

re-claimed project:

**Creative Minds Building
a Community Mural
in Downtown
Prince George
on HIV Awareness**





Dedicated to Everyone Everywhere
With hopes of Raising Awareness
And Understanding
About HIV

Brought to you by:
Province of British Columbia
Northern Health
Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society
and the Community Arts Council of Prince George & District





Re-Claimed: Creative Minds Creating a Community Mural in Downtown Prince George on the Theme of HIV Awareness

Facilitated by local artist Jennifer Pighin, with valued the assistance of the artists and sponsors, the MURAL PROJECT is one way in which we hope to inspire healthy living in the North. By making a collaborative mural visualizing the thoughts, feelings, stories, struggles and successes in PG, with education about HIV, we hope to deconstruct stereotypes & encourage positive living for everyone while adding to the beauty of our city streets.

A group of 14 established and upcoming local artists created 15 - 4ft x 4ft panels for a complete mural on the West Wall of the alley near the Fire Pit on 3rd Ave, Prince George. Each panel includes RED and BLACK within their designs. The red resembles our love for those who are living with HIV and the black is in honour of those who have passed because of the numerous physical and emotional complications related to HIV.

Brought to you by Northern Health, Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society, and the Community Arts Council of Prince George & District. Project funding provided by the Province of BC through the Imagine Grants STOP HIV/AIDS project.

Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society vision statement:
"As a leader in preventative health, we promote the holistic well-being of individuals and communities in Northern British Columbia."

Community Arts Council of Prince George & District mission statement:
"To support, encourage and promote all arts in Prince George and District by raising the level of excellence and providing a creative climate for growth in the arts."



Artists:

Alison Hirst
Andrea Fuentes
Andrew Mooney
Callista Vagt
Carla Joseph
Chad Donahue
Clayton Gauthier
Dalton Nicholson
Ian Baird
Jennifer Pighin
John Bozoki
Laurie Chandler
Nigel Fox
Robert Ryan



Hirst, Alison. *Love in Five Elements*. 2012.
Concrete overlay coloured with Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Love in Five Elements
Alison Hirst - Granicrete North



Love in 5 Elements is Alison's first artistic venture. A long time Prince George resident, Alison recently became the training distributor for a concrete overlay product called Granicrete, and used this medium, with acrylics, as the basis for her art piece.

The five elements are Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood, and everything in nature is either one or a combination of these five. If we keep in our 'nature' and keep in harmony with the other elements, we promote wellness.

The four black feathers represent my loved ones who passed due to HIV related issues. The red of the fire represents a burning love for those still suffering.

www.granicretenorth.com
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Fuentes, Andrea. *Life Excellent*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Life Excellent
Andrea Fuentes

People living with HIV have a difficult life and have to make hard choices, but they are still living.

Bonjour, my name is Andrea Marie Rose Fuentes, I lived in foster care until I was nineteen and had no knowledge of my traditional culture. My parents were of Russian and German descent, it was they who brainwashed me enough to forget my native heritage. I thank the Creator for not taking my culture away from me and keeping me strong throughout my life.

I am a mother of four children, three boys and one girl. I am the eldest in my family and growing up I had to learn fast, sometimes the hard way, but I learned. I am a former volunteer of the Fire Pit Cultural Drop-In Centre, through their help I know who I am today. I enjoy singing and dancing, and am a firm believer in Freedom for all.





Mooney, Andrew. *Progress*. 2012. Spray Paint on panel board, 46" x46".

Progress
Andrew Mooney

You have the power to raise awareness, not fear.



Vagt, Callista. *The Truth of Roots*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

The Truth of Roots

Callista Vagt

All I could think about at the beginning of this project is, "How would I react? What would I feel if I contracted HIV?" Along with that line of thought came the question "How would people react to me and how would their reaction to me, affect my illness and life."

