



REGIONAL TOURISM
ORGANIZATION 7



Tourism Relief Fund-RTO7 (TRF) Incorporated Private Sector Tourism Businesses, Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and Inuit owned Tourism Businesses and Not-For-Profits that service Tourists

Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts Bench Project/Heart Art Sign

**Project Start Date: June
2022**

End Date: December 2022

HEART ART SIGN:

The heart/art sign is becoming an iconic image in Collingwood. It has given our premises greatly enhanced visibility and it is becoming a symbol for the entire district, known as "Creative Simcoe". The sign is over 4' high and has a 3D heart before the word art. Each letter is a different colour, almost a rainbow. Tourists get their picture taken by the sign. They are encouraged to stand beside the heart and make themselves into the letter I, to form "I love art". Vinyl lettering hashtag was placed on the sign for social media shares.



**The Goal of the Bench
Project in relation to the
Tourism Relief Fund:**

The BMFA has acted as a community hub for the last 47 years. As we continue to watch expansion and growth in the arts & culture sector as well as undergo major challenges and shifts- we ask ourselves what it means to be truly inclusive in the arts? For us this meant equal opportunity and giving space to underrepresented artists in our community to promote engagement and tourism.

The bench project was a perfect way to continue our efforts to create a space that is inviting, inclusive and diverse. Creating permanent **infrastructure** to accommodate visitors in a safe and positive way. There are 6 benches in total and the idea is to create two semi circles with an opening to invite anyone to sit. Each bench is designed and hand painted by local artists, each representing a different important community as a part of our wholeness.

It is with both the visual representation on each bench and the actual idea behind a bench/seating area that drives the vision of this project. To sit, to speak, to communicate freely. The semi circle enforces the idea of equality and lack of hierarchy- it creates an open seating dynamic to see one another, to hear one another and to connect. It attracts visitors to our space and encourages one to lengthen their stay rather than just passing by.

Each of these artists has a different, unique story to tell of their identity and their artistic journey. Through the bold visuals, and symbolism on each bench- it is a permanent installation to the BMFA and our community arts hub to share the message to everyone and anyone- you belong here! We believe art is for everyone.

These benches enhance our tourist experience as a public art installation that functions as an accessible way to interact with our arts district. The benches re activate the space, filling it with vibrancy and visual learning opportunities.

The benches were built locally, and all of the artists were sourced locally.

Here are their stories:

Bench #1- A Celebration of Queer Identities

About the bench:

We're proud to present the "A Celebration of Queer Identities" bench! It is designed to look like a well-loved blue denim jacket with lots of patches on it. Patches can be fun memories, lived experiences, or can be chosen as external representations of identity. The patches on this bench have been chosen to celebrate some parts of the Queer experience, and are some of our favourites. The flags along the edges are representative of several Queer groups and identities, and the ends of the bench have active QR codes to enable learning or access local Southern Georgian Bay resources as needed. Finally, the bench legs are painted to represent the stripes found in the LGBTQ2SIA+ pride flag.

About the artists / designers:

Kate and Jennifer Keskikyla are a daughter / mother team of artists, who worked together to bring you this bench. Kate came up with the 'denim jacket patches' design, and Jennifer has a love of flags and experience painting them. Kate is a member of the queer community and received inspiration for this design from the wonderful people she has met on her identity journey. Jennifer is a supportive ally, and recently painted a nautical flag design on a chair for Collingwood's Art in The Street 2022. The patches on this bench enabled some open and honest conversations between the two artists as the design evolved, and we hope that it will start many more conversations amongst the people sitting on it in the future.

Both Kate and Jennifer post images of their art on Instagram:

Kate - @keskidesigns

Jennifer - @jennkeskiart

Jennifer is a member of the BMFA. Please visit her website at www.jennkeskiart.ca

Bench #2- Youth Centre Bee Bench

About the Bench:

Collingwood Youth Centre believes that if you invest in our youth, encourage their curiosity, and appreciate their talents and innovative ideas, they will soar. In their view, youth is the foundation of a strong future and thriving Collingwood community.

