

NEWS RELEASE

Winnipeg School Division Everybody has the Right Finale A Connection with International Storytelling Festival at CMHR

April 26, 2017 (Winnipeg, MB) – Students from across Winnipeg School Division (WSD) and participants of the International Storytelling Festival are connecting today and tomorrow, April 27, at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to celebrate the finale of the WSD Everybody has the Right (EHTR) program for 2016/17.

“This was an exciting year of learning for all of us – learning about our identities, about building respectful and responsible relationships, and about sharing our stories to better understand each other and the world we all occupy,” said Sherri Rollins, WSD Board of Trustees Chair. “Everybody has the Right is a program that was initiated in Winnipeg School Division in 2014 as a way for our students to become involved in the exciting opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. It has now become part of the division’s annual programming.”

Throughout the school year and during two previous assemblies, WSD students have learned about the art of storytelling and how Indigenous children are traditionally taught, with storytelling beginning after the snow blankets the earth. Honouring and respecting the way Indigenous communities learn from each other is a major theme in the Everybody has the Right program.

“I really liked how the human books took time out of their day to share about their past,” said Austin Smith, a Grade 6 student at École Victoria-Albert School. “They helped me to be open and think more about other cultures.”

The EHTR Human Library events over the past year have helped students consider “identity” from a variety of different lenses as they develop their own sense of who they are. Today and tomorrow, students are learning about artifact storytelling with international storyteller Jamie Oliviero and Chris Scholl from DNA Rhythms.

“One of the most meaningful, physical actions we can do as people is to reach out our hands to connect with others,” said Oliviero. “*That* is what is at the heart of this experience.”

As a finale art piece for the 2016/17 EHTR, students will take part in creating giant puzzles, or story circles, on the floor of the John & Bonnie Buhler Hall at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The story circles represent both the individuality and connectivity across Winnipeg School Division. WSD Art Consultant Joe Halas says the story circles, one created on each day of the student assemblies, are the beginning of a larger art making process.

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“After assembling the story circles and developing personal interweaving stories, the students will spend the next two months before Summer break working on their puzzle pieces, transforming them into colourful narrative artworks,” said Halas. “The story circle will be reassembled as one giant and complete artwork in the Fall as part of Culture Days.” WSD will announce details of the final assembly at the beginning of the 2017/18 school year.

WSD was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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