I used both the dead and living trees to represent the lives and health of people with HIV. The difference between the trees is not in the seed, both are HIV +. The difference lies in the roots. The dead trees have been fed by fear, hate and rejection while the living, healthy trees have been fed by support, love and empathy. We are, in much, a product of our surroundings or roots. The difference between strength and beauty or death and despair can often be traced to support network or lack thereof and not the disease itself. The truth of roots is, they matter.





Joseph, Carla. *Humming Bear*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x 45".

Humming Bear
Carla Joseph

"I really don't have any connections to AIDS. I've never known anybody who has it but I know it doesn't just affect certain people it can find its way into many people's lives in many different ways."

Carla was born in Prince George BC with Cree roots in Green Lake Saskatchewan. Carla started drawing and painting consistently since 1994. Many of Carla's accomplishments are a result of designing logos for nonprofit organizations and causes throughout the central interior of BC. Carla's most recent endeavor is in raising funds for local Missionaries to serve a 5-6 year term in Kenya by allotting significant portions of profits gained through the sale of commissioned pieces.

Many of Carla's paintings are an amalgam of Coast Salish and contemporary wildlife, mostly acrylic or oil on canvas. Carla's love of the west coast style developed under the tutelage of her children and spouse's culture as well as her experience being born and raised in BC.

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Donahue, Chad. *One Mistake*. 2012. Airbrush paint on panel board, 46" x 46".

One Mistake

Chad Donahue

A wildfire, like this disease can be started with just one simple mistake, a cigarette butt is thrown out a car window; just one spark can ignite whole forests. As human beings we are not perfect, we all do things we regret, we all make mistakes. So in part, this painting represents one innocent error and what can result.

A wildfire can also bring new life. Lodge pole pines produce a pinecone that is only opened by extreme heat. These pinecones only spread seeds when a forest fire occurs. HIV, just like any disease can be an awakening, it can open your eyes to your lifestyle causing you to make a change for the better.

I know for some people the wildfire may be a bit of a stretch as a symbol representing HIV, but to me I really feel for the people that just made that one mistake, that one second of misjudgment which changed their life.





Gauthier, Clayton and Nicholson, Dalton. *Good Medicine... Stay Aware.* 2012.
Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Good Medicine... Stay Aware
Clayton Gauthier & Dalton Nicholson

This piece is true to my heart; my family has been affected by H.I.V. head on. H.I.V. does not only effect the person who contracted H.I.V. it effects everybody around them, friends and family. This is in honor of loved ones that have been affected by H.I.V. and A.I.D.S.

As a Cree and Carrier artist I have incorporated teachings from both Cultures to produce what you see today.

The Bear is the medicine keeper and constantly sends good medicine in your journey and the Bear is the keeper of the lands that we all walk every day.

Dalton has done an amazing job on the H.I.V. design with a little help from our neighbours on the coast; using the traditional shapes and making this piece one of a kind.

Within the H.I.V. we have incorporated the Eagle feather which represents the road of life, every feather is beautiful in their own way and every step we take brings all of us closer to our destiny... we all meet in the end.

The smudge is a cleansing of the spirit and helps guide us to walk in balance, we have to choose the right medicine to help us on this journey of life here on Mother Earth.

The color yellow sits in the east of the medicine wheel and represents new beginnings. In the east that is where Grandfather Sun sits... Every day is a new day for all of us.

We must walk this road and keep the good medicine with us in our journey. We need to be aware of our surroundings and what the future holds.



Baird, Ian. *Passion and Purpose*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 48" x48".

Passion and Purpose

Ian Baird

As we step upon the moment the world spins a purpose into each of us so we may experience the passion of creation. The moment that lasts forever, has no place in time, a quiet place to build strength to conquer all obstacles.

Imagination guides our creation leading us through the parables of life, Passion and purpose will heal and set you free to the everlasting moment of the now.



www.ianbairdphotography.com



Pighin, Jennifer Annais. *Blanket of Understanding*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Blanket of Understanding

Jennifer Annaïs Pighin

The “Blanket of Understanding” dynamically interprets life cycles and promotes awareness encouraging greater understandings about HIV.

