



# IMAGINE A CANADA

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# 2022 HONOUREES

ART AND ESSAYS





**IMAGINE A CANADA**

The Imagine a Canada program asks youth to

# ENVISION A CANADA RECONCILED

Since 2016, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) has received over 1,440+ Imagine a Canada submissions and has worked with thousands of students to realize their hopes and dreams of a Canada they wish to see. For the 2022-2023 program, students in kindergarten to Grade 12 and CÉGEP were invited to submit artwork, essays, projects or other representations of a reconciled Canada.

In March 2023, fourteen art and essay submissions and eleven projects were selected for recognition for being uniquely beautiful, inspiring, and educational. These projects, and the meaning behind them, have been reproduced in one of two publications showcasing the creativity of youth as well as their understanding of Reconciliation.

Youth from all twenty-five projects participated in virtual leadership training exercises where they learned directly from Elders, Survivors, and Knowledge Keepers as well as special guests about reconciliation, resilience, entrepreneurship, how to manage projects, and how to hold difficult conversations. In addition to being featured in the publication, the chosen reconciliation projects received a grant of up to \$1,500 to turn their visions into reality.

*The Imagine a Canada program has evolved with the ever-changing education landscape in this country. Knowledge of the residential school system and its impacts is becoming more accessible thanks to the efforts of residential school Survivors who have long hoped their stories and experiences could be used to educate others.*

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, now more than ever, have a greater understanding of the complex and difficult history of residential schools and this is evident in the number and content of submitted projects.

This year, we were excited to expand the program and offer grants to assist youth to address Reconciliation in their school or community. Reconciliation requires constructive action to address the ongoing impacts of colonial systems like residential school. We were truly inspired by the diversity of submissions based upon respect, understanding, inclusivity, and cultural revitalization.

Each of us has the responsibility to advance reconciliation in Canada. The Imagine a Canada program helps us to realize youth visions of a Reconciled Canada to make our country a better place for all.

On behalf of the Governing Circle and the Survivors Circle of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba, I wish to congratulate the youth who have shared their visions with the Centre and all Canadians. I also wish to commend their teachers and mentors, guardians and families, schools and communities for supporting the next generation.

Stephanie Scott, *Executive Director*  
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation



**National Centre for  
Truth and Reconciliation**

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

*IG Wealth Management is honoured to be a part of the Imagine a Canada initiative. We all have a role to play in helping create a more inclusive society that respects and recognizes a reconciled Canada.*

Through this amazing program, Canadian youth from across the country have had the opportunity to express their vision of Canada through the lens of reconciliation and to envision what our future together could look like. The results are truly inspiring and empowering.

The collection of art and projects featured in these books celebrates the impactful work of the students, teachers and families who continue to embrace the full scope of Canada's history. Each piece does an amazing job showcasing the bravery and innovation of Canada's young people today as they champion the rich history and culture of our Indigenous communities.

The unique visions expressed through these pieces of work demonstrate the strength and commitment that young people have towards building a more equitable future for Canadians coast-to-coast.

On behalf of IG, I'd like to thank all the parents, teachers and mentors who supported these extraordinary youth through their journeys of expression and education. And thank you to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and the Imagine a Canada initiative, for inspiring hope and change for future generations.

And, most importantly, congratulations to the young people represented in this book for creating their visions!

Damon Murchison, *President and CEO*  
IG Wealth Management





St. John's School

# KENZIE KWOK

*Vancouver, BC*

Kenzie drew a picture of the medicine wheel's influence on the Earth, healing, and wellbeing. The spokes of the wheel extend out to the four corners of the art piece to create four quadrants. The bottom quadrant includes symbols of Indigenous ways of life, the left and right show the land and how it is being connected again, and the top includes the skies and stars.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Reconciliation means acknowledging the past and unjust occurrences that have occurred with Indigenous Peoples and doing our part as Canadians to move forward together as a nation.*

Khatinas.axh Community School

# GRACE MCLEOD

*Teslin, Yukon*

Grace's painting *Loving Earth* is a depiction of the Canadian flag with a world ringed in children and adults, interspersed with love at its centre. Her vision of a reconciled Canada is a land where every child has a loving family.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

MY THOUGHTS ON  
RECONCILIATION ARE:

*I just want everyone to get along.*



têxh

gtae

daka khu. awa



Hn

tlqk

Imagine a Canada  
if all kids  
had a hot  
meal in school.



