



**Celebrating Municipal Excellence**  
**2023 Nomination Form**  
**Deadline: 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2023**

Nominee Contact Information	
<b>Name of municipality/ municipalities being nominated:</b> <small>(please include the names of all partner municipalities)</small>	City of Humboldt
<b>Contact Name:</b>	Jennifer Fitzpatrick
<b>Contact role in project:</b>	Project Manager
<b>Telephone #:</b>	306-682-5226 ext 3
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Box 2349 Humboldt, Sask. S0K 2A0
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	culturalservicesdirector@humboldtmuseum.ca
<b>Name of Nominated Practice or Project:</b>	Reconciliation Mural
<b>Date of Project or Practice Initiation:</b>	January 2022
<b>Date of Project or Practice Completion:</b> <small>(If ongoing, please indicate)</small>	June 2022
	<b>Ongoing:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

Nominator Contact Information	
<b>Name:</b>	City of Humboldt Council
<b>Organization:</b>	City of Humboldt
<b>Position:</b>	City Council
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Box 640 Humboldt, Sask. S0K 2A0
<b>Telephone #:</b>	306-682-2525
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	michael.behiel@humboldt.ca

***Please provide as much detail as possible. Winning practices are posted in the Best Practices Library as a reference or resource to others. Nominations that clearly outline the practice and all steps involved have a higher chance of being selected for an award.***

## **The Practice**

### **1. What issue inspired the nominated project or practice?**

The City of Humboldt has been active in creating programming for community education in Reconciliation for a few years. Through the Cultural Services Department, there have been numerous events and activities, supported through a Community Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant from SaskCulture from 2020 through 2022. The programs included art exhibits at the gallery by Indigenous artists, public programs such as Lunch and Learn with Speakers Bureau from the OTC, and hosting a Blanket Exercise for the community.

Through this dialogue with the public, we heard about the tremendous impact of hearing about the truths of our shared history. We heard residents say how important it was to bring these difficult conversations to the community.

We also heard that there is a challenge in engaging the public to participate in programming, as well as garnering community attention to the need for further conversations about Reconciliation.

This information was discussed by the Public Art Committee, which is appointed through bylaw by City Council, as they reviewed options for themes for their upcoming art projects.

## 2. What has this project or practice done to address the issue?

In March 2021, the Public Art Committee decided that Reconciliation would be the theme for their next project, in order to help bring public awareness to this important work, and to create a welcoming symbol for the city.

This project began with the commitment to the values of inclusivity and community-driven. It was designed to ensure that there was mutual respect and trust between the community and the Indigenous artist. We were thrilled to connect with Kevin PeeAce to develop this project. Kevin is originally from Yellow Quill First Nation, and has extensive experience in collaborative work.

Bio from Kevin's website:

Artist Kevin L. Pee-ace was born in Kelvington, Saskatchewan and is a member of the Yellowquill First Nation and Peter Chapman First nation. Kevin's exposure to art happened at an early age. He recalled seeing the drawings and paintings created by his uncle, Jerry Whitehead, who would later become instrumental in helping to launch his career. Upon graduating from high school in 1991, Kevin went on to complete a Fine Arts Studio diploma program from UCFV – Abbotsford, British Columbia. During the mid-nineties, he explored various programs in Art History, Archaeology, Anthropology and Native Studies at Capilano College in North Vancouver.

Returning to Saskatchewan in 1995 Kevin enrolled at the UofS to continue his studies but quickly realized that the art was becoming more dominant thus committing to it full-time. Art and education have been constants throughout his career, this led to a collaborative approach in creating class murals with many schools throughout Saskatchewan. He currently resides in Saskatoon, Sk painting full-time. He is married and proud father to three children. He has three grandchildren; one grandson, Daniel, and two granddaughters, Raven and Aaliyah.

The project was developed with the commitment to community collaboration. We also wanted to give youth the opportunity to share their perspective and empower their voice. They have inherited the burden of colonialism, and we wanted to hear their thoughts and desires on what they see for their future community. It also provided them with an opportunity to think about their future as leaders of the community. We hope this inspires them to think about their current and future role in building better communities in Saskatchewan. It was a wonderful way to connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

This project has created a tangible, visual representation that Reconciliation is important to the people of the Humboldt area. It has come to symbolize that the community is welcoming and open. The inclusion of pride colours in the Ribbon Skirt is by design. The students noted that this was important to them.