The cellular life cycle of HIV being absorbed and reproduced is portrayed within a format reflecting some elements of a traditional ceremonial robe used by many Northwest Coast First Nations, often called a ‘Button Blanket’. The black background of the blanket conveys the image upon the universe bringing with it a universal perspective. Inside the cell structure are symbols promoting greater understanding across a wide variety of cultures alluding to the fact that HIV does not discriminate upon race, age, gender, sexual orientation or belief systems.



Jennifer is an artist and educator located in Prince George, British Columbia. Her ancestry includes Wet’suwet’un (a Dakelh/Carrier First Nation), French Canadian, and Italian. Jennifer is a proud member of the Lheidli T’enneh Band, “the people from the confluence of the two rivers.” She grew up on the banks of the North Nechako River developing a fond understanding of, and strong enduring bond with, the natural environment.



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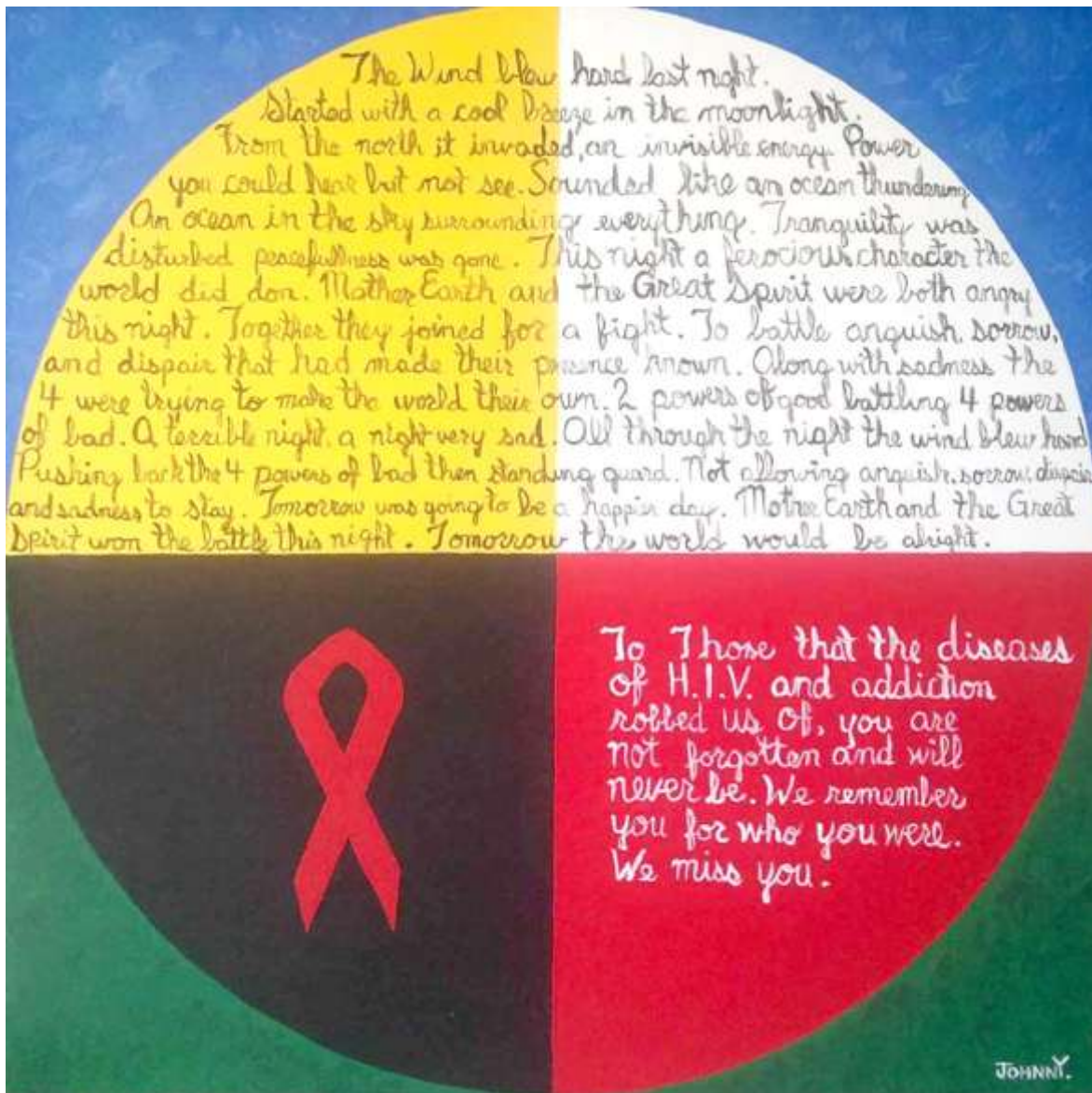