They work with youth to create a safe, relaxing and respectful environment that celebrates youth culture in all its diversity. With safety comes freedom for youth to explore opportunities for personal development, tackle problems and achieve new goals.

The Collingwood Youth Centre works closely with the Environment Network. This was the inspiration for their bench by one talented youth. The bench depicts bees in their natural habitat putting emphasis on the critical role honey bees play in our food supply and our environment.

This bench will sit amongst our bee garden sanctuary in front of the BMFA.

Bench #3- Floral Metis Bench

About the Bench:

The bench design features abstracted native wildflower species to Ontario. Inspiration is drawn from their Métis heritage, specifically recalling teachings of 'The Flower People' -- a term bestowed upon Métis bead-workers for their prolific inclusion of flowers within their beadwork designs. Abigail is currently working upon a larger-scale mural of Métis history and heritage in partnership with the Métis Council of Georgian Bay, Georgian Bay District Secondary School teachers and students, and other active volunteers within the community. The bench serves as an extension of the love they have felt for reconnecting with their heritage and a desire to share an uplifting interpretation of flower painting through use of acrylic paint. Focus on local species brings questions of land knowledge and understanding of local ecosystems; it is hoped that if the flowers are not recognized, perhaps one may take the initiative to learn about the flowers that exist here naturally and cohesively!

About the Artist:

Abigail LaChapelle is an interdisciplinary Métis artist from Simcoe County whose work primarily focuses on storytelling, character design, and a newfound reconnection with their culture. They earned their BFA with Distinction from OCAD University's *Painting and Drawing: Expanded Animation and Digital Painting* program in 2020, as well as received further education at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, California, with a focus on concept art development. Trained in both digital and traditional mediums, they frequently intercross the two, drawing inspiration from both techniques in either application.

Bench #4- Seniors Bench

About the Bench: The design that I chose to paint on the bench is an expression of how I feel being a senior. I feel less inclined for perfection here and decided to make it fun and free and random. It was done with a sense of joy and liberation .. being at a time in one's life where the inhibitions about a lot of things are forgotten. It is time for experimentation without worrying about the end results.

About the Artist:

Beverley Smith has been a professional artist since graduating from Sheridan College (The School of Design) and weaving college in Stockholm Sweden in the early 70's. She moved from Toronto to the Beaver Valley in 1980. She has become well known locally not only for her textile art, but also for her murals, maps and whimsical illustrations of the area.

Bench #5- Magic of Children

About the Bench:

So when we announced this bench project, we offered only 5 spots to ensure inclusion and enough bench surface per artist.

This made for such a fun afternoon together!

I presented the bench and spoke about the initiative from the BMFA and its theme around Celebration.

Asking the students what comes to mind when we think about Celebrating?! And this fine group came back with parties and festivals and fun colours! (fireworks, balloons, confetti,

I shared a printout with a variety of examples, and we talked about memorable celebrations while each artist created their own thumbnail sketches and ideas.

Asking them to think about repetition, shape, pattern, colour choices and any illustrations that felt celebratory.

We then brought out a limited palette of exterior paint colours and each student had a section to paint their designs.

Where the sections came together, they had the chance to collaborate and integrate their concepts.

They finished it off with their names and a few extra paint splatters.

During our time together we played music and enjoyed the process of making art as a team!

About the Artists:

Magic of Children Collingwood is an arts organization that provides children with equal opportunity in the community.

They believe that art instruction **helps children with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision-making, risk-taking, and inventiveness.** ...

Arts experiences boost critical thinking, teaching students to take the time to be more careful and thorough in how they observe the world. A group of young artists took the time to paint a bench collectively and use their learnt skills to come up with something vibrant and playful.

Bench #6- Black History Bench

About the Bench:

A piece of History, a dose of the present and a sneak preview of a positive and much brighter future.

