Closing School Creates Legacy Project With Local Artist

by Corley Farough

When Webster Niblock staff learned that the school would be closing in spring of 2026, they reached out to The Esplanade asking for help to create a Legacy piece of artwork to hang at the School Division District Office. Esplanade Art Instructor Ruth Adams and Dayna Walls, the Director of Education got to work planning, and presented the school with three options: one fibre, one paper, and one clay. To Ruth's delight, they couldn't choose just one, and requested all three options!

More than one-hundred-and-fifty students were able to participate in three collaborative art projects, led by Ruth. The fibre project had the students creating their own designs on broadcloth using dye and markers. While students took their artwork home, Ruth sliced a strip off of each, primitively weaving them into what became a colourful wall hanging, a legacy piece created by the students themselves to be displayed for years to come.

The clay project included tiles cut from terracotta, painted with white slip then transported to the school in a leather hard state. Each student was given their own tile to decorate, and taught a pottery technique called sgraffito, in which they etched through the layers of white slip to reveal red clay, creating an illustration of their own design. Each tile was then fired in the kiln, sanded, and photographed for a poster before being returned to the student to take home.

The final of the three days was dedicated to creating a freestyle watercolour background on

a square of paper, while also decorating a white heart shape using black marker. The hearts were then glued to the backgrounds, the artwork was photographed and laid out in a grid to create a memorial poster with quilt-like charm.

"The most rewarding aspect was how enthusiastic all of the children were to do the artwork. They were excited to be there, excited to learn, and excited to create. It was truly a pleasure to plan and facilitate this project."

- Ruth Adams