



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release – May 3, 2018

Performance of student-created music showcases student learning

For a large part of the school year, St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre unofficially added "cultural-arts centre" to its name thanks to the unique Kitohcikewin/Listen Up! artist-in-residence program involving the Gryphon Trio and the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra (SSO). On May 3, a performance at the school celebrated the culmination of the collaborative journey.

Kitohcikewin/Listen Up! (Kitohcikewin is Cree for making music) is a mentorship program that had members of the Gryphon Trio, SSO and the local arts community work with students at St. Mary's to develop their artistic abilities in four distinct modules: writing original poetry and lyrics; working with composers to put the words to music; creating visual art to be showcased; and a final performance and art installation to conclude the process.

"Teachers would oversee the day-to-day aspects of the project," said Katrina Sawchuk, principal at St. Mary's. "Our partners—who were all fantastic working with our students—would come in for workshops, instructing students and guiding teachers throughout the process."

First Nations elders and knowledge keepers, as well as the school's Catholic School Community Council, were consulted and played an active role throughout the process.

Sawchuk noted that the project helped keep students interested in learning. "Students would get excited to learn, to participate in something different," she said. "Being engaged in learning is such an important step in student success. To them, it wasn't learning to read or write or curricular outcomes, it was about creating something they could be proud of. And I think being reminded of that is important to students, to our families and to us as educators."

"The SSO believes that the opportunity for young people to learn about music and explore their own musicality is a basic human right. It was an honour for the SSO to be involved in this project" says Mark Turner, executive director of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. "Several of our guest artists and orchestra members were able to perform for, and work with, the kids throughout the year. Everyone commented on how much they loved working with the students at St. Mary's and how it was an absolute joy to share in their music."

The afternoon performance at the school featured songs created throughout the process including *Strong Woman - Sōhski Iskwew*, *Red Willow She Bends*, *Kitohcikewin - Music Making*, and *If I Had a Magic Feather*. There was a repeat performance in the evening so the students could share their artwork, poetry, and music with the community.

Poet Leah Dorian worked with students on the lyrics, and artist Rachelle Brockman worked with students on the visual artwork. Paul Suchan and Carmen Braden composed the music, and Erica McFadden and Rob Kapilo were the conductors.

- 30 -

For more information contact:

Derrick Kunz, Communications Consultant
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
306-659-7077 | dekunz@gscs.sk.ca

Megan Grier, Director of Communications
Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra
Phone: 306-665-6414; cell: 306-222-0637
marketing@saskatoonsymphony.org

Roman Borys
Cellist, Gryphon Trio
Artistic and Executive Director
Ottawa Chamber Music Society
416-457-3354 | rborys@gryphontrio.com