A lida yoo tuktank Canada  
akss chia adakat yodi  
we yamoyi  
Ozidi x'it wuduwa-teyiv  
yo Spainx.



Dylan

Khatinas.axh Community School

# DYLAN SMARCH

*Teslin, Yukon*

Dylan created *Warm Food*, showing delicious foods like mashed potatoes with gravy, meat, peas, pizza, and warm drinks. His vision of a reconciled Canada is one where everyone has enough to eat, especially at school.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

MY THOUGHTS ON  
RECONCILIATION ARE:

*It is important for everyone to learn First Nations ways of knowing and doing.*

École élémentaire Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

# NIEVE GRIFFITHS

*Toronto, Ontario*

Nieve created *A Better World*, which features images of two hands clasped together against a rainbow background to signify that everyone is equal. There are also other images and words representing values that are essential for reconciliation.

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## IMAGINE A CANADA

### MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*To me, the word "reconciliation" means that everyone is at peace and respects each other. It also means accepting our mistakes and those of others, and trying to fix them.*



# RECONCILIATION



TERRE  
EAU  
NATURE

CULTURE  
IDENTITÉ

ÉDUCATION

LANGUE

FAMILLE

AMOUR

AMITIÉ

SANTÉ

MAISON

ANIMAUX

PAIX





égalité

culture

paix

nature

amour

respect

vérité

vie

planète

animaux

eau

sagesse

École élémentaire Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

# SOPHIE WILSON

*Toronto, Ontario*

Sophie drew a picture entitled *The Math of Peace*. The symbols include a heart, a feather for Indigenous peoples, a maple leaf for the other people in the country, and a peace sign. The colours signify joy, nature, and indigeneity. There are also bubbles containing key words for concepts leading to reconciliation.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*For me, reconciliation means that the once broken relationship between two or more groups/people has now been restored.*

Juniper School

# JAELA WILLAMSON

*Thompson, Manitoba*

Jaela's *Bridge of Reconciliation* is a painting that depicts Margaret Pokiak-Fenton's experience of attending residential school and becoming disconnected from her family. A heart split into two pieces, with Margaret at the centre, shows her desire to return and reconnect with her family across a bridge of rubble. At the top of the painting is the word Reconciliation and to the left is "wâhkôwîcihiwêwin" which is Cree, or Ininîmowin, word for reconciliation.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*To me, reconciliation means to take things or people that are apart and bring them together. I think the world should be at peace so everyone feels safe. We need no more negativity in this world.*

*Reconciliation is possible anywhere and everywhere as long as we let it. Some people say two wrongs don't make a right. I agree unless you do something to make those wrongs into two rights.*



W = Reconciliation

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M  
-  
h



September 1st, 1914 Dear Diary,

You are the only thing I have left in this world. I am lucky they did not find you because they took everything away from me. They cut my luminous brown hair away. I have no hair left and am forced to speak English. I am trying to at least follow one rule in here by writing in English instead of my original language. I was taken away to some school for Indian's. The point is to drain the Indian out of us, but I am not Indian, so I don't understand why I'm here. Even if I'm aboriginal, I will not let that happen. Mommy and Daddy are still at home. How could they let them take me away just like that? Did I do something wrong? I hope not. I just want to go home. I would do anything to nestle up in Mommy's cozy blankets with her and to have one last goodnight kiss from Daddy. I am not sure if that will ever happen. It is now 5:28 am and I am quite sure they will come at 5:30 to wake us up. I wanted you to know I will protect you with my life and keep you in my pillowcase. Oh no, I hear them coming. Until next time.

