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For Immediate Release

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HOPE “ROCKS” IN ANY LANGUAGE

The Immigrant Welcome Centre and Campbell River Art Gallery celebrate linguistic diversity through community painting project

CAMPBELL RIVER - The Immigrant Welcome Centre's Welcoming Communities Coalition (WCC) and the Campbell River Art Gallery are celebrating diversity and bringing visibility to the variety of linguistic communities that live in Campbell River through a simple yet visually impactful project titled Hope Rocks (#HopeRocksCR).

Starting June 12, people of all ages are encouraged to take part in a movement to inspire hope for all, no matter how it is said. Participants are asked to paint the word “hope” on a rock in any language they choose and bring their decorated rocks to the Campbell River Art Gallery (1235 Shoppers Row). Participants can pick up a rock painting kit at the art gallery or at the Immigrant Welcome Centre's Campbell River location (200-1170 Shoppers Row) during open hours between June 12 and July 17.

The collection of completed rocks will be on display at the Campbell River Art Gallery and then later moved to another community location.

Mike Davies, outreach and education programs coordinator with the Campbell River Art Gallery, says the project not only recognizes, but celebrates, the diversity of our community.

“I think the strength of our community, in many ways, comes from the huge variety of lived experience that we have here,” Davies says. “By showcasing that diversity, we hope people will reflect on the fact that we are far more alike, as people, than we are different.”

There's also never been a better time to explore this idea.

“If there's any one thing our society needs right now, it's hope,” Davies says, “and part of what this project aims to do is have people reflect on what they are hopeful for and how they can take the initiative to make those hopes into reality.”



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While picking up a painting kit or dropping off a completed rock, participants are also encouraged to view the gallery's *Autumn Tigers* exhibit which explores the history of Chinese immigration and culture on Vancouver Island. There is also a painting station and a collection of rocks at the gallery itself to choose from, and it's encouraged that people share a photo of their rock with the hashtag #hoperocksCR on Facebook and Instagram, to help spread the word – and the idea – far and wide that it's our differences that make us stronger.

Hope Rocks (#HopeRocksCR) is an initiative of the Welcoming Communities Coalition and Campbell River Art Gallery with funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

About the Immigrant Welcome Centre & Welcoming Communities Coalition

The Welcoming Communities Coalition is an initiative supporting service coordination, local partnerships, and community-based planning around the needs of newcomers in the North Island. Through community-level research and strategic planning, the WCC identifies barriers facing newcomers, raises awareness around newcomers' needs, and collaborates with local stakeholders to reduce them.

The Immigrant Welcome Centre provides settlement and support services to newcomers to Canada settling in Campbell River, Comox Valley, and the North Island. As an award-winning organization, the Immigrant Welcome Centre is a respected leader in immigrant services and an active proponent for the sector. By fostering strategic partnerships and working to create welcoming, inclusive communities that attract and retain newcomers, we are an effective business partner in the communities we serve. For more information or to book an appointment, contact us at 250-830-0171 or visit ImmigrantWelcome.ca.

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Media Contact:

To arrange an interview with a spokesperson contact:

Ann McLeod

250-830-0171

Ann.McLeod@ImmigrantWelcome.ca

Public Contact:

Campbell River 250-830-0171

Comox Valley 250-338-6359

North Island 855-805-0171

Campbell River

200-1170 Shoppers Road

Campbell River, B.C. V9W 2C8

T: 250-830-0171 | F: 250-830-1010

The Comox Valley

407A 5th Street

Courtenay, B.C. V9N 1J7

T: 250-338-6359 | F: 250-338-6359

www.ImmigrantWelcome.ca

info@ImmigrantWelcome.ca