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Major community youth art project gets green light for grant

Funding supports link between coastal youth for Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation

West Vancouver, BC - Students in West Vancouver and the Gitga’at Nation in Northern BC will be working together on a large art mural and exhibition in 2017 to deepen understanding of their unique cultures and lands, courtesy of a grant for nearly \$50,000 from the Government of Canada and a further \$10,000 from the West Vancouver Community Foundation.

The project, *Gitga’at and West Vancouver Youth: Mural of Merging Voice*, approved for a total of \$49,100 in funding under the *Celebration and Commemoration program – Canada 150 Fund*, will be guided by professional artist [Cori Creed](#), who will assist the students with creative process, production, critique, assessment and installation of the mural. In addition to hands on studio instruction, students in each coastal community will travel to the other community to work together on the project, build cross-cultural awareness and celebrate their attachment to the land, community and country.

Local art teacher Jackie Wong, who directs the [ArtWest 45](#) program at West Vancouver Secondary School, and Hartley Bay school principal Cam Hill, will direct the project in each community. The final result, which will be on display in 2017 at the West Vancouver Museum, the Harmony Arts Festival and the Museum of Northern BC, will consist of at least eight separate 4’ x 8’ panels with a photographic base and additional layers of paint, pen, charcoal and other mediums.

“This award provides an incredible opportunity for some of the most talented visual arts students in both communities, and will help build valuable links between two distinct coastal community cultures that can be shared broadly with the public,” says Wong. “From concept to completion, this innovative project will create meaningful discussions around reconciliation and strengthen community understanding of the history, environment, beliefs and relationship to the land.”

“The West Vancouver Community Foundation, through the Compelling Opportunities Fund and the West Vancouver Artists’ Fund, is pleased to support the work of Jackie Wong in this important project that will bring together the youth of two distinct Canadian communities, West Vancouver and Hartley Bay (Gita’at Nation),” said West Vancouver Community Foundation Board Chair, Nancy Farran. “When Jackie approached the Foundation in early September, we were excited about the nature of the work and the Board confirmed funds to support her...Jackie felt that our support allowed her to proceed. We are thrilled that she also received funding through the Canada 150 grants process.”

The project received strong support from Member of Parliament for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, who has been working with local school districts to increase youth participation in the arts and in truth and reconciliation experiences.

“The way to know one another better is to work together, to create together, to walk a path together. This project will be an extraordinary experience for non-indigenous and indigenous alike.”

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