Ne'multes (I think the word in English is goodbye)

-Elu Augustine

September 15th, 1914

Dear Diary,

I am sorry for not writing in so long, but they are extremely strict here. I have not had any time to write because I am learning every single letter in English. The letters are so interesting looking. Anyways, I absolutely detest it here. I am not allowed any friends or visiting my family, but I talk to some girls who sleep in the same room as me. We do not say much but I will say hi occasionally if I feel lonely. They do not reply to me usually, but I am convinced if I do not say a word in a while, I will lose my voice completely- forever. I have heard screaming down the hallway and I heard a rumour that if you receive a detention that you must go in an electric chair that shocks you. I am becoming increasingly terrified by the minute. I am too scared to even talk anymore. One girl in my class answered wrong on a question and I have not seen her since. I do not know how long I will be able to survive here but I am praying every day. I know Master Spirit will give me a chance and bring me back to Mommy and Daddy. I just need a miracle

Sincerely,  
Elu Augustine

December 21st, 1914

Beloved Diary,

I had to take a break from my diary because one of the nuns found another girl's journal and she came back with bruises. I cannot live like this anymore. I know what I must do- escape. I'm not sure when and I'm not sure how but I have so many bruises and scars that I assume it can't enhance to being any worse than this. They hurt me horribly just because I didn't know how to pronounce a word in English. If they find you, I don't think I will live another day. I wish Mommy and Daddy were with me. Being a twelve-year-old here makes me feel distraught. I'm not certain how I am going to break out of this nightmare but one thing I know for certain is I will be escaping.

Wish me luck,  
Elu.

February 7th, 1915

Cherished Diary,

Today is the day I am leaving this prison. I promise I will keep you updated on my adventure out of here. Luckily, some girls in my room that I thought didn't talk- talk! They are all willing to help with the plan to help me out of here and I'm extremely lucky. We are having oatmeal for breakfast and an apple so all the girls gave me their food so I can try and survive escaping from here. At 12am, I am going to pretend to go to the washroom and escape from the window on the ceiling. I will write as soon as I'm out of here. I think I may have a chance to survive! Just a few more hours until I'm free.

Lots of love,  
Love Elu

February 8th, 1915

Darling Diary,

I made it out alive. I don't know where I am and I'm in the middle of a disastrous snowstorm. My whole body is starting to go numb, and I am regretting leaving the school, but I cannot turn back now. The reason I'm writing is because I'm afraid this might be my last Diary entry. I have no water because it froze, and my food is molding rapidly. I'm proud of myself for escaping that horror scene but I am also petrified all alone. If Mommy and Daddy find you, please let them know that I love them so much. I can't breathe very well and I'm sorry for letting you down, but this is the end of my story. Thank you for coming along on my adventure with me Diary and I don't think I could have made it out without you. It's my time to finish my story. Re-tell my story for me.

Goodbye Diary,  
Love Elu.

Rothesay Park School

# RAELIN FUDGE

*Rothesay, New Brunswick*

Raelin's *The Diary of Elu Augustine* is a fictional diary containing five entries that span six months of her first year in residential school. It begins with Elu Augustine's admission to the school and the cutting of her hair, devolving into grief over the loss of her parents and the constant threat of physical abuse. The final entry depicts her escape into the winter wilderness and wondering whether she will survive.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*To me, reconciliation means to make everyone whole but in a positive manner that will never split us up again. If I could grant one wish, it would be for our world to never have to experience that trauma ever again and for all the prior horrifying events to never exist.*

Juniper School

# KAYLA VOKEY

*Thompson, Manitoba*

Kayla drew a picture entitled, *Piecing Together Reconciliation*. A residential school and stormy skies are depicted on the left side and a tipi and sunny skies on the right. The picture is split down the middle with a broken heart in the centre and there are pieces missing from the puzzle to symbolize the missing truths about residential schools.

"Pakoseyimowin," which means 'to hope' in Plains Cree, or Ininimowin, is written in the clouds along with the text, "we may forgive, but we may never forget."

