Colgate University, Hamilton, New York
Saturday, October 22, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Colgate University’s annual Native American Arts and Culture Festival celebrates Native American culture with music and dance performances, art and archaeology demonstrations, many vendors selling unique Native American crafts, and more. The festival is free, open to the public, and fun for all ages. It will take place indoors, rain or shine, at the Sanford Field House. Follow the signs on Rte. 12B in Hamilton.

The music and dance acts take place all day, with plenty of seating for all. Returning by popular demand is the Onondaga-based troupe Haudenosaunee Singers and Dancers, which includes many young dancers performing fast-paced smoke dances as well as traditional Iroquois social dances in which the audience is invited to participate. New this year is Ayazamana, a music and dance troupe performing traditional dances of Ecuador in brilliant indigenous costumes. Also new is the Tlacopan Aztec Dancers, composed of indigenous Mohawk performers from Canada as well as indigenous dancers from Mexico, who perform in spectacular plumed headdresses and beaded regalia. A special treat this year is a performance by five-year old Tuscarora dancer Cusin Lyons who is already earning accolades for his fancy moves. Alan Cleveland, a well-known Mohawk/Cree performer, will offer a flute performance to close the festival.

The festival includes a Native American craft market, in which vendors from many indigenous cultures and communities offer a wide array of unique craft items for sale including exquisite jewelry, pottery, baskets, leatherwork, dolls, and musical instruments. Artists also offer sculpture in stone, antler, and clay, as well as prints and paintings. Purchases from the Native American artists support their efforts to keep these crafts alive, as well as providing years of enjoyment for the buyer – not to mention a perfect opportunity for gift-giving.

All of the artists enjoy speaking with visitors about their work, and special craft demonstrations will take place throughout the day, including lacrosse stick making, stone sculpture, flute playing, and pottery. An archaeology and culture display by Mohawk educator Mike Tarbell will take place all day.

While visitors browse and chat with the artists and performers, they may also sample traditional Iroquois corn soup and fry bread, as well as strawberry cake, made-to-order Indian tacos, and other foods, all of which will be available for purchase throughout the day.

All are welcome and families are especially encouraged to attend. Young children will especially enjoy storybook readings, coloring and making traditional cornhusk dolls, paper canoes, and bead bracelets with the help of Colgate students. Look for the festive “Children’s Corner” just inside the entrance. Visitors may register at the welcome table to win one of the door prizes – each one an original Native American item – which will be given away hourly.

The Native American Arts and Culture Festival is organized by Colgate’s Longyear Museum of Anthropology in cooperation with the Native American Studies Program and Native American Student Association, and generously supported by the Upstate Institute, Core Curriculum, and ALANA Cultural Center. For more information contact Carol Ann Lorenz of the Longyear Museum at (315) 228-7184, clorenz@colgate.edu.