

Impact Statement

Gabriel Donaldson, Grade 8.

Five Nations United, 2017.

Oil pastel on paper, 10 x 18 Inches.

Washburn Rural Middle School, Topeka, KS

Unsung Hero: Hiawatha

It was extremely difficult for me to choose my topic, but in the end I chose Hiawatha- an unsung hero indefinitely. I saw that this awe-inspiring chief marched through the lands spreading his hopeful message of peace and love- which in the end broke straight through to my heart. I saw that he had so much love in his heart to give and the power to unite the five great Indian tribes. Let me begin by giving you a small summary of what Hiawatha did. Hiawatha was a Mohawk and Onondaga Indian who was born sometime in 1525. Some sources say that he was the leader of the Onondaga tribe. He joined together the five Indian tribes to make the Iroquois Confederacy. During this time he had the help of a prophet known by the Indians as 'The Great Peacemaker.' The prophet had a speech impediment and could not speak well. Since Hiawatha was a great speaker, he was able to unite the tribes to make peace for them all. The Iroquois Confederacy still exists today because of Hiawatha's amazing speaking abilities and the prophet's wisdom.

When I was making this piece I found I wanted to honor Hiawatha through my work and to have it demonstrate his love for the Earth. I feel that my work expresses what Hiawatha did by showing the comparison between the war and hatred on the bottom half to the love and warmth on the top half. With the difference between the warmer, darker browns and reds at the bottom, compared to the light, cool-colored, and cheery warm scenes at the top, I feel that my color choice helps contrast between the war and the love. I also feel that I was able to express a creative and unique view point through my work by making the scenes flow into each other on the bottom portion and centering Hiawatha in the middle. I know that this piece will express the love that Hiawatha had for his nation and the peace that he made in it to anyone that sees it.

Creating this work was not an easy task for me. I found myself constantly getting angry over the smallest details, only to later realize that it was not worth getting angry over. I was constantly asked myself "Is this honoring Hiawatha the way he deserves to be honored?," and most of the time I felt I could do more. I found myself trying to perfect every little nook and cranny. Trying to honor and respect Hiawatha in my work was no easy task, but in the end, I am proud to say that I have honored Hiawatha the way only I knew I could.

This overall was a very long process that required much of my time and energy. It has helped me realize not to overthink things and that it is not always wise to demonstrate power. I feel that making this work of art has helped me try new things and expand my comfort zone. This was a project that I feel I was able to connect with in my heart, mind, and soul. I feel in some way, Hiawatha himself has helped me make this masterpiece and is assisting me to learn to overcome the small things.