MY THOUGHTS ON  
RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Standing up for what's  
right and equality.*

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**



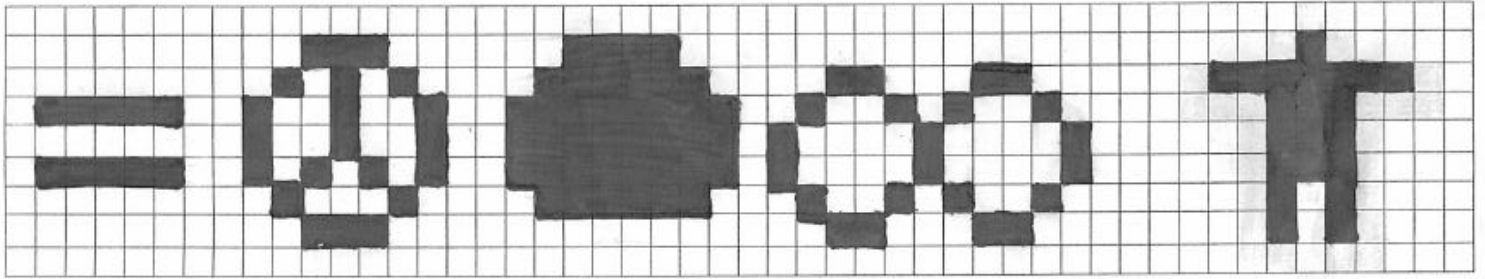


we may  
forgive

Pakosevimojin  
B <math>K</math> M?

But we  
may never  
forget

Kajal Vohra  
sept 22, 2022



Rosary School

# BRETT GRESCHNER

*Manning, Alberta*

Brett designed a Wampum Belt entitled, *Unity Wampum Belt*. The equal sign represents a reconciled Canada where everyone is equal. The peace sign represents the peace and how relations will be healed and have a solid foundation to grow and prosper. The foundation is the rock which also supports a strong and unified community. The infinity symbol represents how everything goes on forever.

Respecting Indigenous Peoples and their traditions is ongoing and crucial to a reconciled Canada. The Inukshuk points us in the right direction to repair our broken relationships and lead us to a brighter future representing a path of truth and reconciliation.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Reconciliation to me means that we have to acknowledge what happened in the past and take responsibility and action for it. An apology without action is not enough. We have to learn from the mistake and wrongs so history does not repeat itself. We have to respect and honour the Elders and the Indigenous Peoples who have went through residential schools and those who have gone before us. Reconciliation is repairing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and preventing future and ongoing harm.*

Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute

# BROOKLYNN PEETERS, TALULAH ETHERINGTON, AND FAIYT KENNY

*Oakwood, Ontario*

Brooklyn, Talulah, and Faiyt jointly created an essay paired with a piece of art titled *Ring of Reconciliation*, which discusses the environmental issues around mining, Indigenous land rights, and unfulfilled obligations of the numbered treaties. The Ring of Fire is a mining region of the James Bay Lowlands.

OUR THOUGHTS ON  
RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Reconciliation, to me, means peace, freedom,  
and everyone having equal opportunity to be  
themselves without harassment or being taken  
advantage of.*

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**



Handwritten text in yellow paint at the top of the page, consisting of stylized characters that appear to be a mix of letters and symbols, possibly representing a name or a title.





Hants East Rural High School

# CHLOE SLAUNWHITE

*Belnan, Nova Scotia*

Chloe's beadwork piece, *Growing Toward a Bright Future*, represents a Reconciled Canada by demonstrating unity between plants, animals, and humans. It shows how we rely on each other throughout life. This piece symbolizes life and growth which is represented in flowers, a tree, and the beaver.

The beaver is one of the Seven Teachings, meaning wisdom. We use our wisdom of past events, to grow toward a better future to not make the same mistakes. The tree (created with abstract hands) represents everyone and how we are all equals. The colors used throughout the piece represent all cultures and a bright future.

