

# Qaumajuq shines brightly



**Devi Sharma**

**OLD KILDONAN CITY  
COUNCILLOR  
WARD REPORT**

I've often heard former Winnipeg mayor Susan Thompson say that the Winnipeg Art Gallery is our city's largest community centre.

Susan has a long history with WAG and is currently the opening co-ordinator of Qaumajuq, the gallery's new Inuit art centre. Her statement truly resonated. With its showcasing of art, culture, and musical events, the WAG truly does bring the city together, and now, in 2021, it is opening up its doors in many new ways.

This will be the inaugural year of Qaumajuq, which is connected to the WAG on all levels. The new, 40,000 square-foot building aims to amplify the voices of artists and promote cultural understanding. I was excited to walk by the new glass entrance at Memorial Boulevard and St. Mary Avenue and look inside to see the three-storey glass vault showcasing thousands of Inuit carvings.

Today I'd like to share with you some of the plans the WAG has for bringing Qaumajuq to Winnipeggers of all ages and backgrounds.

On the first day of 2021, the building was lit with projections of northern lights colours. Later this winter, contemporary Inuit art and northern footage will be projected, as well. The centre is appropriately named Qaumajuq, which means "It is bright; it is lit" in Inuktitut, inspired by the light that pours into the building. There's a lot of pride in the fact Winnipeg now has a new home for the



Supplied photo

*Qaumajuq will be a shining beacon of Winnipeg's continued growth, opportunity, and learning.*

world's largest public collection of contemporary Inuit art, and this theme of light will carry through a year of celebrations.

While the building will be illuminating our city, we all know the pandemic has redirected us to virtual formats of interaction. In that spirit, WAG will be hosting online panels, discussions with artists, at-home projects, as well as virtual tours and workshops. When restrictions allow, the WAG will also host tours of Qaumajuq's stunning new exhibition and learning spaces.

"Qaumajuq will be a forum for learning and fun and we want everyone to know that this place belongs to you ..." said Stephen Borys, WAG director and CEO. "We can't wait to unveil this new cultural landmark in

the heart of the country."

If you've never interacted with the WAG before, now is a good time. This year, the WAG is offering free membership for Indigenous peoples as well as for those 25 and under. Also, when Qaumajuq opens, youth under 18 can enter free every day of the inaugural year.

As a city councillor, I am enthusiastic about creating and promoting enjoyable experiences for Winnipeggers. Many families, businesses, and individuals, as well as the three levels of government, have contributed to the centre's building campaign and programming fund. I know that Qaumajuq will be a shining beacon of our city's continued growth, opportunity, and learning.