

Milestone Mural to be unveiled at community celebration



By Brock Weir

Talented professional and amateur artists have been hard at work creating a lasting legacy and this Sunday the community at large will be able to take in the fruits of their labour as the Canada 150 Milestone Mural is unveiled outside the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The vision of artist Ted Hamer, a professional muralist by trade, and the Centre's Community Arts Facilitator, the work is the product of the imagination and creativity of hundreds of Aurorans who have had direct input on the finished product.

The Milestone Mural Unveiling Free Community Celebration will take place this Sunday, November 19, from 1 to 4 p.m. on the front lawn of the Aurora Cultural Centre.

With opening remarks from Aurora Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leona Alleslev and Mayor Geoff Dawe set for 1.30, the mural itself will be formally unveiled at 1.50, followed by a reception and refreshments inside the Centre from 2 to 4 p.m.

Since the start of the spring, Mr. Hamer, along with other members of the Aurora Cultural Centre team, have fanned out to various events throughout Aurora, along with numerous community hubs, armed with pencils, paper and a very simple question for those they encountered: What's your vision?

A simple enough question, but this was a question designed to get creative juices flowing as Aurorans brainstormed their vision of what Canada means to them and what it could be for the next 150 years.

They were asked, What makes Canada great? What visuals, words or feelings come to mind when you hear the word, Canada?

The collected answers fell into four key themes: Diversity & Inclusion, Truth & Reconciliation, Nature & The Environment, and Who We Are Today & Dreams of a Bright Future.

Mr. Hamer was brought onto the project thanks to a Federal grant, which provided for a community arts facilitator. Once he was in place, he hit the ground running.

People have been very supportive, Mr. Hamer told The Aurora midway through the project.

People are very excited to have something like this in Town and they have given me almost every idea possible for the Town, going from the historical persons who have lived here, to nature. Nature is a big thing here and I am very happy with that.

The other thing I wasn't aware of was Aurora's commitment to volunteerism and especially the commitment to newcomers. I didn't know how many Syrian families were sponsored here initially, and that is a really neat thing to want included on the mural.

He likened Canada to a big village and this was the concept he wanted to translate into a mural form, which ultimately takes the shape of several interconnected maple leaves.

Instead of coming up with one cohesive image, I want people to tell their story of what makes Canada great. It could be a memory they have of Canada, of their lives in the country, but we will have these handouts where they can write or draw anything they want. From their ideas we will create a tapestry instead of a single image.

I have travelled around the world a lot and I have seen areas where people are separated and alone. We are kind of all condensed

around the border and the lakes and we seem to have formed stronger communities. My image of Canada is kind of a big village.?