



## **Four ‘Gimaa’s Allyship Poetry Contest’ submissions recognized for artistic achievement**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Oakville, Ont., June 7, 2022** - Four students who submitted poetry as part of Gimaa’s Allyship Poetry Contest have been recognized and acknowledged for their artistic achievements.

In March, Gimaa (Chief) R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) partnered with the Oakville Community Foundation’s Community Classroom program to launch Gimaa’s Allyship Poetry Contest. Gimaa Laforme shared his own poem titled “*Nii jii*” which means “friend” in Anishinaabemowin. The poem can be [viewed and read online](#).

He then invited students in all Halton publicly-funded schools and MCFN students from kindergarten through Grade 12 to share their own poetry on what friendship or allyship looks like or means to them.

Jasmine, Nimkii, Mabel and Nat were recognized on stage at the Debwewin: Truth of the Land performance on May 24, as they read and presented their poetry live and on screen to the in-person and livestream crowd. They have also been recognized on the Debwewin: The Oakville Truth project website, the Community Classroom website and in the Debwewin: Truth of the Land printed program.

“I want to sincerely thank all of the youth who participated, and bravely shared their talents with us through their art pieces,” said Gimaa Laforme. “I encourage each of them to continue to use their voice, art can and should change the world! I look forward to hopefully many more of these contests.”

Students could present their poem in the way they were most comfortable, including through both oral and written expression, in the form of a poem, rap, spoken word and other creative ways. There were nearly two dozen entries and the four students were chosen by a panel of adjudicators for their work.

Gimaa Laforme is the elected chief of MCFN, where he was born and raised, and has served his community for over 20 years, being first elected to council in 1999. He is very active throughout MCFN’s treaty lands, which encompasses 3.9 million acres of land across southern Ontario, including Oakville which lies on Treaties 14 and 22.

Community Classroom is a free, currently online program that offers all publicly funded Oakville schools and MCFN students the opportunity to participate in an arts, culture, heritage or environmental experience. Currently, these experiences include interactive videos and special live-streamed events.

“We were so impressed by the creativity shown by all the youth in our community who entered the contest,” said Frances Pace, Director of Fundholder and Community Engagement at the Oakville Community Foundation. “Congratulations to our four students who have been recognized for their artistic achievement and thank you to all the students who shared their artistry.”

All of the students’ creative pieces are available for viewing on the [Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project website](#).

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### [Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation](#)

Mississaugas of the Credit are an Ojibwe (Anishinaabek) First Nation with 2,600 Members, 850 of whom approximately live on the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Reserve near Hagersville, Ontario.



### [Oakville Community Foundation](#)

The Oakville Community Foundation is a local charitable solutions provider, delivering the tools to realize your charitable passions. The Foundation acts as a philanthropic medium, investing donations to generate new money for our community. We conduct local research to provide our diverse donors with knowledge and solutions to make an impact in the local community, both today and in the future. Thanks to the visionaries in our community who started The Foundation more than 25 years ago, The Foundation has granted more than 54 million to support charities locally and beyond.

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