Painting 'the history of Nuajaat'

Tusarvik students help create beautiful mural in Repulse Bay

by Darrell Greer
Northern News Services
Repulse Bay

The Repulse Bay (Naujaat) community hall became home to a wonderful new mural, thanks to a hamlet initiative, a group of students and a southern artist in Repulse this past month.

Hamlet senior administrative officer Kowesa Etitiq said the mural came about as part of the hamlet council's Repulse Bay Community Youth Development Initiative.

He said the initiative authorized hamlet staff and council members to start working on youth programming for the community.

"I wrote a proposal for telling the history of Naujaat through art back in March of 2014 and things progressed from there," said Etitiq.

"We wanted to create a mural the community and its youth could be proud of as a way to instill pride in the kids, and also to help combat boredom and suicide.

"We got together with the school and artist Craig Clark of Ottawa to make it happen.

"Everyone involved did a great job on this mural and I think it's something for this entire community to be proud of."

The finished mural is an incredible piece of art.

The students who worked on the project are Benoit Sateana, Melanie and Nicole Yank, Eric Katokra, Suzanne and Charmaine Putulik, Anita, Rosalie, Nellie and Jan Kopak, Susie and Lorena Siusangnark, Amber Kringayark and Lydia Haqpi.

Grade 5 teacher Melissa Figueroa led the group of youths, and said the students took turns working on the mural with Clark at the community hall.

She said Clark explained to them how to put together a mural, mix colours to produce different shades, among other things.

"He (Clark) also had a bunch of paint sent to Repulse so they could continue to work on other projects after this mural was completed," said Figueroa.

"He was really wonderful with the kids, teaching them things and holding special sessions with them, and the kids are quite proud of their work.

"At one point I was painting the eye of a polar bear and I asked Craig for advice, but, he had already shown Anita (Kopak) how she could paint the eye on a caribou, so he asked me to go ask her what she thinks.

"She came over, we talked about it and decided how to go about painting something, so he gave us ownership of it instead of just telling us what us do." Clark sketched the project over a weekend, and it took the group four days to have the sketch come to life as a completed mural.

Grade 11 student Benoit Sateana said he really enjoyed talking with Clark and painting the mural during the project.

He said he's always had an interest in art, and being on the project helped him understand the whole process a lot better.

"I enjoyed painting the rocks around the Repulse Arctic Circle monument on the mural," said Benoit.

"Craig is a really cool artist and he seemed to really know his stuff.

"I enjoyed being a part of the project, even coming in to work on it in the evenings."

Grade 9 student Rosalie Ijjangiaq said her favourite part of the project was painting the caribou on the mural. She said she likes drawing and does some during her free time.

"I just like to draw whatever pops into my mind at the time," said Ijjangiaq.

"I don't really know if I have a good imagination, or not, but I like to draw things I think about.

"Craig seems really talented and it was fun to work on the project."

Kopak, a Grade 12 student at Tusarvik, said she wanted to get involved with the project because she's always been interested in drawing and painting.

She said being on the project was a good learning experience for her.

"It was just great being a part of making the mural because I had so much fun and I learned so much," said Kopak.

"Craig taught us different techniques on what we could do with paint, like learning different ways to mix them to get the different shades of colours we needed for the different parts of the mural.

"He would show us how to do something and then let us do it on our own, and the mural came out looking very lifelike when we completed the whole thing.

"I feel that I really contributed to this project and I'm proud of our work."

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photo courtesy of Melissa Figueroa

***Art instructor Craig Clark talks** with student Melanie (Ayaya) Yank about mixing colours at the community hall in Repulse Bay this past month.*

TAKING A SPIN

Student support assistant Patiq Kabluitok couldn't resist giving the exercise bike a whirl during a student gathering at Maani Ulujuk Ilinniarvik in Rankin Inlet last month.

Darrell Greer/NNSL photo

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