaga Faith Keeper Oren Lyons addressing the crowd on the importance of Skä Noñh as a place to learn on the day of the grand opening. (Photo by Alex Hamer)

Lyons had this to say when asked about the meaning of Skä Noñh for future generations: "I think this is the beginning of a resurgence of American history, of Native American history, here in this country. The American public is just not taught of it, the history of Native people here. So this is a good beginning and this is where the Tree of Peace was planted a thousand years ago, and I think it's going to grow. Hopefully other nations will join in and the true history will come."

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MJ Schenandoah, Oneida, Wolf Clan, with daughter Maisie Schenandoah-Auigbelle, Cree and Oneida, Wolf Clan at the grand opening. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



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Ranahkweineh Royce Thomas, Mohawk, Wolf Clan, dancing in time with the drum at the opening of the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)

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Malaina Potak, Onondaga, Beaver Clan, showing that women smoke dance now too. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



Women dancers performing a round dance at the opening of the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



*The Tree of Peace with Clan System animals on each panel is on display at the Great Law of Peace Center.
(Photo by Alex Hamer)*



Renowned lacrosse stick maker Alfred Jacques, Onondaga, Turtle Clan, at the opening of the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



An older pair of beautifully beaded moccasins on display at Skä Noñh. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



A display showing a beaver pelt and the axe heads that would have been traded for it as well as the Treaty of Canandaigua Belt at the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



Moccasins braided together from corn husks on display at the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



Haudenosaunee Passport

The Haudenosaunee have issued passports since 1923, when authorities issued a passport to Cayuga statesman Levi General or Deskahoh to travel to the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland where he presented Haudonsaunee concerns before the League. The Iroquois Passport has been used since 1977. Not all countries recognize the Iroquois Passport and have denied Haudenosaunee people entry.

Haudenosaunee Passports on display at the Great Law of Peace Center. They are used for travel and a symbol of indigenous sovereignty. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



Stone Carver Tom Huff, Seneca-Cayuga, Deer Clan, allows visitor Martha Johns, Oneida, to try her hand at stone carving. (Photo by Alex Hamer)



Versatile artist Tracy Thomas, Mohawk, Wolf Clan, at the grand opening of the Great Law of Peace Center. (Photo by Alex Hamer)

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