

Canadian Embassy, Kuwait Times celebrate Canada 150 with student art competition

The major themes of the anniversary are diversity and inclusion

By Faten Omar

The Canadian Embassy, in cooperation with Kuwait Times, is proud to launch the 'Celebrate #Canada150' drawing competition for students in Kuwait. The contest aims to make students gain knowledge of the heritage, culture and civilization of other countries. Kuwait Times spoke with the Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Martine Moreau to learn more about the competition.



The Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Martine Moreau. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Kuwait Times: What can you tell us about the Canada150 celebrations?

Martine Moreau: 2017 marks a significant milestone in the History of Canada. 150 years ago, Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia united to create the Canadian Confederation, called the Dominion of Canada. This effort was culminated in the British North America Act passed by the British Parliament that became law July 1st 1867, under which these British colonies would be recognized as a separate and distinct nation. In the years that followed, the other colonies and

territories joined the Dominion, which would stretch from the Pacific to the Atlantic to the Arctic Oceans, as reflected in the country's motto A Mari Usque Ad Mare ("from sea to sea").

The 150th anniversary of Confederation gives Canadians the opportunity to commemorate this event by getting involved in their communities and celebrate our shared values, our achievements, our majestic environment and our country's place in the world. The major themes of the 150th anniversary of Confederation are diversity and inclusion, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the environment and youth. Memorable events have been held throughout the year in Canada and throughout the world. In Kuwait, we are marking the celebrations over the next few weeks with our Celebrate #Canada150 art competition, a Canada-Kuwait friendship hockey tournament and our own Canada Day celebration.

“ Youth is a major component of the Canada150 celebrations ”

KT: What was the major inspiration behind the Celebrate #Canada150 art competition?

Moreau: Youth is a major component of the Canada150 celebrations. Most students in Kuwait know something about Canada but have never had a chance to visit our country. What better way to engage students to learn about Canada, its history, people, cultures, geography, vast and breathtaking landscapes and unique wildlife than through a fun competition as this one? Students in Kuwait are very talented, and I cannot wait to see their artistic renditions of Canada.

KT: What advice do you have for students who want to participate?

Moreau: Get inspired by reading up or surfing the web on Canada, ask your parents and teachers what they know about our vast and beautiful country. Go beyond the usual cliches such as the maple leaf, the beaver,

Niagara Falls, the polar bear, igloos, hockey, Mountains and poutine! Use the radiant yellows and reds of our autumns, the soothing greens of our springs and summers and the silvery whites of our winters and don't forget the palettes of blues from our rivers, lakes and oceans.

KT: How does Canada celebrate the diversity of cultures and communities within its borders?

Moreau: Canada is a country of diversity. Founded by the French and English who were preceded by the aboriginal "First Nations", it has welcomed several waves of immigration over the past two centuries. Now, with more than 20% of our citizens born outside of the country, Canada is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Our success as a nation depends on our ability to integrate a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds within our mainstream culture, while still embracing the variety and richness this diversity of cultures brings. In Canada, we celebrate Eid Al-Adha, the Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas, Yom Kippur. We also host large scale cultural festivals such as the Toronto Caribbean festival, Le festival de la Francophonie, the Quebec Winter Festival, the Calgary Stampede. And across Canada smaller scale festivities are organized to celebrate the various cultures and communities that make up our social fabric.

KT: We know that more around 12,000 students are participating in this competition. This is the first time that you are having this competition in Kuwait where Canada isn't so well known. What can you say about this figure?

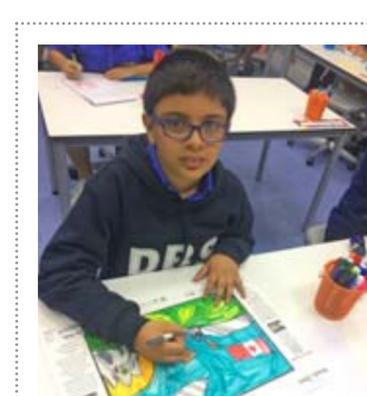
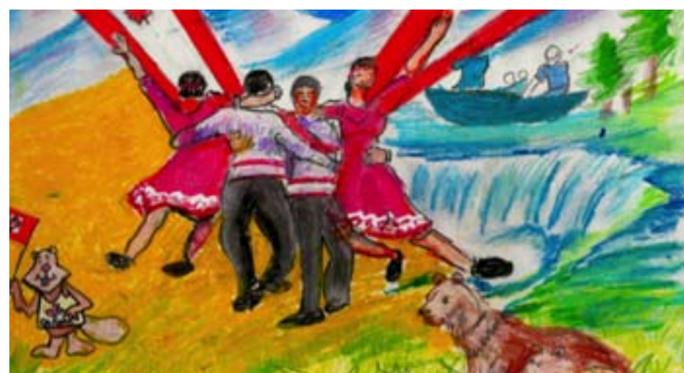
Moreau: 12,000 drawing boards have been distributed to schools across Kuwait. I am told that the uptake is very good. I have even had people sending me photos of their children's drawings so there is certainly great enthusiasm around this initiative. This is very heart-warming and tells me that Canada projects a positive image internationally, and while most people have never travelled there they recognize it as being a land of opportunity, with a diverse and tolerant society where everyone is encouraged to realize their dreams and achieve their full potential.



Some of the colorful drawings from students who participated in the competition.



Universal Civilizations Academy students take part in the #Canada150 drawing competition'.



Students from Dasman Model School are seen working on their entries in the #Canada150 drawing competition'.