



## YOUNG ARTISTS THANK THE FRONT LINE

October 5, 2021

Kelowna, BC – Visual Arts students at Mount Boucherie Secondary created a meaningful art project to thank the West Kelowna Fire Fighters who protected Westside homes during the Mount Law wildfire and the Kelowna General Hospital staff who faced demoralizing protests at the start of the school year.

"I have always found our teenagers to be well-versed in gratitude," said Visual Arts Teacher James Elwood. "Creating art is a very personal expression for young people and we felt that individual pieces of art as an expression of gratitude would be both profound and enduring."

Students started their school year by diving into the project on the first day of visual art classes. Over 250 students, guided by three Art Specialty teachers, chose a medium, style, and subject in which they were confident. They were instructed to create a piece that was a strong personal expression, but also something that someone else would want to have.

"Thank you to the students of MBSS who took the time and put in the effort to express their gratitude and thanks to the West Kelowna Fire Department members for their efforts during the 2021 wildfire season and specifically the Mount Law Fire in Glenrosa," said Chad Gartrell, Assistant Fire Chief for West Kelowna Fire Rescue. "These incredible works of art and kind words are a great reminder when the fires are out, and the smoke has cleared from the valley, that their efforts were appreciated."

On the back of each piece, students wrote personal gratitude notes, imagining they were standing with the person who will receive the artwork and telling them about the artwork itself. Some students went beyond a thank-you note to write how they were afraid to return to their Glenrosa neighbourhood, fearing their house would be gone; others wrote heartfelt stories of health care workers who cared for family members.

A custom-made box holding the artworks was delivered to West Kelowna Fire Rescue and another box went to Kelowna General Hospital. Any person working at each facility is welcome to browse through the artwork and choose a piece to keep.

-30-

---

For comments, please contact:

Jim Elwood, [james.elwood@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:james.elwood@sd23.bc.ca)