

Teddy bears and vintage music at Arts Alive! event in Pointe-Claire



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Arts Alive! Quebec features a Teddy Bear picnic for families, in Pointe-Claire, Sept. 24. (Photo courtesy of ELAN)

The Arts Alive! Québec tour is coming to John Rennie High School in Pointe-Claire on Sept. 24

and all teddy bears are welcome.

It's the second year for the tour of six regions in Quebec, organized by the English-Language Arts Network (ELAN) and the word is getting out.

"Attendance is up all over," ELAN executive director Guy Rodgers said. "The idea is to give local artists more visibility and that has certainly happened."

With summer coming to an end, it was too much of a weather risk to book the Pointe-Claire event outdoors, so activities will unfold in three locations within John Rennie High School.

The star event of the morning is the Teddy Bear Picnic.

"Our first Teddy Bear Picnic was on the riverbank in Huntingdon," Rodgers said. "Blankets and finger food and children with their teddy bears. It couldn't have been cuter."

Teddy bears and their owners will be entertained by storyteller Pat Nicholson who will tell the story *I Don't Like Spiders but They Seem to Like Me*. The picnic begins at 11 a.m. and costs \$5 for one parent/one child.

Offered free of charge for children — henna tattoos, face painting and balloon animals.

The early part of the day focuses on activities for youngsters. As the day progresses, activities kick in that appeal to the teen and older crowd.

The day ends with headline band Vintage Wine, playing old rock 'n' roll and blues greats. Show begins at 7:30 p.m. and costs \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students. Opening acts are singer-songwriter Greg Halpin and pop-country/rock band Happenstance.

During the day, local artisans will peddle their wares, visual artists will display their work and a variety of foods will be available.

And Deidre Potash, the curator for the West Island event, has organized a variety of workshop opportunities for young and old, including costume design, printmaking, rug-hooking and painting. The workshops cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. The minimum age requirement for a workshop is 8.

“Think of it as a village fair where local artists meet,” Rodgers said. “It’s an informal, pleasant event where you can try different kinds of foods and maybe get to know your neighbours better.”

The program of free afternoon entertainment in the school's Louise Chalmers Theatre features Jamie-Lee Saucier singing Broadway tunes, violinist Judy Hung and friends playing from the classical repertoire, vocalist Barbara Lewis singing Canadian pop and folk classics and a dance demo by the Pure Movement Dance Studio Showcase (they might even ask you to bust a few moves.)

Rodgers said English arts groups all over the province are being drawn to the Arts Alive! Québec, many meeting for the first time. One of the successes of the initiative is that these groups are finding ways to help each other out, through artistic exchanges.

“These are dedicated, talented individuals who often don’t have the same access to promotional tools and financing,” Rodgers said. “(Arts Alive! Québec) helps them forge networks.”

Arts Alive! Québec is at John Rennie High School, at the corner of St-Jean Blvd. and Douglas Shand Ave. in Pointe-Claire, Sept. 24. Activities begin at 10:30 a.m. For program details visit www.arts-alive-quebec.ca (<http://www.arts-alive-quebec.ca>) and to buy tickets for the Vintage Wine show, visit www.brownpapertickets.com (<http://www.brownpapertickets.com>).

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