

Delburne School student's artwork chosen for official 2017 Orange Shirt Day design

For Immediate Release, September 7, 2017: Amy Peters' design was selected from over 380 submissions to be the logo for this year's provincial Orange Shirt Campaign.

Amy, who is in Grade 11 at Delburne Centralized School, was keen to participate in the design competition because of her great respect and interest in Indigenous culture. The competition was organized through The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities, which is instrumental in the annual Orange Shirt event that honours residential school survivors and promotes ongoing reconciliation.

"The spirit within the youth that put on paper what their hearts and minds were feeling to help all children to feel safe, is amazing! Thank you for all your gifts," said Elder Wilson Bearhead, one of the design judges.

The Orange Shirt Day campaign has been growing quickly, since it was launched in 2013. It grew from 'Phyllis' Story' of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day at residential school when she was a very young girl. The end of September date was chosen because it's the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools. It's an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year.

"We learned all about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Social class, and I just felt compelled to show my deep respect," said Amy, who has attended Delburne Centralized School since Grade 1. "The work underway to rebuild First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities is so important, and if my art can provide any kind of support to those efforts I'm thrilled. The symbolism in Indigenous artwork is so meaningful, and the colours and symbols and placement of every item is so intricate, that being able to learn more about it has added so much depth to my art. I'm just very grateful to be part of this event and very proud that my design was chosen from among so many others."

Art isn't Amy's only passion. Along with being an engaged high school student, she is an avid competitive archer who is trying to qualify for the Canada Winter Games when they come to Red Deer in 2019. She's not far from her goal, having won the Silver Medal at the 2014 Alberta Winter Games in Banff and Bronze at Medicine Hat in 2016.

"There is no reason a small-town student can't reach their goals, with some hard work and perseverance," said Amy. "My school is so good to us. They support us in many different things, some which are completely outside of school. They really want us to pursue our interests and reach our goals – it's meant a lot to me."

Delburne Centralized School, along with many other schools and departments in Chinook's Edge, will be ablaze in orange later this month, all showcasing Amy's design. "Amy's story is a testament to the power of schools to educate, inspire and cultivate change," said Principal Ted Hutchings. "Amy is a remarkably talented young lady who makes our school and community a better place."

Orange Shirt Day is being commemorated this year on Friday, September 29.