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Laurier marks Global Climate Strike week with events and climate mural

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is marking **Global Climate Strike** week, **Sept. 20 to 27**, with a series of events and a colourful mural at the heart of the Waterloo campus. The mural, which will be painted by local artist Pamela Rojas with help from Laurier students, includes local landmarks, portraits of local and world-renowned changemakers and the message “Climate is Life,” to underscore the value of the climate to life on Earth. The mural will be painted on the back wall of the Theatre Auditorium, adjacent to the walkway leading to the Fred Nichols Campus Centre.

“As one of Canada’s most environmentally sustainable universities, Laurier leads the way in creating and exchanging knowledge that informs our drive toward a more sustainable future,” said **Deborah MacLatchy**, Laurier’s president and vice-chancellor. “The impacts of climate change require us to engage locally, nationally and globally. Laurier’s faculty, staff and students make strong contributions — in the classroom, lab and field, in development of evidence-based policy, and in the boardroom — to future-focused climate solutions.”

Laurier’s Climate is Life mural is designed to bring people together to act in solidarity for climate action. On the left side of the mural, surrounded by faces, there’s an empty silhouette, where passers-by can stand for a photo.

“We purposefully left an empty space in the mural as an invitation, to say, stand with us and be part of this movement for change,” said **Kai Reimer-Watts**, a Laurier PhD student in the Community Psychology program and the leader of the mural project. “The overall message is of action and rising up as a community to really address and overcome this shared challenge we’re all faced with.”

Passers-by will also be invited to join Rojas to paint the mural, starting Sept 20 and taking place over about 10 days, with Rojas leading participants in the collaborative process.

Laurier will also be marking the week with a series of events, including:

- **Concert and Garden Tour**, on Monday, Sept. 23 at the [Northdale Community Garden](#). Learn about the on-campus food movement and take in local singer-songwriter duo Erso.
- **Climate Action Pop-up Booth**, on Tuesday, Sept. 24 in the Quad near the mural, with trivia, giveaways and resources, hosted by the Laurier Sustainability Office.
- **Social Media Photo Contest**, Sept. 20 to Oct. 4. Students can submit photos of themselves taking action on climate change and post on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter using #LaurierClimateAction to be entered in a draw to win a prize!
- **Documentary Screening** of *How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change*, on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 8 p.m. in Research and Academic Centre West 202 on the Brantford Campus. There will be free popcorn for all who attend and bring their own container.

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- **Global Climate Strike Waterloo Region**, on Friday, Sept. 27. Interested Laurier community members will gather in the Quad at 10 a.m. and walk together to Waterloo Town Square to join the [Global Climate Strike Waterloo Region](#) from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Visit the Laurier [Sustainability Office](#) online for more information and a full list of events.

The mural was designed by Laurier students, staff and faculty, in collaboration with the artist and in consultation with a wide range of people at Laurier and in the wider community. The mural is being supported by campus and community partners, including the Laurier Sustainability Office, Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union, Graduate Enhancement Fund, the City of Kitchener's Community Grant, and additional in-kind support from individuals and organizations in the community.

The mural pays tribute to Laurier's location on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Neutral and Haudenosaunee peoples and our shared connection to, and recognition of, the life-giving Grand River watershed. Images include the Anishinaabe Grand River Water Walk and green technology — solar panels, wind turbines, bikes and electric transport — and of environmental destruction, fires and landfills.

"We really wanted to emphasize the importance of our climate and its interconnection with all the other systems in place today that make up our society. That's where we came up with the phrase 'Climate is Life' because, at the end of the day, climate action is really about sustaining and protecting all life," said Reimer-Watts.

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