



SHELTER HOUSE
T H U N D E R B A Y

BACKGROUND

Shelter House, in partnership with Louise Thomas of Ahnisnabae Art Gallery and the City of Thunder Bay, are pleased to announce that a new mural, funded through the Public Murals Grant Program for the Fort William Downtown, has been completed and will be presented to the community this Friday Sep 26, 2008.

The digital reproduction of a Roy Thomas original titled “Relatives” has been installed on the North side of 400 George Street. This provides an excellent view of the mural for traffic and pedestrians traveling South on Simpson Street and will enhance the streetscape as well as the Kam River Front Park entrance.

Cal Rankin, Executive Director of Shelter House is pleased to be able to partner with the City and the Aboriginal community on this project. “This painting addresses the division that communities often experience when it comes to cultural diversity and depicts the commonalities that we share.”

WHY THIS IMAGE?

Shelter House serves a very diverse population who struggle to find happiness and a sense of success in their lives. Their fight is often hindered as a result of systemic prejudice and intolerance in our society.

Discrimination exists in Thunder Bay. It exists while trying to secure housing; it exists while trying to access health care; it exists in the pursuit of higher education; it exists on the job, and it exists on our streets. Discrimination is plaguing our society, but it does not need to be. Shelter House works to promote the ideals of tolerance and acceptance, in the hope that together we can build a more caring community where people are able to meet their basic needs and live together as equals.

“Relatives” by Roy Thomas encapsulates these ideals perfectly, and serves as a reminder that we must all live together with mutual respect and acceptance, as we are all in the same boat.



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MURAL CAPTION

“Relatives” is one of the last big series Roy painted after being diagnosed with cancer. Part of the original “Visiting Water Spirit”, it was later changed to “Relatives” by Roy Thomas. This reproduction makes a statement about tolerance, diversity, spirituality, community and the collective purpose shared by all mankind.

The four colours of “people figures” in the canoe represent our diverse ethnic origins, and our connection to one another through the spirit of life. The butterflies represent the shared spirituality that is all around us. The birds, animals, and fish signify the life givers “air, land, and water.” The canoe symbolizes equality amongst all people and that in order to reach our collective goals and aspirations we must work together as one.

The message is simply that we are very diverse, but related, and we must all live together with mutual respect and acceptance, as we are all in the same boat.

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