

“DAREarts IN SIOUX LOOKOUT AS PART OF THE SIOUX LOOKOUT LITERACY FESTIVAL”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –January 27, 2011

The week of February 7th – 12th Thirty community high school youths will be participating in a week of artistic sessions with a focus on film-making. Come and see the **DAREarts** team of arts professionals participating with our **Sioux Lookout Literacy Festival** partners. The five days will contain a challenging and rewarding program that will grow the students in self-awareness and esteem building. The sessions will be led by the DAREarts team of **Cathy Elliott** – aboriginal artist, playwright, songwriter & performer, **Francois Aubry** – film-maker, **Jennifer Kalinowski** – film-maker and **Jeremy Proulx** – young aboriginal screenwriter and community worker. These professionals’ sessions will have a film-making focus, along with Sharing Circles, storytelling, music, dance, drama and photography. The youth will be guided to develop their final storytelling films which will be showcased to the community and media, Saturday, February 12th at 7:00 p.m., location to be announced.

The youth will create their own story based on one of the Teachings. The grandfather teachings are our core reference. Paralleling DAREarts’ “Human Spirit Values” (Trust; Respect; Self-Confidence; Balance; Compassion; Appreciation; Persistence; Curiosity; Acceptance) that form the basis of DAREarts programs, the Seven Sacred Teachings are traditional concepts that form the foundation of the aboriginal way of life. The messages are universal and each teaching honours a basic virtue that is necessary to lead a full and healthy life: COURAGE, RESPECT, TRUTH, LOVE, HUMILITY, WISDOM and HONESTY.

The inspiration for the youths’ storytelling will be the recent movie by Michael French called ‘Heart Of A Dragon’ about Canadian hero, Rick Hansen, climbing the Great Wall of China in his wheelchair. (*see below for further background*) This film opens with a famous Chinese ‘legend’ that runs about 2 minutes and serves as a backbone to the movie.

“With great legends being such a rich aspect of Aboriginal life in Canada, it may be that the aboriginal youth will be empowered to tell their own stories using the creative freedom found in legend as we were in making our movie.”
Michael French, Director

“Daring kids to chase their dreams through legend-telling on film is a perfect fit within the DAREarts. Vision. Through creative film-making, DAREarts hopes to build a pathway of hope across Canada that ‘dares’ kids to chase their dreams and then share their stories with each other to inspire others.”

Marilyn Field, DAREarts Founder

We will show the legend portion first to the youths’ to inspire them to tell their own story by creating their own 2 minute films. At the public showcase screening of their work, we will share the entire movie with the youth to further inspire them to ‘chase their own dreams’ and ignite change in their own communities. Most of these youth are from smaller communities where there are no high schools and so they must come to Sioux Lookout to attend school. Thus, when they return to their home communities, they can take their own films plus the ‘Heart Of A Dragon’ movie with them to share and inspire others while building their leadership skills.

DAREarts is a Canadian non-profit charity that ignites change in young Canadians through the arts. DAREarts was founded in 1994 by **Marilyn Field**, a former music and classroom teacher for the Scarborough Board of Education, who recognized the power of arts in the development of young minds. Registered as a charity in 1996, DAREarts builds courage and confidence in children who are threatened by drugs, violence and hopelessness and encourages them to become tomorrow’s leaders by harnessing the core power of the arts. Workshops in all the arts develop **Discipline, Accountability, Responsibility and Excellence** in Canadian children.

Further details of this empowering week will be sent to you by February 3rd. We all thank you for your media support to ensure that this type of opportunity is available to the youth of our future.

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Please visit DAREarts Foundation at www.darearts.com

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For more information, or for media to attend this special screening, please contact:

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“Heart of a Dragon” background support information

“Heart of a Dragon” tells a touching story inspired by wheelchair athlete Rick Hansen, and is about hopes and dreams - it’s the story of a man who, in a test of his own self endurance, discovers the true meaning of love, loyalty, friendship and the strength of the human spirit.

“The story of ‘Heart of a Dragon’ is a story of struggle in order to survive and how each one of us has his or her own physical or emotional obstacles to overcome, our own great walls to climb,” says **Michael French**. “The film’s story has a universal theme which I believe will resonate with people anywhere in the world where people have hopes and dreams, and the courage to meet challenges and obstacles that may come their way. Through hard work and perseverance, and the support of people you love and trust you can achieve anything.”

Over twenty years ago, something quite extraordinary happened in China. A young man in a wheelchair, accompanied by a few of his closest friends, entered Beijing half-way through their Man in Motion World Tour with over 1 million Chinese heralding his arrival as a hero. Starring in the film are **Victor Webster, Sarah-Jane Potts, James T. Byrnes, Yu Na, Andrew Lee Potts** and **Ethan Embry**.

“Heart of a Dragon” is written, directed and produced by **Michael French**, and is executive produced by **David Foster**, the 15-time Grammy® Award-winning producer and songwriter, and **Mark Gordon**, whose numerous film producing credits include ‘Saving Private Ryan,’ ‘The Messenger,’ ‘Speed,’ ‘The Patriot’ and TV’s ‘Grey’s Anatomy’.

*Please visit “Heart of a Dragon” at www.heartofadragonmovie.com
www.YouTube.com/heartofadragonmovie www.Facebook.com/heartofadragonmovie*