



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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Tweetable Sidewalk Poetry Gets Stamped into Selkirk Ave Concrete Sidewalk

Maple Ridge, BC: As part of Maple Ridge's 140th Anniversary celebration sidewalk poetry initiative, the City through the Public Art Steering Committee will be completing the final phase of this project by having the poems stamped into Selkirk Ave between 225 and 226 Streets. The City held a contest to select ten poems written by local citizens which were temporarily displayed as vinyl over laminate decals on sidewalks around the Town Centre from May through September 2015. Two poems that had the most votes from online voting by citizens were written by Leanne Koehn (adult category) and Emily Tsui (youth/kids category). The poems by Koehn and Tsui will be stamped permanently on Selkirk Avenue by the end of November. Maple Ridge will be the first Canadian City to stamp poems in its sidewalks following the successful examples in St. Paul and Cambridge, USA. At the recent Creative Cities Conference that was held in Kelowna, it was selected as one of the projects for "Public Art in Canada: A Year in Review."

"Sidewalk Poetry is not only a way to preserve a legacy from the 140th Anniversary but also a way to make public spaces more interesting and celebrate the literary arts. There is a poet in every one of us. It was gratifying to see so many submissions from people of all ages last year. We look forward to the next call for submissions in the spring," comments Susan Hayes, Chair of the Public Art Steering Committee. The Steering Committee intends to continue working with Holy Wow Poets, Golden Ears Writers, the Municipal Accessibility Committee and City Engineering and Operations Departments over the next five years to add to Maple Ridge's sidewalk poetry tweets. This project would not be possible without the cooperation and efforts of some key partners - special thanks to Cambridge Arts Council in Massachusetts for sharing some key technical information around the stamps which enabled us to find a local production company and to the skills of staff at the Operations Centre. Mayor Nicole Read adds that "the stamped poems will enhance the pedestrian walking experience and over time the collection of poems can be read like a book on the sidewalks throughout the City." Over the next decade many sidewalks will be repaired or added to make Maple

Ridge a more walkable and safe city as part of enhancements to the transportation network, for pedestrians, vehicular traffic and bicyclists.

For questions, please contact Yvonne Chui, Arts & Community Connections Manager at 604-467-7415 or [ychui@mapleridge.ca](mailto:yhui@mapleridge.ca).