



Impact Statement

Dilynn Scott, Grade 12

Commitment to Stay, 2026

Acrylic, pastel on ceiling tile, 24 x 48 inches

Kelowna Secondary School, Kelowna, Canada

Unsung Hero: Romeo Dallaire

Romeo Dallaire is credited with many notable acts, from his early military career to becoming a writer and speaker for human rights and veterans' mental health. However, Dallaire is most notably recognised for his humanitarian peacekeeping efforts during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. Before the genocide began in April 1994, he recognised the looming fate of the Tutsi, reporting his knowledge to the United Nations (U.N.) and received a lackluster response in return. Ignored, the U.N. eventually ordered Dallaire to leave Rwanda, but he refused. He requested 5000 peacekeepers and was granted only 2600; this number soon reduced to 500. Regardless, Dallaire and the few peers who remained managed to save 32,000 people from the genocide. Such an act of defiance demonstrated his morality and hero-like status, refusing to be a bystander. His unwillingness to submit to the status quo is something I admire and seek to emulate in my own life. He returned to Canada with severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and risking his life to protect others led him to attempt to take his own life. He survived, and his silent battles drive him to remain outspoken even when those in power choose to remain silent. This was the beginning of his fight for peacekeepers' right to use force to prevent "crimes against humanity." Foremost, he created the Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire Foundation to provide camps for Rwandan kids and Canadian children impacted by poverty and the impacts of war. Dallaire's humanity and drive to support his fellow human beings while risking his life in Rwanda in the face of resistance undeniably define Romeo Dallaire as a hero.

Romeo Dallaire's impact has not been single-dimensional; his work has crossed continents and subjects. He has continued to learn and address current world issues, transforming his firsthand experience into actionable change. He has positively impacted the lives of many of his fellow soldiers, promoting and funding Mental health organisations to help those impacted by war overcome the mental and physical side effects. Apart from veterans, he has formed global partnerships to end violence against children and, most importantly, give the Rwandan people the humanitarian rights they deserve. Primarily, he has achieved his goal in partnership with Dalhousie University to create The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace Security. Dallaire further uses his global connections to speak with both teachers and country leaders beyond Canada to develop achievable goals and action plans to end genocides. Altogether, Romeo Dallaire has made positive changes locally and globally, demonstrated through his humanitarian efforts, aiding those who have been affected, and uplifting other educators and leaders to do the same.

In depicting Dallaire's career, I sought a fluid story-like representation within the piece. To achieve this vision, (on the left) I displayed Dallaire in Rwanda with a child and a body in a bag bleeding out, who may be interpreted as either a parent or loved one who has been killed. This has left the child all alone, feeling hopeless and isolated. Despite the weight of the situation, Dallaire is offering support and ultimately survival. Continuing right, the central figure is Dallaire speaking at the Dallaire Initiative Workshop hosted by Vancouver Principles in 2019, as for the audience, I chose empty seats, for Dallaire has been fighting for human rights for over thirty years, but still, minimal international commitment has been offered to help him create change globally. At large, Dallaire has been overlooked frequently for his work and ignored or dismissed in attempts to improve the lives of others and global peace. Finally, (upper right corner) there is a flock of doves flying through, emitting light onto Dallaire's face; they represent his Children's Peace Initiative and larger goal of seeking humanitarian rights to achieve a future of peace in the world. In terms of material, my base is a ceiling tile and then acrylic paint as my medium to bring my vision to life. In 2025, Graeme Stacey was accepted as a fellow to the LMC in Kansas. Since then, the ARTEFFECT has been presented as an optional project for Genocide Studies 12, Holocaust Studies, and Social Studies 10, in hopes of fully covering the ceiling, alongside celebrating those who have fought for the betterment of humanity and the world.

While imploring the impacts of Romeo Dallaire towards global peace, I was incredibly inspired by his humanity and empathy demonstrated through his leadership. At many points, he could have decided to acquiesce to the U.N.'s devoid peacekeeping mandate. Instead, Dallaire has confronted these ideologies, stating in his book *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers*, "(w)here you are born should not dictate your potential as a human being." I have resonated deeply with this sentiment, particularly as an indigenous person, for one of our strong beliefs is that every living being is equal. Therefore, in relation to Dallaire's belief and even beyond, where you are born, no matter what race, sexuality, gender, age, etc, should not impact your future or the way the world values your life. Altogether, these are core beliefs of mine, and Dallaire's words and measurable actions have not only solidified my beliefs but continue to motivate me to be vocal and encourage others to regard them as equally valuable. I hope that by displaying my ceiling tile in the classroom, present and future generations of learners will take the initiative to learn as I did. Some may say that it is idealistic or romanticised, but no matter the classroom, continent, or colour of their skin, I dream that all students will be granted equitable opportunities to be whatever or whomever they want to be in rejection of their pre-determined futures.

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