



Youth Inspire Inclusivity and Cross-Cultural Understanding through Song
Lake Trail Middle School students contribute to reconciliation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 8, 2018

Comox, BC: Grade 8 students at Lake Trail Middle School have created inspirational songs focused on bringing inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding into the spotlight. This week, the students participated in a transformative project, learning about Canada’s colonial history from a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous performing artists and arts educators, then writing and recording songs in response. Their songs will be showcased in a community presentation on May 14th.

Students took part in *The Four Directions Project*, led by Canadian not-for-profit, Darkspark, an arts organization that uses song-writing and recording of pop songs to engage youth and promote cross-cultural understanding. The Four Directions Project was originally conceptualized in collaboration with a Grade 8 class from the Quinte Mohawk School in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Ontario.

In direct alignment with one of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Four Directions Project endeavours to harness education creatively. Participating youth discover how colonial prejudices and stereotypes were created, are maintained – and may be broken. The experience builds empathy, intercultural understanding, and mutual respect. The lessons encourage youth to believe their voices can create change in their communities and the world.

Supporting youth to find their voices, engage with history in a novel way, and contribute to change is exactly what Darkspark is about. According to D’Ari Lisle, Darkspark’s co-founder and producer, “Darkspark teaches students about how popular music has and can have social impact and generate social change. The student’s heartfelt songs dig into the dark, yet let the light shine through. The students’ work will have a lasting impact in making a difference in the community and in their own lives – and this is a truly beautiful thing.”

The project at Lake Trail Middle School was made possible with support from Government of Canada and the Comox Valley School District.

The students of Lake Trail Middle School will present their songs created through the Four Directions Project at G.P. Vanier High School in the multipurpose room (access past the gymnasium) on Monday, May 14th, at 7:00pm, with doors opening at 6:30pm.

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For more information:

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