

Potton delivers big fun at 'I love skating' event



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On the afternoon of Friday, Feb. 6, the Municipality of Potton in celebration of Festive Hearts Month, held an "I Love Skating" event children and their parents at the Park Andre-Gagnon rink in Mansonville.

Despite the cold temperatures, the turnout was wonderful with many



COURTESY

Smiling faces at the Potton Skate Party!

youth took part in the planned events that happened both outside on the ice and grounds and inside.

Activities on the rink were led by the staff from the Missisquoi North Youth Centre and included ball relay; hula hoop musical chairs; duck, duck, goose, what time is it Mr. Wolf; freeze tag; clothes relay; no hands ball relay; beach hockey and freeze tag.

"Organizing these activities was a lot of fun for me and my co-workers," said Sarah Jersey, assistant to the youth director at the CAB.

"I have to say however that seeing the kids doing them in action was an even greater treat!"

The youth who took part in the games on the rink were awarded mock Olympic medals that the winners sported with great pride and enthusiasm.

Community organizer Trish Wood

who was responsible for the day had organized a variety of activities which included hockey on the rink, arts and crafts inside with Super Hero, hot chocolate and surprises.

"I am thrilled with the turnout," said Wood.

"This is a great way to get the kids moving and active while helping families to celebrate and enjoy the winter months in Potton."

Over 75 people were in attendance at the event and the activities were steady throughout the afternoon.

With the Winterfest Outdoor Family Fun Day organized for the following day, Potton's youth and families had a busy, activity packed weekend.

For more information about the Municipality of Potton's Festive Hearts Month, visit www.potton.ca or their Facebook page by searching "Potton en Bref Plus."

Galt art reaching out

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According to Hirshfeld, the project began with a simple exploration of expressionism and a trip to see an exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

From there the students researched and studied several global issues relating to the rights of children including child brides, child soldiers, children living in hunger and poverty, in refugee camps, and street gangs.

Inspired by their own emotional reaction and point of view, students then painted an expressionist portrait of a child.

"We hope not only to support a wonderful project but also to inspire our students to take part in the greater community. We wish to empower them as young artists to appreciate the unique ways in which art influences opinions and actions."

"We talked about how children in third-world countries don't have the same privileges as us," said student artist Teala Sirois, who shared that a large number of different videos and stories were looked at. "We take many things for granted."

In the latter half of the research phase, students started sketching their portraits.

"The idea was to react to the stories emotionally and form an actual connection, not just read about facts," their teacher shared. "They each chose the theme that touched them the most."

"This is a really nice collaboration," said Heather Thomson of the refugee sponsorship committee. "It's a wonderful gift."

Thomson said that the students brought the idea up before Christmas And it was welcomed with open arms. Though the refugee sponsorship group relies on a number of fundraisers throughout the year, she said this is the first time something of this type has been proposed.

"We're extremely grateful to this community and the way people rally around the work we do," Thomson added, pointing out that the program

is currently sponsoring two refugees and has stated in touch with eight former beneficiaries of the program who remain on campus. she said that after the collaboration was proposed, the committee went to Galt to visit in January along with one former refugee student and one of the students currently being sponsored. "It was a really great exchange."

"We were so happy that they were able to come and visit with us," said student artist Brooklyn Leclerc. "I really liked meeting (the refugees) and hearing the stories of how they got here."

It was at that meeting, Hirshfeld said, that the two groups planned tonight's exhibition together and divided up tasks. A month later, on the verge of the sale, the students simply said that they are excited to see the public's reaction to their work. Those interested in seeing the productions are invited to the Galt library from 7-9 p.m.

"Get involved and make a difference by making a donation or purchasing a painting in the silent auction." Hirshfeld said, adding that cash and cheques will be accepted, and that donations without purchase will also be taken.

"There will be refreshments and live music."

This is the refugee sponsorship committee's 22nd year of existence. Each year the group, with the help of students, faculty and staff, the Bishop's and Champlain administrations, and many people in the community, brings two students to the campus and supports them for one year both materially and emotionally while they adjust to life in Canada.

To date, the committee has helped 35 students and one young child restart their lives.

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