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*To me reconciliation means having mutual respect for everyone. It is important to learn about the past and about the truth in order to learn from it and move forward. Together we can grow towards a brighter future.*

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

Orangeville District Secondary School

# GABRIELLE THOMPSON

*Orangeville, Ontario*

Gabrielle's poem *New World* speaks of a world in which values Indigenous knowledge and rituals and teaches them in school. The poem includes words in Ojibwe in reflection of Gabrielle's love to her language. There are references to the elders who served as mentors in the project woven into the lines about cedar tea, sweet grass, heart berries, and beadwork.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Reconciliation means understanding the truth and working everyday to be better. I want to go through school and see the representation of whose land we are on.*

*I want to learn about how to live on the land and how plants can help me. I want Indigenous art in my school, indigenous language classes, and more indigenous representation in general.*



It began with nothing,  
in nothing the possibility of something,  
then falling.  
It began on a turtles shell,  
With courage,  
With earth,  
With life.  
It began with dance,  
and laughter,  
and love.

it is home.

It is sage smoke and cedar tea.

It is moose meat and bone marrow beads.

It is sweat lodges and long houses.

This world braided together with Wiingaashk  
and Ode'imín. Sweetgrass and heart berries  
at its foundation.

Nibi breathing life through it.

All beings maintaining each other.

Sitting in classes of Indigenous and European lessons.  
Oral history of this land,

Our turtle island,

Our home.

Learning the plants and animals I share  
its earthly gifts with. Making beaded  
medallions in math class,

Identifying plant medicines in biology,  
Learning Ojibwe and Anishinaabemowin along with  
French. Manoomin and bannock in the cafeteria.  
Knowledge keepers and elders next to teachers.  
All people partners.  
Honouring our treaties,  
Inaaknigewin,  
Our responsibility.

Recognition of all that was stolen;  
working to give it back.

Accepting our mistakes and working every  
day to make up for them.

The eighth fire we chose to save; creating the world  
everybody deserved. The world we took away.

Creating new systems that work for everybody.

Protecting our land, our home.

If it began with nothing but a possibility;  
then it can be fixed with possibility.

Since it began with courage;

it can be fixed with courage.

Because it began with love;

It can be fixed with love.



Highland Secondary School

# DANIELLE BILOZAZE-LEWIS

*Comox, BC*

Danielle designed a Nalceth or medicine bag for traditional medicines used by Indigenous Peoples. The medicine used is indicative of truth as well as learning. Danielle's beadwork features a heart surrounded by flowers and other plants: the heart represents the strongest medicine of love; the flowers and plants are medicines for healing that also speak to Reconciliation. The use of beading on this piece is also representative of their culture and how they are healing as well as reclaiming sovereignty.

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**IMAGINE A CANADA**

## MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Reconciliation, to me, means when peoples actions line up with their words - when we can act with integrity and compassion with our lived shared history. Reconciliation is when people take the cotton from their ears and put it in their mouth to truly hear the truth otherwise we will never see a true reconciled Canada.*

Miller Comprehensive Catholic High School

# SOPHIA YOUNG

*Regina, Saskatchewan*

Sophia produced a video-poem entitled, *I'm Not the Woman You Had in Mind*. The video depicts a girl who learns to break free from a doll – the doll being a symbol of Eurocentric femininity. Themes of listening and learning are utilized to highlight the steps needed to achieve a reconciled Canada. These steps lead to acknowledgement of past and present, embracing intersectionality, and the need to support each other in finding ourselves (without having to rely on prescribed colonial identities).

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## IMAGINE A CANADA

### MY THOUGHTS ON RECONCILIATION ARE:

*Truth and reconciliation meant finding who I am. Reconciliation helped me come to terms with the intersectionality of my identity. Elders have been my role models in viewing mixed identities as beautiful. Their teachings allowed me to blossom into the woman I am today.*

*When I imagine Canada, I envision a place where reconciliation is the basis of every activity. Reconciliation is power. When we learn to see others, we create a Canada for all.*













National Centre for  
Truth *and* Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

**NCTR.CA**