



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QMS STUDENTS LAUNCH CYFA ARTISTIC SHOWCASE

Created for youth, by youth—art is alive in Cowichan

November 16, 2023 – Duncan, BC, Canada – With the support of 49 of his peers, Grade 11 student, Jason Cheng, led the creation of a first of its kind art festival on Vancouver Island, the Cowichan Youth Festival of the Arts (CYFA). Together, CYFA student committee members ideated, gathered, coordinated and hosted a day-long fully immersive art extravaganza, complete with a red-carpet experience.

Cheng, an avid filmmaker and photographer, said that he was inspired to curate this event after participating in film festivals himself. “Having been nominated and awarded at film festivals like the All-American High School Film Festival in New York and the BC Student Film Festival, I felt a need to create a festival here in Cowichan for youth to take part in,” he shares. “Many of the art festivals available on the island are strictly for visual arts, so I wanted to include as many art forms as possible for CYFA to be inclusive of all youth artists.”

From workshops, performances and exhibitions, more than 500 QMS students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 explored and participated in 11 festival programs to represent the breadth of art mediums such as visual arts, music, drama, dance, film, photography and poetry. The explosion of colour and music was an incredible experience for everyone who attended.

“As the founder and organizer of CYFA, I felt a sense of deep gratitude and awe for what we, as students at Queen Margaret’s School, were capable of doing,” adds Cheng. “This is an entirely student-led and operated initiative: from marketing to leading festival programs and crafting location set-ups, to catering our entire Senior School with complimentary refreshments. I believe CYFA really fostered a sense of community in our school.”

Head of School, David Robertson, agrees that the CYFA team more than exceeded his expectations and was thrilled that the students felt empowered to follow their passions in the arts. “No education is truly complete without a significant exposure to the Arts, so QMS is delighted to support the inaugural Cowichan Youth Festival of the Arts. The fact that it was entirely a student-driven initiative makes it all the more impactful and impressive.”

Cheng and his team were tireless in creating a momentous event that would showcase the arts while inspiring other young people to join them in the future. “We set out to promote the arts within our community and we’ve done just that,” he continues. “Next year, to really honour our title as the ‘Cowichan’ Youth Festival of the Arts, we would love to have artists from other schools join us to celebrate the magic of the arts, together.

We look forward to connecting and collaborating with local art organizations and expanding our impact in the valley and beyond.”

For further inquiries about next year’s CYFA, connect with the festival committee at cyfa@qms.bc.ca.

About Queen Margaret’s School

QMS is a university-preparatory, all gender day and boarding school located in Duncan, BC. Our purpose is to prepare young trailblazers, as no two journeys are the same. With an educational emphasis on experiential learning, innovative thinking, environmental stewardship and sustainability, we live by the value statement: *Be curious. Be kind. Be brave. Be you.*

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For more information or to arrange a QMS interview please contact:

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Photos by Ashley Marston & Jakob Buttner-Danyliw (noted in the file names): QMS Senior School students created and led a first-of-it’s kind celebration of the arts with a full day immersive extravaganza called the Cowichan Youth Festival of the Arts for their community.

