

Canadian Peace Museum awards local students



By **Kaitlin Sylvester**

The Bancroft Village Playhouse was filled with anticipation recently as the winners of the Stories of Peace 2023 competition were announced. Hosted by the Canadian Peace Museum, this unique event gave Canadians the opportunity to express their interpretations of peace through short videos. The challenge was simple but profound: create a one-minute video answering the question, "What does peace mean to you?"

Among the talented entrants, the team from Birds Creek Public School emerged as the winners of the 2023 competition. Their video showcased a heartwarming portrayal of unity, emphasizing the importance of diversity and harmony within their school community. The sheer enthusiasm and authenticity of their message resonated with both the judges and the audience. Bird's Creek Public School's winning video was produced by LeeAnne Ireland

In addition to the winners, two other entries received honourable mentions. Gattuar Loch Bakam created a touching video portraying the transformative power of forgiveness and reconciliation, garnering the attention of an anonymous donor who provided the Canadian Peace Museum with a gift of \$100 to award to Bakam. Kyle Ramsay presented a fun take on how peace can be achieved through gratitude, highlighting friends and family in his description of what peace means.

Dr. Wim Laven, an instructor of peace studies, political science, and conflict resolution for North America shared his thoughts on the essence of peace. He emphasized that peace should always be freely accessible to all, underscoring the idea that peace is a fundamental human right.

The Stories of Peace competition serves as an introduction to an exciting development of peace and cultural preservation. Canada is set to open its very own peace museum, right here in Bancroft. Although the exact date remains to be determined, there is a possibility that 2024 will see this significant cultural institution open its doors to the public.

President of the Canadian Peace Museum, Chris Houston, used the occasion to address a pressing issue of our times. He pointed out the rising trends of racism, sexism, antisemitism, and xenophobia in society. Houston stressed that peace cannot be considered in isolation; it is intrinsically connected to equity, fairness, and kindness. These qualities, he emphasized, should form the bedrock of a peaceful society.

The Bancroft Heritage Museum and the Bancroft Historical Society have offered their considerable support to the project to ensure that the history of peace and its importance are preserved and shared with Canada at large. This collaboration brings together

historical context and contemporary messages of peace, creating a vibrant tapestry that enriches the cultural landscape of Bancroft.

The Stories of Peace competition showcased the remarkable creativity and passion of Canadians in their pursuit of peace. The winning entries and honourable mentions all highlighted the importance of harmony, diversity, and understanding in building a peaceful society. As we look forward to the opening of Canada's Peace Museum in Bancroft, the messages shared in these videos serve as a reminder that peace is a value worth celebrating and preserving, not just on the national stage but in our daily lives. It's a testament to the power of storytelling and the enduring human desire for a more peaceful world.