Bozoki, John. *Highway of Tears*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Highway of Tears
John Bozoki

*Hold your candles high
For all the lost girls we salute the sky
Heaven is now home for the girls who took a ride
For the girls that the highway of tears took, those who have died
The light from the candles flames are to let all these lost girls know we care
To acknowledge the souls they did bare
We here still love you, to all of you we will always care
The tears we shed show this when at heaven we stare
The world is not always a kind place for an innocent soul
Robs innocence, steals lives, both an unfair toll
So to all the girls that the evil highway took, we salute you by saluting the sky
When we hold candles high*

~ Johnny Bozoki



Bozoki, Johnny. *The Wind Blew*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

The Wind Blew
Johnny Bozoki

*The Wind blew hard last night
Started with a cool breeze in the moonlight
From the North it invaded an invisible energy
Power you could hear but not see
Sounded like an ocean thundering
Our ocean in the sky, surrounding everything
Tranquility was disturbed, peacefulness was gone
This night, a ferocious character the world did do.
Mother Earth and the Great Spirit were both angry this night
Together they joined for a fight
To battle anguish, sorrow and despair that had made their presence known
Along with sadness the four were trying to make the world their own
Two powers of good battling four powers of bad
A terrible night, a night very sad
All through the night the wind blew hard
Pushing back the four powers of bad then standing guard
Not allowing anguish, sorrow, despair and sadness to stay
Tomorrow was going to be a happier day
Mother Earth and the Great Spirit won the battle this night
Tomorrow the world would be alright*

~ Johnny Bozoki

*To those that the diseases of HIV and addiction robbed us of,
you are not forgotten and will never be.
We remember you for who you were.
We miss you.*



Bozoki, Johnny. *Giving Back*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

John Bozoki
Giving Back

Giving Back is created in honor of the Fire-Pit for always being there.

“Positive Living North has developed an innovative program called the Fire Pit in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic Northern BC communities are experiencing.

The prevention program’s unique design targets the root causes of the epidemic: colonization, racism, poverty, homelessness, lack of education and the displacement many Aboriginal people experience.

The Fire Pit’s philosophy directly reflects how creating a safe space, where trust is established, leads to healing from the root causes of this epidemic. In the street-level setting of the Fire Pit, we engage in activities which encourage people to feel safe and to value themselves. This process allows people to take part in cultural activities that lead to healing and reduce risky behaviors.

The Fire Pit is a place where people can gather to relax with friends, learn, share and understand culture, health and community. It is a place where you can do crafts, artwork, have a bite to eat, join a talking circle, talk to supportive staff and get more information about health, HIV/AIDS and HCV.

The healing journey experienced at the Fire Pit is aimed at moving a person along a path from being at-risk toward a place of less risk. Reducing at-risk behavior through engaging in healthier sexual practices and other harm-reduction strategies becomes more relevant to people when they have had an opportunity to heal and learn about themselves. This journey takes both time and a supportive environment.

The Fire Pit is built on healthy relationships, and it is through these relationships that we feel connected, find acceptance and understanding of our experiences and develop a kind of self-awareness that allows us to value ourselves and to make changes in our lives.”

