

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a registered non-profit association and we are proud to help facilitate creative thinking, self-expression, and art from down the road and around the world in a spectacular setting in rural Nova Scotia. Giving voice through the arts, the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a unique institution in Canada, bringing together the best in arts education for all ages with community and professional artist programs. The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a research and development centre in and for the arts of all disciplines and cultures, and is proud to help facilitate the development of new art from around the world in wonderful facilities on a spectacular farm in rural Nova Scotia.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project will connect people living on the North Mountain and the Annapolis Valley, with a challenge of 100 words for stories, and pencil or ink drawings, with 50 pages for each the North Mountain and the Annapolis Valley.

One or two graduate students in NSCAD, Art Education with an interest in community arts practice will work with communities throughout the valley and along the mountain, to lead (COVID-safe) workshops in 5 different mountain and valley communities in summer, 2021. These workshops will be free for participants, and engage them in writing and/or drawing about their community. Beginning in September, we would review the submissions and the work produced through the workshops and choose the ones that most allow diverse voices and perspectives, bringing together children, adults, seniors, outsiders to art and writing as well as accomplished professionals for the chapbook.

The goal of each workshop is to encourage stories and visual art from the participants and to help refine them so they learn new skills and techniques for expressing themselves in a simple, effective, artistic way that is non-threatening and brings them together with the other people in the Workshop.

The chapbooks will be printed by Gaspereau Press in August, and prepare an exhibit for opening on Labour Day, along with the launch of the books, welcoming all participants to the gallery exhibit opening, and working to include as many of the participants and submitters as possible. We will also create a web-friendly version of the project – creating an online portal that enhances the book's information and allows us to ensure inclusion of the whole submission group.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

The Mountain and the Valley is a project that will connect writing and visual arts and allows the project team to work with a wide community to showcase the diversity of our region, guiding people in creative expression which may be new to them and gathering their stories and experiences of living here, whether as new settlers or as people whose ancestors are from this land. It is vital to forefront community voices which have often been overlooked here, including Indigenous, historically African NS, and immigrant voices which are integral parts of our community. This project is designed to celebrate and nurture that diversity of voices and to give new ways for residents to explore where they have come from, and what it is for them to be in this place now.

We have links to many different communities throughout the valley, but we have not been able to do this kind of direct outreach before, capturing the stories of the land in which we work, which only 80 years ago had ways of living and working that are now long gone. We want to engage more people in

the work of Ross Creek. We want to provide our wider community with an outlet that gives them new skills to develop their voices, and to then give their work pride of place by honoring their stories with a publication and gallery exhibit. Our goal is to empower our community through the arts very directly and by working with Dr. April Mandrona at NSCAD, we hope to encourage more community-based arts engagement for local people, and more community-based arts practice for arts students. We are hoping that this project will lead to exciting new partnerships on all levels, and capture stories of our community before they are lost.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2021.