This bench represents a story, not just any story but a story about the past, present and future, the truth.

Most or some stories start from the top or present, I choose to start from the past, the bottom.

The BLACK legs represent the people's of Afrikan descent. It represents them carrying the WEIGHT of the world on their shoulders.

The RED symbolizes the BLOOD that was shed,the HANDS symbolize the fight,the struggle,the Afrikan ancestors pushing thier children,wives and families into a much better future,holding them up.

The names are those who were African leaders and or lost their lives supporting the struggle .

The WHITE dots on the legs of various shades represent the WHITE people who fought alongside the Afrikans,the whites who worked alongside the Afrikans both hidden and in plain sight.

It would've been impossible without their involvement.

Many are unknown some by choice, had to be, and /or remain anonymous for fear of their lives and that of families lives, some to this very day.

The Artist respects and understands that, which is why no names are listed.

Their sacrifices will forever be remembered and cherished till our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ returns for us to all meet again.

The words EQUALITY, JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, RESPECT, are prominently and strategically displayed on all sides of the bench.

These words to this very day are still being sought. The words are placed to be viewed from all angles,the intent is to be noticed and acknowledged no matter the angle of approach.

These words are meant to not only be seen but read ,felt and acknowledged.

The little splotches of red by words symbolizes that Afrikans are still shedding blood at times a little less,sometimes hidden and sometimes in front of the whole world on camera.

Lives sometimes are and were in the continent AFRIKA ITSELF lost while the world looks on and does nothing yet encourages the world to help and support non Afrikan countries at war.

On top of the bench the patterns displayed represent the numerous shades of the AFRIKAN people, ranging from jet black to pinkish shades(Albinos).

90% of the seating area is painted gold representing the richness of AFRIKA and its people, descendants of KINGS and QUEENS.

There exist to this very day Kings and Queens.

The Gold also represents Afrikas GOLD eg THE GOLD COAST now known as GHANA WEST AFRIKA.

The black circle represents how the world has been encouraged to see, view and think of AFRIKANS.

In truth AFRIKANS are a very warm, loving, hospitable and rich people, this is also represented through the brightness of the gold.

Prominently and proudly displayed around the circle are the many but not all creations of AFRIKANS.

Many the creations are not displayed, some were stolen from and never given credit.

Some are unknown to this very day.
N, S, E, and W represent the four corners of the earth AFRIKANS hail from.

This is not just any ordinary bench to just be sat on in any which way, but rather a History lesson. A lesson that he who forgets the past is bound to repeat it.

If you are of Afrikan decent know and respect the fact that many Afrikans as well as CAUCASIANS lost their lives for you to be able to sit here on this profound bench safely, comfortably and peacefully.

Acknowledge, respect and appreciate that as you view, read, learn and sit.

If you are of CAUCASIAN decent know that
a few of your ancestors acknowledged the wrong being done to a beautiful innocent people, that same very few made a huge difference in the of the oppressed.

Their contributions and sacrifices made a huge impact in the world today.

This small difference was so grate that you can also sit here in peace and pride. You

can silently say to yourself I MAY NOT have been there,I MAY NEVER have stopped racism,or unfair treatment towards my AFRIKAN brothers and sisters but somewhere along or down the line an ancestor did,for we are connected I can and will learn from this,this will make me a much better person for we aim to be(good) and do things better than our parents and ancestors were.

If you fit neither of these groups acknowledge what went into this piece of history,learn how powerful love for your fellow human being can be, see the rewards and carry the words EQUALITY,FAIRNESS,JUSTICE AND PEACE,show that to all.

Creating this piece of art was not easy. Like a child it continued to grow and will still grow into the next task.

As the days of creating progressed I realized that it is way bigger than I. It was and still is a story and lesson that needed not to be just told but shown,revealed and acknowledged.

