

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH ARTISTS ON MURAL

“What the Salmon Say” from a First Nations Perspective

May 25, 2016 - Duncan, BC, Canada – A team of 45 young artists from Queen Margaret’s School and 13 adult artists from Duncan combined forces to create a public mural which promotes the understanding of local ecosystems from a First Nations perspective while beautifying a main corridor in the City of Duncan.

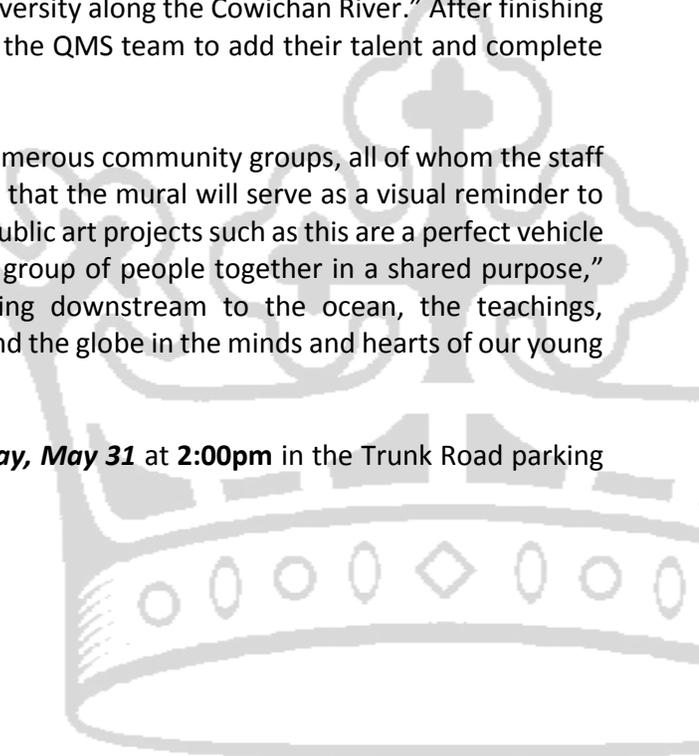
The 64’ x 4’ mural includes renderings of salmon styled after traditional Pacific Northwest Coast art and will be situated across from Joe’s Tire Hospital in Duncan. “Children’s motivation to learn and communicate their passion for our natural environment is supported when they have the opportunity to make a visible contribution in their community,” explains Angela Andersen, Department Head of Fine Arts at QMS. “The building owner, the Duncan Business Improvement Association (DBIA) and the City Council of Duncan gave the students of QMS a goal to work for, something to be accountable for. Not surprisingly, they joyfully rose to the challenge.”

In collaboration with Angela Andersen, Grade 12 QMS student *Emily Zhang* studied form line style and consulted with local carver, Lambert Goldsmith to establish the overall composition of the mural concept. Her scaled drawings were pitched to the building owner, the DBIA and an art review panel who suggested and facilitated the inclusion of local artists before the project was sent to City Council for approval. Funding was provided by Art Starts and the DBIA, while labour and artistic assistance were provided by the City of Duncan Public Works Department and the Cowichan Valley Arts Council.

QMS Grade 5 students joined the Grade 10-12 art class in gathering research for the project. Students learned details about First Nations art through visits from artist Lambert Goldsmith and explored the historical use of native plant species on field trips to the Cowichan River, engaging with First Nations ethno-botanist Ken Elliott. “In their role as peer educators, QMS students were passionate about learning the importance of respecting riparian land and waterways,” continues Andersen. “Our youth aspire to make a difference in the world and art is a natural way to learn about, celebrate and share a commitment to protecting biodiversity along the Cowichan River.” After finishing their research and sketching the mural outline, local artists joined the QMS team to add their talent and complete the community circle.

The large-scale project required the support and involvement of numerous community groups, all of whom the staff and students at Queen Margaret’s School are grateful. The hope is that the mural will serve as a visual reminder to respect and honour our relationship with nature and each other. “Public art projects such as this are a perfect vehicle to communicate values, exchange knowledge and bring a diverse group of people together in a shared purpose,” says Andersen. “Like the salmon depicted in the mural, heading downstream to the ocean, the teachings, relationships formed and experiences gained here will spread around the globe in the minds and hearts of our young people.”

The public is invited to the official unveiling taking place on **Tuesday, May 31 at 2:00pm** in the Trunk Road parking lot on the east side of Joe’s Tire Hospital in downtown Duncan.



About Queen Margaret's School

Established in 1921, **Queen Margaret's School (QMS)** is located on 27 country-like acres in Duncan, BC. QMS offers a coed Early Childhood Education program, coed Junior School (Kindergarten-Grade 7), University-Preparatory High School for girls (Grades 8-12) and all girls Boarding School (Grades 6-12). Queen Margaret's School is home to Canada's *only* on-campus school English Equestrian Program and an intensive ELL Program. The school's comprehensive scholastic and extra-curricular program provide opportunities for achievement and personal growth through academics, sports, visual and performing arts, riding and community service. We prepare students for university, for higher education, for life.

For more details about Queen Margaret's School, please visit the school's website at www.qms.bc.ca.

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For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Photo (by Hayley Picard): First Nations artist *Lambert Goldsmith* collaborates with QMS Grade 5 student *Mary Jaggs* on the "What the Salmon Say" mural.



Photo (by Angela Andersen): QMS Grade 12 student *Emily Zhang* works with local artist *Katelyn Wills* on the "What the Salmon Say" mural project.