From: http://www.positivelivingnorth.ca/s_35.asp



Chandler, Laura. *Blue Angel*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Laura Chandler
Blue Angel

People who have been diagnosed with HIV have a pretty rough time coping. Faith, Hope and Charity are needed to overcome the diverse effects of the disease and survive. Faith is symbolized by the Blue Angel who takes all negative emotions away. Hope /rebirth are symbolized by the butterfly: a beautiful and fragile creature. We provide the charity and love by showing understanding and support. The red heart shape symbolizes this. The two haunting human figures could be anyone. Anyone can come into contact with the virus. We are all vulnerable. The figures are carrying flowers representing the talents and gifts each of us have to offer. We are all worthy of support and love. Most of all we need a cure. Progress is being made. Have faith.

Laura (Laurie) Chandler has been a resident of Prince George for over 20 years, working as an artist and art educator. She has been exhibiting her work since 2001 in juried shows at Two Rivers Gallery and in the Central Interior's annual Art Festival. Her first solo show In the Wake of a Legend was shown at Two Rivers Gallery in 2007.

Being involved in local community endeavours such as the B.C. Lions Society's Spirit Bear project and the City's Banner program are important to her as well. Recently she was chosen to be the artist for the 2012 Highway Banners for the City of Prince George. She has also participated in the Two Rivers Gallery art auctions and has recently been involved in the Creative Fusion project and other murals with Studio 2880.

At her home studio, she works on a variety of topics: landscapes, portraits, still life and other themes. She prefers to work mainly in acrylics, watercolours, pastels, pencil and ink. Her work has found homes across Canada as well as many other countries.

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Fox, Nigel. *Frogs*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Frogs
Nigel Fox

It is about respect and collaboration.



Nigel Fox is an artist specializing in painting and drawing. Nigel recently graduated from the First Nations Fine Art program at Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art in Terrace in order to explore the characteristics of native art and culture within Canada. Nigel is descended from the Ojibwa nation.

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Ryan, Robert with Jennifer Pighin & Callista Vagt. *A Matter of Perception*. 2012.
 Acrylic on panel board, 42" x80".

A Matter of Perception

Robert Ryan

Everyone views their surroundings differently, this is the same in life, the glass is half empty or half full, it's a matter of perception.

I am the product of two proud nations, Tsimshian and Gitksan. I was born in Prince Rupert and lived the first fourteen years of my life in Cassiar Cannery on the Skeena River. I've spent a few years travelling across Canada and into the states, all the while learning about people and other cultures. I believe we all serve a purpose regardless of where we are in life, no one is better than the other; we all contribute in one form or another.



Ryan, Robert. *We Walk for Those Who Cannot*. 2012. Acrylic on panel board, 46" x46".

Signed by participants of the 2012 Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life at Masich Place Stadium, September 22, 2012, Prince George, BC.

And last but not least **thank you!**

- ♥ Wendy Young for making this possible by getting the ball rolling
- ♥ Northern Health, Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society, Province of BC, and the Community Arts Council of Prince George & District for supporting this project
- ♥ The Fire Pit Staff for the venue, support, and physical & spiritual nourishment
- ♥ Dean Marsters for your infinite support with this project and many others
- ♥ Callista Vagt for your help through the many stages, from beginning to end
- ♥ The Participating Artists whose talents, time and thoughtfulness have made this such an absolutely amazing journey
- ♥ The Workshop Participants, who attended, shared, hoped, dreamed, visualized, learned, taught and helped us reach this level of understanding - although your work is not directly visible it is intrinsic to the process and *is indeed* seen here through your part in bringing inspiration and guidance to the hands of our artists
- ♥ Angela Fuentes for everything you bring, share and inspired in this project - you are a strong woman and key player in our team having taken the ball and tossed it right at us in effect challenging us with motivation
- ♥ The Installation Crew: Wendy, Dean, John Smith, Lynn Thibault (help & photos of installation), Ivan Paquette, Angela Fuentes and Keith Carlson – what a great crew



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Project Facilitator and Publications by Jennifer Pighin September 2012