LEST WE FORGET

By Atswei 2022













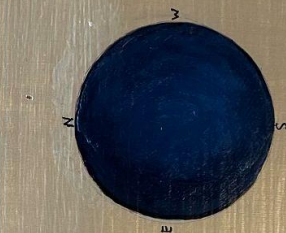
Window Cleaner - A.C. Lewis
 Portable Pencil Sharpener - John C. Cole
 Fire Extinguisher - Tom J. Marshall
 Rocket Catapult - Hugh McDonald
 Hair Brush - Lyda Neamen
 Heating Furnace - Alice H. Parker
 Hand Stamp - W.B. Purvis
 Insect Destroyer - A.C. Richardson
 Curtain Rod - S.R. Scotton
 Urinalysis Machine - Daisy Sanderson
 Player Piano - Joseph Dickinson
 Door Stop - O. Dorsey

Tissue Holder - Mary Davidson (while disabled with multiple sclerosis)
 Peanut Butter - George Washington Carver
 Laserphaco (device/technique to remove cataracts/revive patients eyesight) - Patricia Bath
 Automatic Gear shift - Richard Spikes
 Clothes Dryer - George T. Sampson 1892
 Dustpan - Lilyod P. Real
 Folding Chair - John Purdy
 Golf Tees - Dr George Grant
 Ice Cream Scooper - Alfred L. Gralle
 Lawn Mower - John Albert Burr

Arm for Record player - Joseph Dickman
 Door Knob - O. Dorsey
 Photoprint Wash - Clotborg J. Dorkaus
 Guitar - Robert Flemming
 Motor - J. Gregory
 Theano Hair Curlers - Solomon Harper
 lantern - Michael Harney
 Gas Burner - B.F. Jackson
 Kitchen Table - H.A. Jackson
 Bicycle Frame - Isaac R. Johnson
 Wrench - John A. Johnson
 Eye Protractor - O. Johnson
 Egg Beater - W. Johnson
 Air Conditioner Unit - Frederick M. Jones

Helicopter - Paul E. Williams
 Ice Cream - Augustus Jackson
 Eggless recipe 1802

Cellular - Henry Sampson
 Folding Cabinet bed 1885 - Sarah Goode
 Potato clips - George Crum
 Gas mask - Garrett Morgan
 Protective mask - Philip S. Downing
 Blood Bank - Charles Richard Drew
 Improved landing board - Sarah Boone
 Home Security System - M.V.B. Brown
 3 light traffic light - Garrett Morgan
 Re-hydrated Tissue - Fredrick Jones
 Automatic elevator doors - Lornie Johnson
 Super Sackers - Lornie Johnson



Internal Combustion Engine - Frederick
 Refrigeration controls - Frederick M. Jones
 Clothes Presser - John H. Jordan
 Bottle caps - Jones/Long
 Electric lamp - Latimer/Nichols
 Hydraulic shock absorber - Ralph Anderson
 Re-frigerator - J. Standard
 Pie refrigerator - J.P. Ashbourne
 Biscuit cutter - James A. Bauer
 Corn Crusher - Andrew J. Beard
 Pottery Engine - G.C. Beckert
 Letter Box - Alfred Benjamin
 Stainless steel pads - Alfred Benjamin
 Car Coupler - Andrew J. Beard
 Torpedo discharger - H. Bradbury
 Torpedo Springs - Phil Brooks

Lawn Sprinkler - Joseph H. Smith
 Modern Toilet - Thomas Elkins
 The Map - Thomas W. Stewart
 Reversible Baby Stroller - William H. Richardson
 Logomatic - Paper Dan
 Pairs/Sizes - George W. Carver
 Lotions/Soaps - George W. Carver
 Automatic Fishing Reel - George Cook
 Ice Cream Mold - A.C. Gralle
 Printing Press - W.A. Gralle
 Envelope Seal - F.W. Leslie
 Laser Fuels - Lester Lee
 Pressure Cooker - Maurice W. Lee













