

# GW Graham Secondary School Team *(Canada)*

GW Graham Secondary School in British Columbia staff are passionate about empowering students through hands-on learning in the trades and continuously advocating for youth participation in skilled trades. Project-based learning where students apply advanced welding techniques to create meaningful, often large-scale, art pieces, is used to enhance their skills. Technical training is blended with creative expression, helping students develop both employable skills and a deeper connection to their craft. Several community-focused welding projects have resulted all under the guidance and motivation of the high school welding teacher, Bradley Bootsma.

In 2023, a team from the school entered the CWB Association Forged by Youth competition and won first prize with the following students contributing to the sculpture project: Laurynn Davidson, Kallum Vandyk, Maria Barkey, Nolan Barkman, Wyatt Cavanagh, Marcus Dalton, Jared Holosney, Nathan MacNeil, Shea Pankiw, Owen Sheets, Reuben Vanpelt, Hannah Joy Nirwanski, Liam Harrison, Isaac Rychcowski, William Vernon, Cameron McCall, Hayden Pugsley, Tyler Bergin, Colby McLellan and Brandon Smith and Bradley Bootsma providing guidance when required.

## Contact info

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[www.agassizharrisonobserver.com/local-news/chilliwack-welding-students-take-top-spot-in-national-contest-with-grizzly-bear-barbecue-3117174](https://www.agassizharrisonobserver.com/local-news/chilliwack-welding-students-take-top-spot-in-national-contest-with-grizzly-bear-barbecue-3117174)

## Exhibit “Grizzly Bear BBQ”

The Grizzly Bear BBQ is a life-size welded sculpture that also functions as a fully operational barbecue. It was built entirely from repurposed steel by senior high school welding students as a capstone project. The grizzly bear was chosen not only for its significance as a keystone species within North American ecosystems, but also because it is the school’s mascot—making the project deeply personal and meaningful to the student body and community.

The build incorporated MIG welding, plasma cutting, bending, and metal forming techniques, with careful attention to structure, shape, and artistic detail. It took about 5,000 hours to complete. The students first welded together the skeleton of the 4000-pound bear, then covered it with sheet metal. They worked painstakingly to get the shape just right, and covered it with thousands of pieces of rusted metal to simulate the fur.

Students used recycled and scrap metal materials to emphasize sustainability and environmental responsibility. The sculpture is designed to spark conversation around biodiversity, especially the importance of protecting large mammals like the grizzly bear that play vital roles in their habitats. In alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15, the project encourages dialogue around conservation and sustainability, both locally and globally.

## Dimensions of Exhibit

Lifesize





*Grizzly Bear BBQ*

*GW Graham Secondary School Team*





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