

HOLIDAY ALLEY

Putting Art on Ice in Selkirk



Brenda Kardynal's ice-fishing shack in the beginning stage – ready for December's "Art on Ice", a feature event for Holiday Alley street festival.

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While most students are dreaming of summer holidays, a group of high school students in Selkirk are busy building unique ice-fishing shacks that will become public art – all for a good cause.

Thanks to students and local businesses, several Manitoba artists will get to use ice-fishing shacks as their canvases – creating **Art on Ice**. The embellished shacks will be put on public display in downtown Selkirk during the Holiday Alley winter street festival and then auctioned off.

When Lord Selkirk Education Centre Director Steven Grahame heard about **Art on Ice** he developed a unique shack model that can be easily built, stored and moved. His students then volunteered to build several shacks and deliver them to artists who will create masterpieces.

Brenda Kardynal, Holiday Alley volunteer, is the first artist to adorn a shack.

"Remember 'Bears on Broadway' in Winnipeg? Do you like the ice-skating 'Warming Huts' at the Forks? Well, **Art on Ice** is all that – and more," said Kardynal today as she painted a wide-open mouth of a giant catfish on the side of a shack in the backyard of her home on River Road.

"**Art on Ice** is a real community event. It's uplifting to see everyone involved, from the people who contribute the materials and the kids with their time and the men teaching the kids. It's just beautiful. This is the way it's supposed to be in a community," said Kardynal.

Every winter hundreds of anglers turn the frozen Red River into ice fishing villages. Ice fishing shacks dot the Red River North making January, February and March peak tourism season in St. Andrews, St. Clements and Selkirk.

"Holiday Alley and **Art on Ice** is another way to embrace winter in our community. We already love to ice fish, so we might as well do it in comfort and in style," Kardynal added.

One of the supporting local businesses is the Window Factory.

"We heard about the need so we decided to donate 10 windows to **Art on Ice**," said Patty Ashton of the Window Factory. "We live and work in the area and to support Selkirk is a good way for us to give back to the community."

Grahame says the project has been powerful for him and his students.

"In a small city, what goes around comes around, and it's really exemplified in Holiday Alley. We get to participate, we get to give and we're also getting a huge opportunity from Holiday Alley to do this. Students get to come here and it really gives them a sense of purpose and they know '*Hey, what I'm doing matters*'. It makes it a really authentic experience," Grahame said.

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His students echo his thoughts.

“It’s important to get yourself out there, help others and help this community. I like this community and I’m here to help out,” said Quinn Blackburde-Moore, student builder.

“It means I get a math credit and it means I get to help out in community which is awesome because I love to give back,” added Zur Robinson, student builder.

“They look pretty good. I’d like one for my backyard,” confessed student builder Kevin Grier-Bruce.

The seed of the idea for **Art on Ice** first came from Mary-Jane Feeke who was thrilled with the idea of bringing art, sound, light and creativity to the downtown of Selkirk, where she once ran Benjamin’s catering businesses in the Traders Bank Building on Manitoba Avenue, says Holiday Alley Volunteer Shirley Muir.

“While MJ is off in Spain launching another restaurant, we’ve taken her seed of an idea and grown it. The next steps are that we’re looking for a paint supplier to join us and offer to supply paint. We’re looking for another eight businesses, individuals or organizations to sponsor a shack and help keep our builders and artists busy. They can call us at 204.771.7523 or email us at info@holidayalley.ca,” Muir added.

The shacks will be on display in downtown Selkirk as public art and auctioned off Saturday Dec. 2, 2017 during Holiday Alley. Lucky anglers or homeowners will own them, put them on ice in the winter or use them as garden sheds in the summer. Some proceeds from the auction will be shared with an endowment fund at the Selkirk and District Community Foundation called *Homes for All* that supports community housing projects (like group homes, homeless shelters and nursing homes).

ABOUT: *This year Selkirk will celebrate art, sound, light and creativity with the launch of Holiday Alley: Art on the Avenue. A block of the old downtown Selkirk on Manitoba Avenue East will be filled with art, light, sound and creativity. The **Art on Ice** shacks will be on display in downtown Selkirk as part of the celebration. Holiday Alley was created out of the very successful Homes for the Holidays: House and Heritage Tours, now its third year.*

See: www.homesfortheholidaysredrivernorth.ca

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