**Healing Garden Workshop at Allen Sapp Gallery**

Grade 5 – 8 suggested, 2 hours

1. **Introduction:**

Today we are going to be learning about what a Healing Garden is and how this connects to First Nation beliefs about plants, bio diversity and our role in caring for the earth and ourselves. We will look at traditional knowledge and practices for health. We will put our hands in the earth and look for solutions to create healthy conditions. And we will create art to express our personal ideas and feelings about mother earth.

**Self Reflection:**

What is your personal connection to the natural world? Close your eyes and allow yourself to visualize and remember as I talk to you and ask questions.

Where do you like to go when you are outside? Do you have a favorite place, maybe a private place you like to go to when you want some peace and quiet? What about gardens? Do you have a favorite plant you like to look at, smell or maybe to eat? Have you ever made a whistle from a blade of grass? Have you ever blown the seeds from a dandelion? Picture a plant and imagine you are the size of an ant, crawling along, observing… what does the surface look like? Now imagine you are crawling into the soil and you can see the roots… what else is in the soil? Now imagine you are laying on the grass, looking up at the clouds going by.

**Turn & Talk:**

Open your eyes and turn to the person next to you to describe what you visualized.

2. **Background Information: Smartboard presentation**

* What is an ecosystem? What is the role of the decomposers?
* How are things inter-connected, one element affects the other, keeping balance in nature
* How do organisms work together?
* How do we catch and store energy?
* What is permaculture?

**Hands-On:**

Soil in two boxes – one from our space in back of the Gallery and one from a healthy space, with composted soil

Students will take turns putting their hands in the boxes and make observations using sight, smell and touch.

In small groups they are to problem solve ways to renew the soil and present their plan to the whole group.

3. **Traditional Knowledge:** Daphe Pooyak

* Looking at traditional plants
* Discussing their uses, oral teaching, learn from nature
* Spiritual beliefs, honoring the land and Creator
* Hands-on exploration of plant samples

4. **Looking at Art:**

Viewing process to look at the artwork of Christi Belcourt <http://www.belcourt.net/>

(listen to her video description of the large painting called “My Heart is Beautiful” )

Discuss/analyze the qualities in her paintings such as “Honouring my Spirit Helpers - Baagitchigawag Manitou”

5. **Creating Art:**

Design your own personal Healing Garden. What would you put in it? Explain your choices. Which colours would you choose, plants with purpose, shapes, ecosystems?

Pencil crayon and pastels on paper, some collage material available as well.

**6. Possible Classroom Extension:**

Students take seeds to their classroom and grow plants to be put in the ground in the Spring – either at the Gallery or at their school.