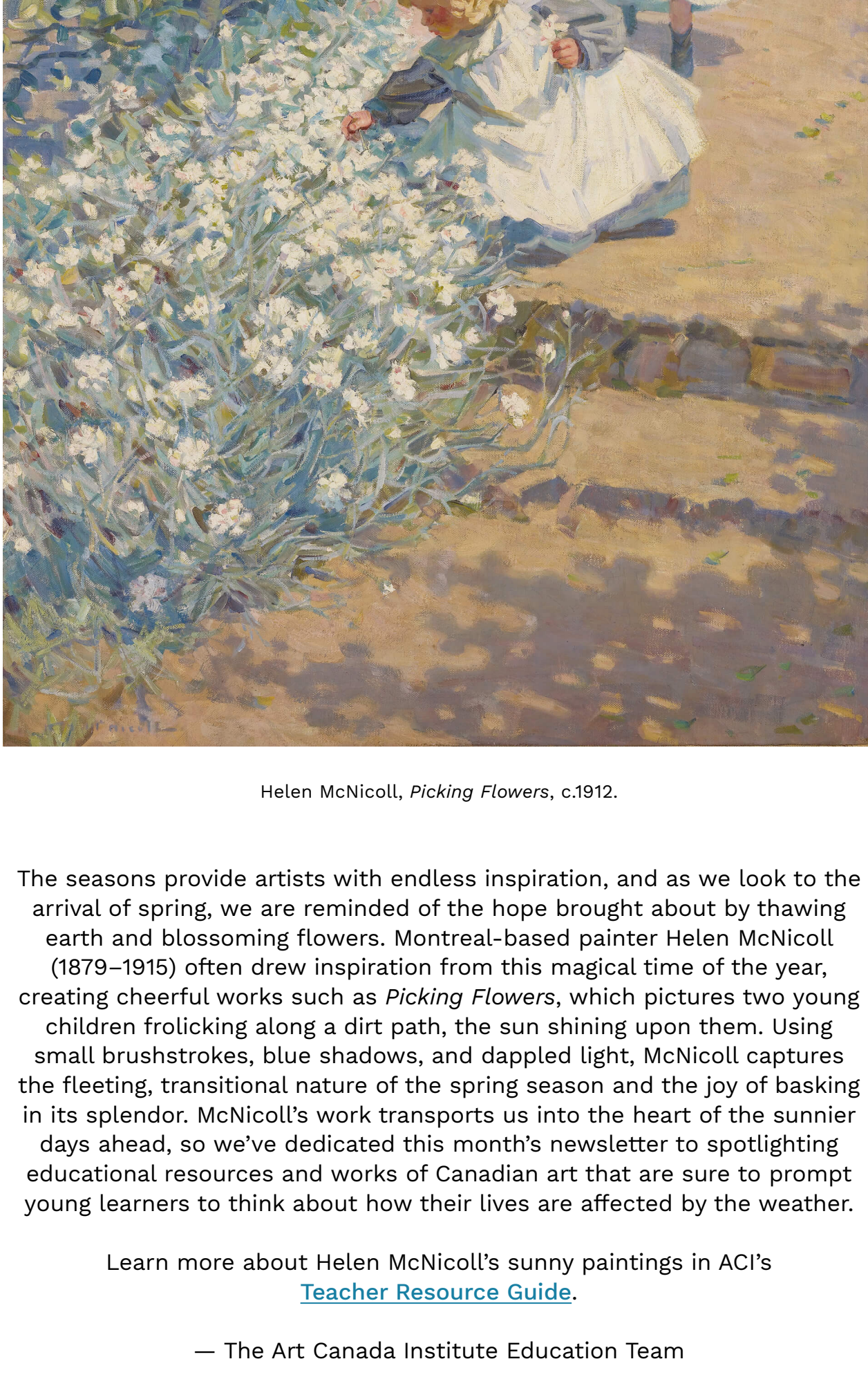


SPRINGING FORWARD

ART AND SEASONAL CHANGE

With warming temperatures upon us, ACI is turning to a selection of Canadian artworks that celebrate the joys of the spring season.