## The Process

***This section should be the longest and most detailed part of your nomination. Include enough information, such as steps, resources accessed, and considerations to support a municipality interested in applying the same project or practice.***

3. Indicate who had a direct role in this project or practice:

- Municipal Council
- Municipal Administration
- Other

*Artist Kevin PeeAce, Educators at all four schools in Humboldt*

4. What was the role of the municipal council and/or municipal staff in this project or practice?

The Humboldt Public Art committee reviewed several locations in the city for potential placement of the mural. The criteria include sightlines, directional exposure to preserve the art, adjacent use of the landscape around the piece, pedestrian access for viewing, and placement within the community. The overwhelming choice by all members of the committee was the north side of City Hall. It has a park adjacent where the public can safely view and reflect on the mural. This recommendation was brought to City Council were were all in favour of this location and the project. The funds for the project came from through the Humboldt Public Art Committee which is a committee of City Council.

Municipal staff person, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Director of Cultural Services was the staff lead on the project.

5. Were other groups were involved in developing this project or practice? If so, who were they and what role did they play?

Artist Kevin PeeAce was the creative lead. Kevin was open to sharing his experiences and thoughts on Truth and Reconciliation with the students.

This project was made possible due to the partnership with each of the four schools in Humboldt. We had representatives from the Humboldt Public School, St. Dominic School, St. Augustine School and the Humboldt Collegiate Institute. When we inquired about student participation, each school said yes! There was several teachers who assisted, but the contacts at each school were Cathy Korte-Monz, Jackie Bay, Celeste Leray-Leicht, and Chloe Monz. We are thankful to them for their participation in the project.

Therefore, Kevin and the students had virtual conversations – one per school - in January 2022 to discuss Kevin’s experiences and thoughts on Reconciliation and to ask the students their ideas. The contacts at each school coordinated the zoom calls, and the actual painting of the mural.

Bryan McNabb, Superintendent of Indigenous Education at Horizon School Division and his team were instrumental in the development of the ceremony for the blessing of the mural in June 2022.

6. What resources were involved?

The resources involved were the project management by the Director of Cultural Services who coordinated the project, and the department staff.

The first aspect of the project was to connect Kevin PeeAce with the school students. This was supported through a SK Arts development grant and matched by the Public Art committee. We held four separate session so that each school could have their own conversations. The Director opened each session with a land acknowledgement, and introduced Kevin to the students assembled.

Kevin provided his personal experiences as an Indigenous person, and talked about Reconciliation. He encouraged the students to not feel overwhelmed by the topic, but rather to think how they can improve their community. He encouraged them to be optimistic about the future, and think about what their hope and aspirations for community were.

He also suggested that there are personal steps one can take when thinking about Reconciliation. He suggested that they should think about getting to know their neighbours.

The primary resources were the student's creativity. Students were asked to create their own idea of Reconciliation and the future of their community. They could paint, draw, colour, write, or whatever they wanted to use in order to share their message or idea. The students works were assembled and sent to Kevin.

In sharing his thoughts on the process in an article on Discover Humboldt's website, Kevin noted that "initially we went through Zoom and we talked about Reconciliation. We talked about what it means to them. I asked them to go a step further and to put it on paper, just so I could see what it meant. The response was overwhelming, and you can imagine with the different schools, the ideas that came out of there were phenomenal."

Kevin took inspiration from these works and created the design for the mural.

In the same article, Kevin noted that "the engine" of the mural was contained in all the ideas the children put forward. The trick was to piece together those ideas into a cohesive vision that would harmonize the message. That's the job of the artist, to put himself "outside of himself" to create an experience for others to enjoy.

The link to this article is found here; <https://discoverhumboldt.com/articles/artist-kevin-peeace-shares-his-perspective-on-new-mural>

## 7. How was the project or practice developed?

The project was developed through the mutual respect and friendship between Kevin and Jennifer. Their approach was collaborative – Jennifer handled the specifics of finding the appropriate location for the mural, managing the budget and the coordination with local schools, as well as the installation. Kevin was the creative lead – sharing his experiences with the students, inspiring them to create their own designs and voice their own messages. From their inspirational pieces, Kevin created a unique design for Humboldt. He then created the six panels that would make up the complete mural. Two were painted by Kevin – one with a red base to represent Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and the other an orange base to represent the Residential School Survivors. The wheat sheaves represent Humboldt as it is in the heart of the prairies, and part of the city's logo. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous people shaking hands is representative of the Treaty 6 medal. Humboldt lies in Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis.

The four center panels were brought to Humboldt and each school received one 4 foot by 8 foot section to paint. The students then painted these panels. Kevin then took the six panels and finalized the black outlines and ensured the pieces seamlessly melded together. Municipal staff installed the panels on City Hall.

