

July 14, 2023 Blog

In 2021, A.J. Baker students asked Zorra Council to host a Powwow. They wanted to meet people and experience that culture. Zorra Council committed to exploring that, a land acknowledgment, and possible policy responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. I have since reached out to all possibly involved First Nations, and after making a connection with the Ogimaa Kwe (Chief) Jacqueline French of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN, Deshkan Ziibiing), I met her at their office in Muncey as both Zorra mayor and Oxford Warden.

Ogimaa Kwe French was extremely welcoming and we talked about how to work towards a better relationship between the two communities and agreed that this is more important than preparing a land acknowledgement at this time. Ogimaa Kwe French raised the possibility of a joint Council meeting to learn about each community's issues, challenges, and opportunities. Additionally, and I think most importantly, I had an opportunity to visit Antler River Elementary School and the students of A.J. Baker were offered the opportunity to attend and participate in the community's children's Pow Wow this year. On Friday, June 23, they had an amazing day in #indigenouspeoplesmonth! when students from A. J. Baker P. S. travelled to Antler River Elementary School at the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation for a Powwow. Chi miigwetch COTTFN!

Oxford County Library has introduced a new Ox on the Run bookmobile! This will allow the Ox on the Run program to extend beyond the summer months for the first time, to serve residents of all ages, offering access to library books, programs, and other resources, like internet and computer access, printing services and technology support, during visits to Oxford communities, parks, splash pads, community centres, and special events throughout the year. Watch for the bookmobile at community events, and for more information about Ox on the Run, visit [ocl.net](http://ocl.net).

Did you know that local businesses and organizations can apply to Future Oxford to become a Zero Waste Space? Zero Waste Spaces is a voluntary waste reduction program that identifies members through the display of a "Zero Waste Facility" decal. This lets people who enter the premises know that the location:

- composts or digests organics;
- recycles all plastic, glass, metal, paper and cardboard;
- avoids single-use plastics;
- offers reusable and/or recyclable packaging; and,
- honours and commits to "zero waste" principles.

Become a "zero waste space" by completing the online application at [www.futureoxford.ca](http://www.futureoxford.ca).

It was my honour as Warden to officially open the new home of Oxford EarlyON Child and Family Centre at 75 Graham Street in Woodstock. This is the primary hub for Oxford County's EarlyON Child & Family programming, this building now offers free, high-quality programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. It also supports EarlyON programs across the County, serving more than 100 parents, caregivers and children

daily through mobile outreach. EarlyON programs offer warm and welcoming places where parents and caregivers can play with their children, meet people, get advice from early childhood professionals, and learn about other family services in the community.

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

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