



*With special thanks for Seetal Sunga for the doors!*



## Students Bring Refugee Experiences to Life Through Art

“PASSAGES - Doors to Refugee Stories” launches 3-D exhibit in St. Laurent Centre

Release date: Tues Aug 1, 2023

Event Date: Wed Aug 16, 2023, 11am-3pm, Centre Court, St. Laurent Centre

Doors - They are important to all refugees. Some doors are closed, slammed shut. Some doors are opened, and become passages to a new life. Budding art students are bringing refugee stories to life, on actual doors, while learning the business of art and applying their skill.

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As part of the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), students can participate in one of 45 programs in 13 sectors, from business, to construction, to health & wellness, to art, and then see if it is the direction they want to take as a possible career.

Each semester, DeSerres Art Store, in St. Laurent Centre, offers students a chance to work with a professional artist to develop their art skills and to learn the business of art. DeSerres enhances their program by partnering with a local charity or non-profit organization, this summer, with Carty House, the only transitional home for female refugees in Ottawa.

The students will be creating calligrams, words formed into art, out of the stories from past and present female refugee residents of Carty House. The stories will be displayed on 100-year-old doors donated from a home in Sandy Hill. The exhibit is called **Passages – Doors to Refugee Stories**, and will open with a launch event on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, from 11am-3pm, in Centre Court at St. Laurent Centre, including interactive activities for all ages. The exhibit will be on display at St. Laurent until the end of August, with hopes of moving to additional display locations throughout the rest of the year.

Carty House hopes the exhibit will shed light on the experiences of refugees, especially women, like those who stay at Carty House, who are not sponsored and usually arrive in Ottawa scared, alone, and needing to rebuild their lives, one step at a time. During the exhibit, Carty House will be accepting donations to replace their aging porch on their current refugee home. The doors will be for sale at a later date, with proceeds benefiting Carty House. CartyHouse.org will provide ongoing information.

“Carty House is more than a transitional place to live, it is also a safe space to heal, to grow and learn, to make friends, to cry and laugh, and to plan for a better life.” - Louise Ebeltoft, Manager of Operations and Refugee Services, Carty House.

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