

## Students unleash their inner thoughts in exhibition opening



**By Brock Weir**

Art is a window into the ?self, the imagination, and the inner workings of the mind,? according to local Grade 12 students.

Upcoming graduates from Cardinal Carter Catholic High School and St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School unveiled themselves, their imaginations, and the inner workings of their respective minds before a packed house at the Aurora Cultural Centre on Thursday night, splashing out their experiences on canvas and through other media for all to see.

?This is not merely a collection of art pieces by Grade 12 students suspended on these walls for admiration, but rather a collection of likeminded individuals that, by mutual love of creating, have joined together this evening,? said Olivia Malito, a student at St. Max. ?Art is the expression of the banes and delights of human existence; it is a representation of the self, the imagination, the inner-workings of the mind and it does not have to be understood.?

Artist Jackson Pollock defined art as the ?expression of emotion?, she continued, noting he did so with every ?splatter and dribble? on his canvas.

?The product of human emotion deserves to be acclaimed,? she said.

Olivia, and Sarah, who greeted the audience on behalf of Cardinal Carter, certainly found the perfect audience for such acclaim last week ? and the message of what they were trying to convey was not lost on the people on hand for the opening.

?It never ceases to amaze me the incredible depth of talent of these young people on display,? said Mayor Geoff Dawe. ?It is fabulous you are doing this. You have a Board and teachers who put so much time and effort into teaching you art. Our middle daughter took art and it really helped to expand her view of life and got her out of her shell.

?This is a fabulous opportunity for you folks as you explore some of your feelings, some of your views of life, and put that down in art. It makes it easier for us, quite frankly, to understand what is going on in your lives.?

A similar view was also offered by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, who said he was impressed not only by the quality of the work on the walls, but also the ?maturity? on display.

?I come from a family where luckily I have children who are artistic and can express themselves in artistic ways, so we have been big believers in arts, culture, and heritage,? he said. ?Paintings, poetry, music, fashion, design and dialogue all define who we are as humans, as a community and as a nation. It is so wonderful to see that happening in our schools at early grades through the later grades in high school.?



The joint exhibition, which will be followed later this month in a similar show by students from Aurora High School and Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, was entirely spearheaded and curated by students from each respective high school, who received a few pointers along the way from Stephanie Nicolo of the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The Centre has provided a venue to celebrate the work of Aurora's budding artists through these shows for five years running, but this is the first year all four of Aurora's high schools were able to participate.

This is the first year participating for Cardinal Carter and, as an alumna of the school, this had particular resonance for Ms. Nicolo.

"This [show] has the most inspirational pieces and the most items to consider," she said. "You have such inspirational moments within your life that you are leaving on the canvas that is why we wanted to expand the program and I am so happy we did. You guys put a polished show together and I hope you are proud because you worked so hard over the holidays and put in countless hours."

"To your parents ? because you won't say thank you to them until you are in your 30s ? thank you for picking me up late because I stayed late at school painting murals on the walls. Thank you for letting me get to school early because I needed to drop off drawings due today and I just finished it two hours ago. Thank you for bringing me to Michael's or Curry's because I really, really needed that crayon. Thank you for buying crayons when I was four years old because it allowed me to experience light, colour and inspiration. You guys frame their lives and without that we would be without wonderful works on these walls."