

Ruiter Valley Land Trust visits Ken Jones Respite Centre

The Scoop
By Mable Hastings

On Thursday Feb. 22, Isabelle Grégoire (B.Sc. Urban Planning, M. Environment and Geography) and sculptor, Danielle Sauvé from Ruiter Valley Land Trust hosted a special craft, the creation of an animal footprint sculpture in clay, with the Ken Jones Respite Centre group. The Ken Jones Centre is a once-a-week respite program of the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) for persons with intellectual and physical challenges and gives caregivers a break while giving the clients the opportunity to enjoy a day of activities with friends. The group meets at the Youth Centre located at 282 Principale in Mansonville.

The Ruiter Valley Land Trust is a conservation organization located in Potton in the Eastern Townships. It is a non-profit organization (NPO) that works to protect a large territory that is part of the Sutton Mountains range, and that offers trails, activities and training to the population.

As part of an annual "circuit" where the Ruiter Valley Land Trust team organizes

activities throughout the village and hosts workshops and information sessions with various groups - based on raising awareness and interest in regards to our local nature and environment; the session with the Ken Jones Centre was just one of the stops in Potton again this year.

"We are always thankful that Isabelle and the Ruiter Valley group include our centre in their annual events," said CABMN Youth Centre Coordinator, Ethan Ball.

Spending a few hours collaborating with our Ken Jones Centre program participants and animators of the Respite Program, Sheila Samborsky (KJC) and Terry Stott (KJC and Day Centre) as well as Animator of the CIUSSE-CHUS Day Centre, Karen Tinker, the group talked about local wildlife and made paw prints which the clients could keep: using clay and references of actual taxidermy to correctly copy an animal's foot print. The two-hour activity provoked interest and enthusiasm for all involved.

Isabelle Gregoire holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban Planning and a Master's degree in Environment from



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the University of Toronto. She is an educational consultant and trainer in environmental sciences in schools in the Appalachian region of southern Quebec. A tracker since 2004, Isabelle has been collaborating with organizations and educational groups for over fifteen years.

"I had the pleasure of presenting a workshop at the Youth Centre last year," said Isabelle Gregoire. "I always enjoy collaborating with the animators and offering learning opportunities for the youth and the clients in the programs for the intellectually and physically

challenged and hope to offer something at the centre every year," she added.

For the Ken Jones Centre clients, it was nice to have the activity focused on them and working with the smaller group allowed Isabelle and Danielle the opportunity to mold the activity to the needs of the group.

For more information about the Ruiter Valley Land Trust visit: www.ruitervalley.org

For more information about the Ken Jones Respite group visit: www.cabmn.org

Quebec Appeal Court rules secularism law is constitutional, English schools rebuffed

The Canadian Press

The Quebec Court of Appeal has ruled that the province's secularism law is constitutional and overturned a lower court ruling that exempted English school boards from the law, known as Bill 21.

In a decision today, the province's highest court upholds much of a

2021 Quebec Superior Court ruling, which said the law's use of the notwithstanding clause overrode infringements of fundamental rights.

The ruling is a victory for the Quebec government, which had appealed the ruling on the grounds that a provincial law must apply equally across the province.

The 2019 law declares the province is

a secular state and includes a provision prohibiting public sector workers in positions of authority — including teachers, judges, and police officers — from wearing religious symbols on the job.

The Court of Appeal did not agree with the lower court, which had exempted English school boards on the basis that minority language education

rights — which aren't covered by the Charter's notwithstanding clause — weren't respected.

The Quebec government has repeatedly argued that Bill 21 is moderate and supported by a majority of Quebecers, while opponents say it discriminates against racialized minorities who choose to practise their faith.

School board concerned

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was appointed by the provincial government following the passage of Bill 15 into law at the end of last school year. Previously, school boards and services centres had the authority to hire their own ombudsperson.

"The first thing that irks me about this is that the school boards are no longer considered capable or competent to hire the ombudsperson for the students," Kirby said.

"But then for this person to come

to our ed services meeting and speak not a word of English to an English school board, I found disturbing, distressing, I found it rude."

Realizing Audette is in a tough position because with the OQLF interpretation of Bill 96,

"She probably didn't dare to speak a word of English. And that's the other thing that really bothers me. She assured us several times to commissioners that raised the issue that English parents and students would be responded to in English,"

Kirby said.

"But boy, I didn't see any evidence of that."

ETSB vice-chair Joy Humenuik said her concern was for the students.

"We teach our students to speak the French language," Humenuik said, "but when you're talking about issues that are traumatic, or whatever was going on, you are most comfortable in your maternal language."

Pointing out that Audette could clearly understand English and

was likely capable of answering, Humenuik said parents might be more capable of asserting their right to service from the ombudsperson in English, but she worried students, especially upset or in a vulnerable state, "It really concerns me that those students will not get what they need when they need it."

Commissioner Tina Pezzi-Bilodeau added that during the meeting, the ombudswoman was unsure if the forms to file a complaint were available in English.

And the winner is...

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Youngest panelist to date, also had the ominous task of defending a romance novel, a genre new to the annual Canada Reads competition.

Next week Lennoxville will find out which of the five books selected the rest of Canada feels is "the one book to carry us forward" as CBC hosts its debate at the national level March 4-7.

The presenters will include Athlete

and CBC Sports contributor Dallas Soonias defending Bad Cree by Jessica Johns, Former Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi defending Denison Avenue by Christina Wong & Daniel Innes, Fashion influencer Mirian Njoh defending Meet Me at the Lake by Carley Fortune, Actor Kudakwashe Rutendo defending Shut Up You're Pretty by Téa Mutonji and Author Heather O'Neill defending The Future by Catherine Leroux, translated by Susan Ouriou.



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