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New monument to honour sexual assault survivors, missing and murdered Indigenous women

Replacement for Nogojiwanong sign in Millennium Park in Peterborough



There are plans to build a new monument in Millennium Park in March to honour survivors of sexual violence as well as the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people of Peterborough.

The monument will be a large round mosaic — likely two metres in diameter — made up of thousands of smooth river pebbles and rocks set into concrete. It lies flat on the earth.

Lisa Clarke, the interim executive director of the Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre, described it this way at a presentation on Thursday evening at a meeting of the city's arts, culture and heritage committee.

She said the idea is to build the monument so it integrates with the medicine wheel garden that's already there, right next to the wolf mother-and-cub sculpture (which is called Esker).

Clarke said the mosaic will be created by many survivors and their allies. The finished monument will constitute a gathering-place for the community, she said.

A gathering-place in a natural setting — particularly by the river — is sorely needed, she said: "We actually have a high rate of murdered and missing (in Peterborough) — and we're not talking about it."

Clarke said she was speaking on Thursday evening on behalf of all the project collaborators and supporters, including KSAC, Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, First Peoples House of Learning and Nijkiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Service Circle.

The mosaic will be one of eight similar monuments across Ontario that will be created with help from Red Dress Productions, an arts organization in Toronto, she said.

The funding is coming from the Ontario Arts Council, she said.

The mosaics are part of a project called the Countdown Public Art Legacy Project. Four other mosaics have already been created with help from Red Dress, and are located in Eganville, Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, Pembroke and Killaloe.

Four more are planned for other locations in Ontario — Peterborough is one of the four.

The arts and culture committee received the presentation for information Thursday night. Clarke will present the concept to the parks and recreation committee next before making a presentation to City council (where council will be expected to consider approving the project).

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