



what we look at

Colleen Gray, contemporary Metis Artist, teaches this program using her unique artwork to call attention to the state of our planet and highlight the importance of the Indigenous peoples' connection to both land and language. Her program highlights some of the challenges of living in a remote Indigenous community while seeking to bring recognition to a problem that needs multiple solutions. Using a PowerPoint presentation, drumming, and an open dialogue presentation, Colleen invites the students to bring their observations and critical thinking to the subjects discussed. We lightly explore the spirit of her paintings, a few ancient beliefs and some interesting stories.

open discussions

The information is delivered through carefully selected artworks. Students are invited to create a dialogue around the art, and ask questions about anything they've heard or wonder about regarding Indigenous culture. These discussions seek to invite the innovative and creative critical thinking that is prevalent in young minds today. They have opinions and solutions that we should be listening to.

challenging questions

We have seen challenging questions come from the minds and hearts of children who hear information from many sources about the rise of Indigenous knowledge and strength in Canada. This experience will offer a platform for open and deep discussions about things the art makes them feel. We invite questions about their views on Indigenous life in general in order to inform and combat stereotypes. The visually motivated conversation between the artist and the audience can be deep, revealing, inspiring, and powerful.

recognizing issues

We touch on topics such as the needs of youth in these small communities. We look positively at the beauty of the land they live in, the wilderness of their world, and the great beauty they're surrounded by. But we also speak on the struggles faced by isolation and poverty.

the map to my school

We use remarkable cartography to help the children understand what the unusual names of communities mean. This alone is a powerful and fun experience that allows anyone to enjoy the diversity of Canada's First languages. The Indigenous Place Names Map is a tool that offers deeper learning about Indigenous language and why it's so important to the foundation of the culture.



We invite your school to reach out. Through the boxes of art supplies that we collect and send, we will invite your students to write positive notes on our "BearHeart" cards. These 5x7" cards are a postcard opportunity for your students to share their art, encouragement, good news, and stories with remote youth. The two may never meet but there will exist, a positive connection between the writer and the recipient, even if only through words and pictures on the paper.



The program can be modified and we encourage Educators to meet and define their student groups according to their likely interest in exploring this program, and avoid dividing the students by classroom or grade. In this way, presentation time frames can be set up to accommodate students who might appreciate more time for in-depth discussion during the presentation.

This is a program geared to invite critical thinking through art. We hope to engage meaningful discussions with students about the world through "paint brush teachings".

For more information about the program please email Colleen Gray by email at artforaid2013@gmail.com.