

NEWS RELEASE

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Young Artist's Vision of Growth and Change Selected for 2026 Street Banners

Nanaimo's own Solana Van de Leur becomes the youngest artist ever selected for the City's annual Street Banner Program

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is proud to announce that Grade 11 student and local artist, Solana Van de Leur's design has been selected for the 2026 Street Banners, marking the first time in the program's history that a youth artist has been chosen through a province-wide call specifically for artists aged 19 and under.

The 2026 Street Banner Program invited young artists across British Columbia to help shape Nanaimo's streetscape through original artwork that reflects youth identity, imagination and insight. Solana's design was selected for its visual depth, rich symbolism and heartfelt storytelling.

Solana's artwork offers a fresh youth perspective on growth and change, depicting an arbutus tree framed by day and night as a symbol of resilience and transformation. Through vibrant colour shifts and thoughtful symbolism, the design reflects how young people view change as both challenging and full of possibility. Grounded in Nanaimo's landscape and shaped by personal storytelling, her artwork celebrates renewal and the evolving journey of youth finding their place in the world.

As the youngest artist ever selected for the Street Banner Program, Solana represents a new generation of creative voices helping shape the visual identity of Nanaimo. A passionate artist, writer and competitive figure skater, she works across many mediums including acrylic, watercolour, digital illustration and sculpture.

The 2026 Street Banners will be installed in spring 2026 throughout Nanaimo's downtown, the Arts District, and along key routes such as Bowen Road and Third Street, transforming everyday streets into a colourful celebration of youth creativity and community pride.

For more information on the City's Street Banner Program visit the [City's website](#)

Strategic Link: The Street Banner Design Program aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's City Plan by facilitating opportunities for the public to encounter art and culture in public spaces throughout the city and as part of their daily experiences.

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo is proud to announce that Grade 11 student and local artist, Solana Van de Leur's design has been selected for the 2026 Street Banners, marking the first time in the program's history that a youth artist has been chosen through a province-wide call specifically for artists aged 19 and under.
- Solana Van de Leur's design was selected for its visual depth, rich symbolism and heartfelt storytelling, portraying the arbutus tree as a powerful symbol of growth, resilience and transformation.
- The 2026 Street Banners will be installed in spring 2026 throughout Nanaimo's downtown, the Arts District, and along key routes such as Bowen Road and Third Street, transforming everyday streets into a colourful celebration of youth creativity and community pride.

Quotes

"Inviting youth artists to lead the 2026 Street Banner Program was about amplifying new voices and youth perspectives. Solana's beautiful and thoughtful design shows how mentorship and opportunity can spark exceptional creative expression."

Jaime-Brett Sine
Culture Coordinator
City of Nanaimo

"Art and storytelling have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, and through this contest, I got to tell a story about myself while depicting something as iconically Nanaimo as an arbutus tree. It is such an honor, and so surreal to know that soon I will get to see the banner that I designed all over my neighbourhood and community."

Solana Van de Leur
Artist

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View the online edition for more information -

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR251113YoungArtistSVisionOfGrowthAndChangeSelectedFor2026StreetBanners.ht>