



The students at TIES preparing a mosaic puzzle canoe for Canada 150



The first publicly displayed TIES canoe project – decorated to look like birch bark, it is being used as a planter at the Lansdowne Community Garden

TIES

Lansdowne Students Refurbish Canoes for Canada 150

By Lorraine Payette

Think about Canadian history and Canadian legends, and the first image that comes to mind is usually a person in a canoe. Whether piloted by a member of the First Nations, a voyageur or a fur trapper; the canoe was transporting goods or people; sitting on the water, the land, or even, flying through the air. The canoe is a symbol of Canada and all she has ever been or hopes to be.

When a 30-year canoe collector decided to pass his collection on, teacher Dionne Running, of Thousand Islands Elementary School (TIES) in Lansdowne was more than ready to accept the challenge.

“His vision was to restore these canoes and donate them back to schools,” said Running. “He wanted to have a canoe in every school, the profound message being that canoes built our past and they’re part of our future.”

Students were delighted to have a part in a project that would show off their skills and heritage. They leaped in happily, bringing in paints and markers, sandpaper and rags, everything they needed to decorate these beautiful old boats.

“We have one at the Community Gardens in Lansdowne,” said Running. “That was kind of a joint venture through Kim George

and LAFR (Lansdowne Association for Revitalization). They had a fibreglass canoe that we were going to decorate for them to be made into a garden planter. Fibreglass is very hard to paint, so I said, we have these beautiful canoes, and I thought this would be a much more appropriate purpose for those canoes.”

While the boat at the Community Gardens has been painted to look like a birch bark canoe, the latest one represents the interlocking mosaic that makes up Canada. Each piece or tile is hand painted individually by the students, showing what they feel is most representative of Canada.

“We’ve got some tiles that have pictures, like a teacup and a kitchen with bacon, and some are just colourful ones,” said Wesley Pengelly, grade 5. “A lot of students have come and worked on this. I, my siblings, and some other First Nations students painted two different types of medicine wheels. We’ve got traditional white, yellow, red, and black in the circle window style, and then we’ve got another style where it’s like pizza slices.”

“My friend Macy and I have worked on all these puzzle pieces,” said Bridget Buell, grade 4. “We drew all of them and there are over 220.”

“We have been working on this since May and everybody in the school has a puzzle piece they can do to represent Canada 150,” said Quintin Moore, grade 4. “We have over 150 tiles and we have over 150 kids in the school, so it just makes it better and more fun.”

“I think this canoe project has gone really well, thanks to Mr. Running,” said Trystan Ball, grade 5. “We’ve done a lot of hard work. Some classes have grouped up with our reading buddies and we’ve made artwork together.”

“It’s colourful, it shows different parts of Canada, and it inspires you that in 1867 Canada was made,” said William Gamble, grade 6.

Darwin Wagar, Grade 5, agreed.

“We’re making it because of the 150th birthday of Canada to celebrate how many years it’s been here. I think it’s coming along very well.” LH



Students happily paint their pieces in the puzzle