On National Indigenous Peoples Day in June 2022, we held a celebration of the Mural. The students and the community were there to honour this work. Public Art Committee Chairperson Barrie Broad was the MC for the event. Bryan McNabb shared his knowledge about the traditions of smudging and protocols. Elder Stuart Bitternose gave his blessing, and there were songs and dances from Harold Littlelent and the Dancing Horse Dance Troupe. Kevin shared his reflection on the project, and shared his experiences as a Residential School Survivor. It was a powerful and moving moment for our community. Kevin noted the following, “It was very emotional, for sure. I think back in my past, and this kind of day, we’d never see these kinds of days like that, and to see it now makes me feel ... hopeful. That’s what kind of day today brought, and the mural is just an extension of the relationship.”

The students were thanked for their vision for the project, and of course, there were cookies and juiceboxes for all!

## The Results

### 8. What effect did this project or practice have on the community?

Several people have shared that this project has had a profound impact on the community. Many have noted that it is the first large scale, tangible work of art that projects the community’s commitment to Reconciliation and to its openness to welcome people of all cultures. The mural can be seen when driving through the community along Highway 5 and 20.

The Reconciliation Walks on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which for the past two years have been organized by the local Westminster United Church Affirm team, start at the mural. It has become a natural gathering space for events around Reconciliation. This summer was the first time that tipis were put up in this park, as Myron Neapetung led tipi teachings for school students and the public in the park.

Aside from the designs of the students that created the mural, organizers wanted to share the words that the students felt were important. Therefore, the words they identified are listed around the interpretive panel beneath the mural. Please see the interpretive panel for the mural in the photographs.

This project moved us along our journey in Reconciliation, and in the fall of 2022, Humboldt was approached to participate in a pilot project on Reconciliation. In partnership with Heritage Saskatchewan, Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Aboriginal Friendship Centers of Sask, and supported by the Community Initiatives Fund, the community is now involved in a year-long "Relationship Building and Reconciliation through Living Heritage" program. This pilot will provide data for other communities in their journey in Reconciliation. The support and enthusiasm we received through this project from Council and the community provided the foundation to take further steps in our community's journey. We are still on that path today. Information about the Pilot can be found at <https://www.humboldtmuseum.ca/reconciliation/>

9. Was a formal evaluation done after the project or practice was completed? Please explain.

The Public Art Committee reviewed the project at their meeting, and were pleased that it came in within budget projections and in time for National Indigenous Peoples Day.

We also heard very positive responses from the schools involved in the project. The public always has a way of letting us know what they think of what has been done, and the responses were overwhelmingly supportive. The social media posts garnered more attention and support than most posts. The media coverage was excellent.

We felt it was a significant project for the municipality and the province. It went to the next level, when we were honoured with a national award. In October 2023, the project won the Public Art- Sustainability Award from the Creative Cities Network of Canada which adjudicates project nominations across the country. The jury noted that "great community engagement and age diversity upped the game relatively to population numbers. It was a great impact for a community of that size. School children who walk by the mural will say 'I was a part of that.'" Please see the full story in the link below.

<https://www.discoverhumboldt.com/articles/humboldts-reconciliation-mural-gains-national-attention-with-major-award>



## 10. Describe any challenges faced.

The challenges were primarily around timing, as everyone has busy schedules. Coordinating student painting at four schools with Kevin's schedule was a challenge, but everyone was gracious in accommodating each other, and prioritizing the project. The other challenge is the timing for the conversations around Reconciliation, as we need to be open to where individual people are, along their journey. Some people are further along the path than others, and so this types of projects offer an opportunity to have those conversations, it is just sometimes a challenge to have enough time to dig deep into the topic. We will continue to provide space for these conversations as we can.

## Lessons Learned

### 11. What lessons were learned and what would you recommend doing differently?

The lessons learned were numerous. Often times, we start projects without allowing the necessary time for the relationship building aspect. We would recommend taking the time to build authentic relationships, and get to know each other. I wish we had more time for the students and Kevin to get to know each other and discuss more deeply, but I am sure that the teachers continued these conversation with their students, and as Canadians strive to build a stronger country, these conversations will continue.

This artist led engagement contributed to cultural understanding and created pathways between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples towards Reconciliation. We respected Kevin's creativity as an artist. As a municipal staff person, we sometimes want to control the process and the product. But working with community can be far more rewarding when we allow the community the freedom to lead. The content of the mural was a combination of the inspiration of the youth and an Indigenous artist. It was this coming together in Reconciliation that created a work far beyond our expectations, and we would recommend that others allow the space for that creativity to be ignited.

The only different path I would suggest, is to give these types of projects more time. We sometimes rush things to match fiscal years and grant deadlines, and building relationships is about more than that, so it is important to do the groundwork and build trust. This was a powerful project for all involved, and we know that it has touched people beyond what we can measure, and that is a lesson we need to embrace.

<https://www.discoverhumboldt.com/articles/live-truth-and-reconciliation-mural-unveiling->