

# Roots of Reconciliation

## AT LAKES DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL



### PART THREE – THE EAGLE

Occasionally in life we are given an opportunity to meet tragedy and pain with courage and conviction. This year has been all of that and more for LDSS students, staff and administrators as we reflected on the horrors of

Red Seal Welder, Jordan Gooding, joined the process as the welding continued and the feathers were tacked into place. Countless hours were spent shaping the eagle and ensuring that every message had a spot. The hopes and dreams of all of us were embodied in that beautiful bird and the vision that it carried had to feel just right.

We chose the eagle as a fitting symbol for rising above the destructive and stormy impact of our collective experience with residential schools. From high above, he can see what we cannot. The eagle represents strength, new beginnings and resilience. The eagle is the resolution. From the towering

residential schools and colonization. Amidst the river of tears we collectively cried there emerged a sense of unity, determination and profound transformation. Rather than allowing ourselves to drown in sadness, we rose to the surface and started paddling forward together.

Our collaborative art installation was started in February 2016. Everyone who set foot in our school, from students and staff to trustees and community members were invited to spend time in the metal shop cutting, filing and shaping out a feather to place on the eagle that would sit atop our majestic tree. On each feather there is engraved a message chosen by the individual to represent what they have learned. These are messages of hope and love and new understandings which will be held in trust by the eagle in our midst.

The spirit of joy and healing wafted through the school as each class joined Jeremy Gooding in the shop to craft their own unique feather. You could sense a resolve in the students as they hammered away. Mr. Gooding's Choices class and Mrs. Giesbrecht's Endeavors class were instrumental in this process. They were the first groups to learn how to use the various instruments to shape the metal feathers and they designed and built the prototypes. These students became the experts as they helped their peers through the process. The First Nations studies class also held leadership roles as we led each class through the creative process.

The whole school watched in amazement as Steve Wilejto and Jeremy Gooding built the internal structure of the eagle. It had to be both sturdy and beautiful to satisfy and of course it was both.



a pedestal. It was handpicked from the shores of Ootsa Lake and contains six roots symbolizing the six traditional groups in the Lakes district area.



peaks of Tweedsmuir Park to the vast shores of Babine Lake, the Eagle is a symbol for us all and the beautiful place we call home.

Shortly after Spring Break the Eagle took a journey of its own to be coated in a copper solution in Kelowna. Copper was used in our region by many First Peoples and we believed it would be both appropriate and stunning! As we await the Eagle's return we are placing our focus on the tree which will be used as



June 3rd will be a day of celebrating with guest speakers, musicians, gift giving and food for all! We look forward to seeing members of the community come out and join us as we unveil our beautiful Eagle. If you would like to lay a small stone at the foot of the tree you would be welcome to do so on this special day. In the weeks ahead we will be certain to give more details as to times and the run of events. It will be our pleasure to share this day with you all!