



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL STUDENT WINS NATIONAL STUDENT ARTIST COMPETITION *Katsitsiaroroks Mitchell Takes First-Place Prize*

Eighth-grade Mohawk student Katsitsiaroroks Mitchell won first-place honors in the 2008 national Native American Student Artist Competition, an annual event sponsored by the Office of Indian Education. The contest is designed to encourage student artists to explore the connections between Native American culture and educational success and is open to Native and Alaskan Native students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. This year's competition also included an essay contest for the first time.

Mitchell's art work displays the various Mohawk Clan symbols. "I put the bear at the top of the picture because I am a member of the Bear Clan," explained Mitchell. Since she is fluent in the Mohawk language, both her life and her art work relate to this year's contest theme of "*Circle of Empowerment: Education, Language, Culture, Tradition.*" Her work was executed in coloring pencils and includes natural elements such as the earth, the moon in its various phases and the traditional Mohawk design of people with hands joined in friendship.

Robin LaCourse was Mitchell's art teacher for the past year and was pleased to have a student with her ability. "Katsitsiaroroks is extremely artistic. She's a joy to work with and is an independent thinker with clear insight," she said. "All of her art work relates to her and her culture. She has a good eye for detail and a good connection with nature. This assignment was to illustrate values and it was a reflection of her values. She's a great artist."

Mitchell is an honor-role student at J.W. Leary Middle School in Massena, New York and has received other achievement awards including the J.W. Leary Award, Student of the Month and the Inspiration Award for her figure skating. A young woman with many interests, she mentioned, "I like to read in my spare time and read a lot of the same books as my brother," which is a refreshing departure from playing video games. She has landed her first summer job, working at the Elder's Center in Cornwall, Ontario, plans on enrolling in Saturday art classes at an art gallery and will continue to study art when she enters high school.

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Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

Mitchell's winning art work was selected from about 1,000 entries overall. Her first-place prize was in the sixth through eighth grade category. She received an engraved portfolio, stocked with art supplies, an engraved plaque and a certificate. Her work will be part of a nationwide traveling display and will be featured at prestigious galleries such as the U.S. Department of Education, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the Chicago Children's Museum, the Oklahoma City History Center and a variety of museums and galleries during the summer of 2008.

All entries were judged by a panel of artists from the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Indian Educational Association and American University. Judging was based on originality, relationship to contest theme, creativity, composition and control of materials. The competition has grown from generating a few hundred entries during the first year to over 1,400 entries from across 34 states and over 175 tribes and clans. Images of the student artwork can be found online at www.indianeducation.org/sac/gallery.

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