

ARTS & EVENTS

Banner wins place of honour in Ottawa park

By Barb Brouwer
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Mady Hart and Natanya O'Brien are having a banner year.

The Grade 7 King's Christian School students "raised their voices" in a national banner competition, one of seven winners from among 1,048 entries.

The annual Raise Your Voices! public art contest for students in grades 5 through 8, was brought to the attention of King's Christian art teacher Rick Luth by the school principal Jeff Covey.

"The idea of the banner is that it gives the students an opportunity to express what matters to them," says Luth.

Grade 5 and 7 students worked in teams of two or three and when they were done, the school sent some 20 images to the National Capital Commission in Ottawa.

Luth says his students brainstormed about possible banner subjects.

"We looked at reasons and things to celebrate in Canada and things to raise awareness about," he says, noting the students came up with a huge list of primarily celebratory subjects to choose from. "But the two are connected – the things you want to celebrate are the things you want to protect."

Mady and Natanya's entry was the "Tree of the Year" that depicts Canada's four seasons on one tree.

Good friends, the girls were happy to collaborate and work on a banner together.

Both agreed they wanted something colourful to fill the page but initially had different ideas about how to go about



Collaboration: Kings Christian School Grade 7 students Mady Hart and Natanya O'Brien discuss the elements of their award-winning banner design with art teacher Rick Luth.

that.

Natanya chatted with her mom, who brought up the idea of a tree because they are plentiful in this country.

The students spent a couple of classes working out their ideas and then figured out colours.

The lower, left-hand side of the Tree of the Year is blossom-pink to celebrate spring, while the upper side features the green of summer. A heart on one of the blossoms signifies love – for the planet and her people. The seasonal theme continues on the top, right-hand side of the tree, with the colours of fall, while the lower quadrant features the white icicles of winter.

The tree is set in luxuriant green grass, with a backdrop of mountains and a bright blue sky.

"We even put different colours in the

sky to add contrast," said Mady.

Results of the competition were made when the school was closed for spring break.

"Mr. Luth called and said, 'how is your spring break?'" says Natanya. "I said 'good,' and he said, 'well, guess what? I got a phone call from Ottawa and you and Mady won.'"

Natanya woke Mady up by texting her with the news that, she says, surprised her and her mother.

"It's really exciting," said an enthusiastic Mady. "There are lots of people in Canada. What are the chances?"

Not only were the girls happy with how their banner design came together, so was their art teacher.

"Just in passing, I said that I did think this had a chance. I was very pleased," says Luth

with a wide smile. "They had a strong theme, simple and straightforward, but it has the boldness too."

The seven winning banners will hang in Major's Hill Park near Parliament Hill until winter, along with a plaque that includes the girls' names, title of the image and information about the design. Both the school and the girls will get their own banner as well.

King's Christian School officials have decided to send the girls to Ottawa in June to see their banner and also tour the capital.

"We are now busy brainstorming ideas to financially support this venture..." says Luth, who hopes to organize a meeting with Okanagan-Shuswap MP Colin Mayes and a visit to the Parliament Buildings.

