

Project of Heart La Tuque High School CLC

La Tuque High School CLC

Central Quebec School Board

La Tuque leveraged PoH to build and strengthen several local partnerships and connections. Aboriginal artists and organizations came into the school, and students attended events at the local Friendship Centre.

“I was also aware that La Tuque had a residential school here in town. I felt it important to get involved in order to teach our students about residential schools, to bridge the gap between our community and the Atikamekw, Cree and Innu that live in La Tuque and finally, to help the healing begin here in town.



After a variety of curriculum activities and the tile decorating, local artist Laurianne Petiquay was commissioned to create two identical final art pieces.

“When the pieces were complete, we had two ceremonies. The first one was for the students at the school. Yolande Jacob came to bless the piece that would stay at the school. Alfred Birothe, Laurianne Petiquay and Michelle Dupuis joined in the ceremony. Laurianne explained how she designed and created the piece and she explained her use of colours and symbols. Then Yolande purified the piece with an Atikamekw prayer and with the burning of sweet grass. Then all the teachers and students were invited to close their eyes and sing a final prayer of healing, while Yolande sang and drummed.

The heart tells the story of all the children that were affected by the residential school. The tiles represent the children on their journey away from and back to their

home, represented by the tee-pee in back. The heart is cracked, but healing, though some cracks will always stay. The purple feather on the front represents the suffering and sorrow. The Turquoise stone in the middle represents healing and security for the Atikamekw and is encircled by sweet grass, a purifying herb. The silver dust represents the spirits of those children who never made it home.

The second ceremony took place at the Complexe Culturel during Mon Rendez-Vous Autochtone. Michelle Dupuis, coordinator at the Centre d'Amitié Autochtone de La Tuque, told the participants about our project and how this piece was to be displayed at CAALT. Again, Yolande blessed the piece and sang a purifying prayer. Finally, a group of Atikamekw singers sang while we danced around dance. Our work does not end here.

We are strengthening our partnership with the CAALT, by having the artist work with our students on different projects. The CAALT is joining us as we march in support of Shannen's dream and helping us to create a video about it. Finally, the CAALT have approached us for help in introducing the residential school history and the PoH in the French schools in town."