

Mentorship in Motion could get boost from McMichael



By Brock Weir

Mentorship in Motion, the artistic collaboration between six established York Region artists and six budding artists working through challenges, wrapped their 2012 tour at the Aurora Cultural Centre on Saturday.

The program, which was founded by Aurora's Herbert Pryke through his Artcures Inc. initiative, was an offshoot of his belief that art can provide an outlet to "express, inform, evaluate, provide therapy, and to heal" and provide a way through the creative process to "soothe and heal the mind, body and soul."

Among the collaborators in this year's initiative were Mr. Pyke and his mentee Michael Teuma-Castelletti who have both battled cancer. Their work, benefiting KC's Cancer Cushion Fund, was inspired by The Avengers, showcasing the superheroes doing battle with a cancer cell.

Ernestine Tahedl teamed up with Lindsey Chalmers to create a colourful work of peonies to benefit DramaWay, a program to provide fine arts to people with special needs. The work of Joan Armour and Alex Hawkins depicting a landscape they found by chance walking through the Oak Ridges Moraine helped support Bereaved Families of Ontario - York Region, while the team of Lilian Ghazarian and Kanta Khalid helped the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness.

Jill Segal and Katie Pryde's embracing work went to highlight the Sick Kids Foundation, while the work of Cesan d'Ornellas Levine and Ben Dobson, the largest mixed media piece in the gallery, went to benefit the Geneva Centre for Autism.

"I know it is called Mentorship in Motion, and no disrespect to the mentors that provided all the training, but I would call it Through Your Eyes," said Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown at the closing reception on Saturday afternoon. "What we have seen through these pieces of art is through to the souls of some of these young people who have participated and you have let us touch a little piece of what your life is about" and I believe that is what art truly is."

Ms. Brown was joined at the reception by Mayor Geoffrey Dawe. He said that looking around the exhibition he was truly engaged in the work.

"There are three main transformatives in life - love, culture and learning - and all three of them are perfectly exemplified here," he said. "What is mentorship if it is not learning or teaching someone else? There is obvious love just looking at art. You can see the love there and it is so fabulous in this exhibition [to show] the transference of one group of artists to another group, creating some incredible pieces to partake in, to absorb, and take something away from it."

Laura Schembri, Executive Director of the Aurora Cultural Centre said recent visitors to the Church Street landmark had a chance to do exactly that, when they held training sessions for suicide prevention.

?The inspiration that your art gave to this group was commented on several times,? Ms. Schembri told the assembled artists. ?Your stories helped formulate some of these very important discussions and it has created a lot of joy as well. That is what was really needed in there. The joy and celebration [the art] exhibits was really, really important. It had a positive impact on people and it is going to be paid forward.?

Through the success of the exhibition, Mr. Pryke presented each group with a cheque for \$1,000 for their selected charities. This success could also play a key factor in the evolution of the Mentorship in Motion project itself.

Through its circuit of York Region, the show stopped for a two week run at Kleinberg's McMichael Gallery. Participating artist Jill Segal said she and Mr. Pryke had been in talks with the gallery after they expressed interest in taking on the responsibility of the program. Bringing the gallery on board would ensure its continued success and growth on a much larger scale not just through the facilities they offer, but also through their regular funding sources.