



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QMS WELCOMES ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Huy ch q'u John Marston & Quw'utsun Elders

September 20, 2023 – Duncan, BC, Canada – On September 16, 2023 QMS and Khowhemun School students, staff and faculty came together in a special ceremony to celebrate art, community and reconciliation. As part of his new artist-in-residence partnership with Queen Margaret's School, Stz'uminus artist, John Marston, and his carved cedar canoe were welcomed to Quw'wutsun territory by local Elders and Chief Lydia Hwitsum.

The canoe rested briefly under a cedar tree on Innisfree Farm before Quw'utsun and Khowhemun singers and drummers lead a long procession of students and staff carrying the canoe to its temporary resting place at QMS. During its time at the School, students will have the opportunity to learn about the cultural significance of canoe carving from one of BC's most renowned artists. Students will also learn about traditional Coast Salish design, as John creates an original design for the exterior of the canoe that he will paint and complete during his time at QMS.

"We are deeply honoured by the gift of John sharing his knowledge and artistic skills with the young people of QMS and Khowhemun," shares QMS Art Teacher, Loretta Paoli, "We are also grateful for the friendship that our Quw'wutsun friends have bestowed upon us. Huy tseep q'u!"

As part of the ceremony, local Elder Dr. Luschiim Arvid Charlie blessed the canoe with cedar branches, a welcoming song and drumming, while selected guests were asked to act as witnesses of the event—to become keepers of the story to share far into the future. Elder Charlie also shared stories about the legend of thunderbird and the symbolic power the deity has for the Quw'utsun people.

"It's been a long journey for this canoe," shares Salish artist, John Marston. "The work that we're doing today is a great honour to the spirit of this canoe. Many years ago, the log washed up in our ancient village of Kulleet Bay and my sister helped me pull it ashore. That's when the work began—over ten years ago."

"This ceremony and the whole project are both all about learning and cultural appreciation," adds Head of School, David Robertson. "We are all in this journey together and we're deeply grateful to John for sharing his knowledge, talent and passion with all of us at QMS."

This six-week artist-in-residence program was funded by a generous grant by ArtStarts in Schools through a partnership agreement with the BC Arts Council and the Province of British Columbia. Additional funds have been provided by TELUS StoryHive and the Columbia Basin Trust. We share our deepest gratitude for their support.

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: QMS and Khowhemun came together with Quw'utsun Elders for a special canoe welcoming ceremony as part of John Marston's six week artist residency at Queen Margaret's School.

