

Constitution

Of The

Kahnawà:ke Community Youth Forum

We the people of Kahnawà:ke, as part of the Haudenosaunee confederacy, we are, and have always been a sovereign people; we have our own laws, government, culture and spirituality. Our lives are governed by the principles of the Kaianere'ko:wa, the Great Law of Peace, a covenant made in ancient times. We respect the covenant for it describes our right and responsibility to govern our own affairs in our own way. We consider this covenant to be a precious inheritance of our children and future generations, with which no one can interfere.

NOTE: excerpt - taken from Community Decision Making Process Summary Report Aug 15/08.

ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Kahnawà:ke Youth Forum, hereinafter referred to as the “Youth Forum”.

ARTICLE II—NATURE

The Youth Forum is a volunteer organization that serves the community of Kahnawà:ke, supported by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake.

ARTICLE III—PURPOSE

The purpose of the Youth Forum shall be to provide Kahnawà:ke’s youth with the opportunity to gather, express and discuss their views on community issues in a safe, open and neutral forum.

ARTICLE IV—OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Youth Forum is to contribute to the social fabric of the community through reflection, discussion, and responsible decision-making. All members of the Youth Forum are encouraged to participate and make changes in community policy, processes and legislation as the Youth Forum shall act as a consultation venue for community organizations.

ARTICLE V—MEMBERSHIP

All Kahnawà:kehró:non and those part of neighboring First Nation communities who are between the ages of fifteen and thirty are eligible to become members of the Youth Forum.

The Youth Forum shall include three types of membership:

A) General Members

(a) Composition

- I. The membership of the Youth Forum shall consist of an unlimited amount of volunteered youth.

(b) Qualifications

- I. Members must be between the ages of fifteen and thirty years of age.
- II. Members must be a resident of Kahnawà:ke or have familial ties (those with Kahnawà:kehró:non relatives) to the community.

B) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke chiefs responsible for the Youth Portfolio.

- I. The role of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is to promote the endeavors of the Kahnawà:ke youth and to generate individual, community, and nation, support for youth involvement in community/national/international political issues and decisions; and to promote and/or “champion” issues raised by the Kahnawà:ke youth.

ARTICLE VI—OBLIGATIONS AND PREROGATIVES OF MEMBERS

We must recognize that Kahnawà:ke is diverse in its social, political, economic, and religious structures.

- (A) All opinions and voices are to be considered equal and valid.
- (B) All members are responsible to create a safe and respectful environment for discussions and decision-making.
- (C) All members are responsible to respect the speaker (i.e. listen, avoid interruption, turn of cell phones).
- (D) All members should encourage each other to speak and express their views; remember to be tough on the issue, not the individual.

ARTICLE VII—SELECTION PROCESS

All positions will be filled by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at the time of an election.

ARTICLE VIII—EXECUTIVES OF THE YOUTH FORUM

A) COMPOSITION

The executives of the Youth Forum shall be:

- (a) The President
- (b) The Vice-President
- (c) The Secretary
- (d) The Treasurer

Note: Description of Executive roles and responsibilities is contained in the Youth Forum's by-laws.

ARTICLE IX—AMENDMENTS

- (a) The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority and one half of the executive vote of the current Youth Forum, at any meeting.
- (b) Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the President at least 72 hours before the meeting. The President shall include such proposed amendments in the agenda of the meeting.

*This version of the Constitution and By-Laws has been reviewed by the 2013 executive committee: Jessica Deer, Vernon Goodleaf, Kawannahere Jacobs, Shotehra Rice and Megan Whyte.
April 30th 2013*