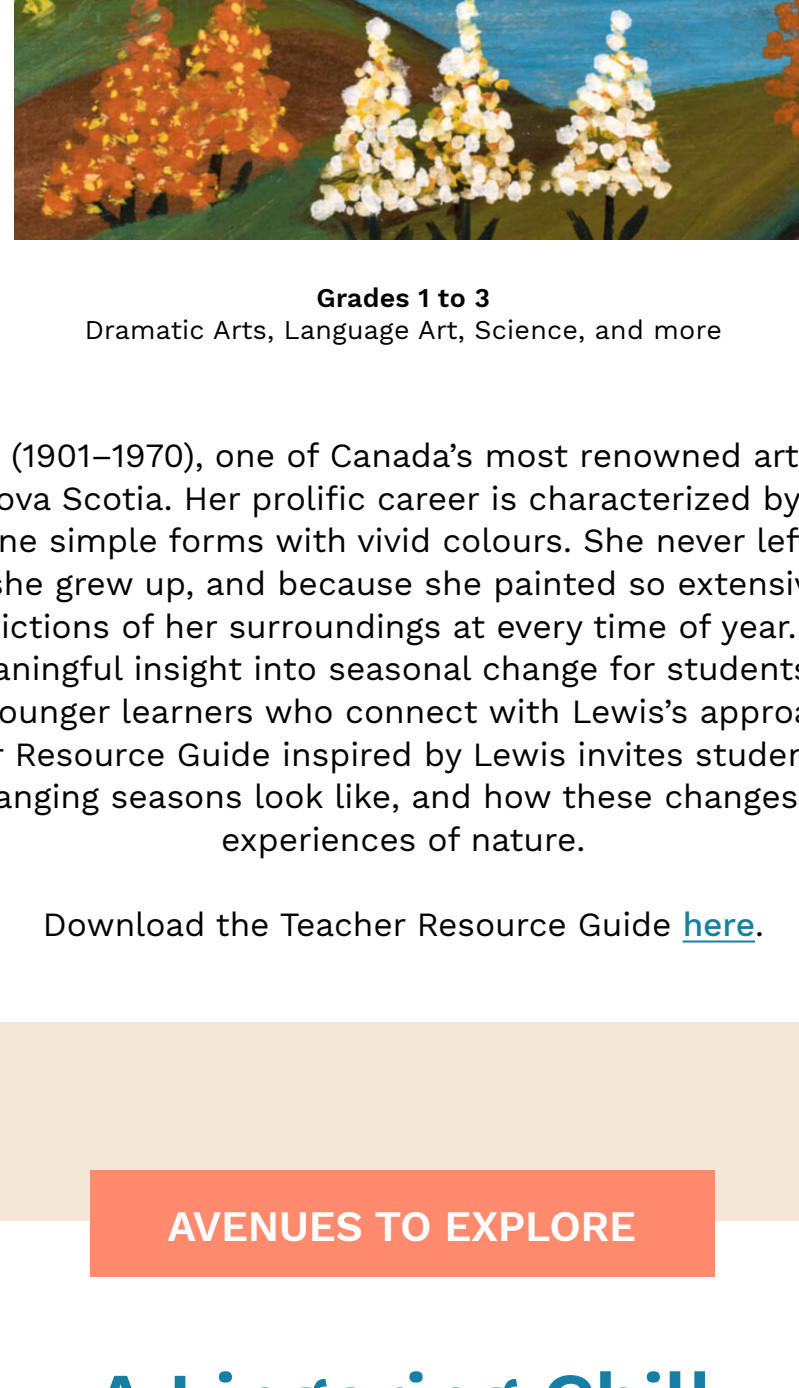
Helen McNicoll, *Picking Flowers*, c.1912.

The seasons provide artists with endless inspiration, and as we look to the arrival of spring, we are reminded of the hope brought about by thawing earth and blossoming flowers. Montreal-based painter Helen McNicoll (1879–1915) often drew inspiration from this magical time of the year, creating cheerful works such as *Picking Flowers*, which pictures two young children frolicking along a dirt path, the sun shining upon them. Using small brushstrokes, blue shadows, and dappled light, McNicoll captures the fleeting, transitional nature of the spring season and the joy of basking in its splendor. McNicoll's work transports us into the heart of the sunnier days ahead, so we've dedicated this month's newsletter to spotlighting educational resources and works of Canadian art that are sure to prompt young learners to think about how their lives are affected by the weather.

Learn more about Helen McNicoll's sunny paintings in ACI's [Teacher Resource Guide](#).

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

Transitional Temperatures



Grades 1 to 3
Dramatic Arts, Language Art, Science, and more

Maud Lewis (1901–1970), one of Canada's most renowned artists, painted life in rural Nova Scotia. Her prolific career is characterized by joyful scenes that combine simple forms with vivid colours. She never left the region in which she grew up, and because she painted so extensively, Lewis captured depictions of her surroundings at every time of year. Her work can provide meaningful insight into seasonal change for students of all ages, particularly younger learners who connect with Lewis's approachable style. ACI's Teacher Resource Guide inspired by Lewis invites students to identify what the changing seasons look like, and how these changes impact their experiences of nature.

Download the Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

A Lingering Chill



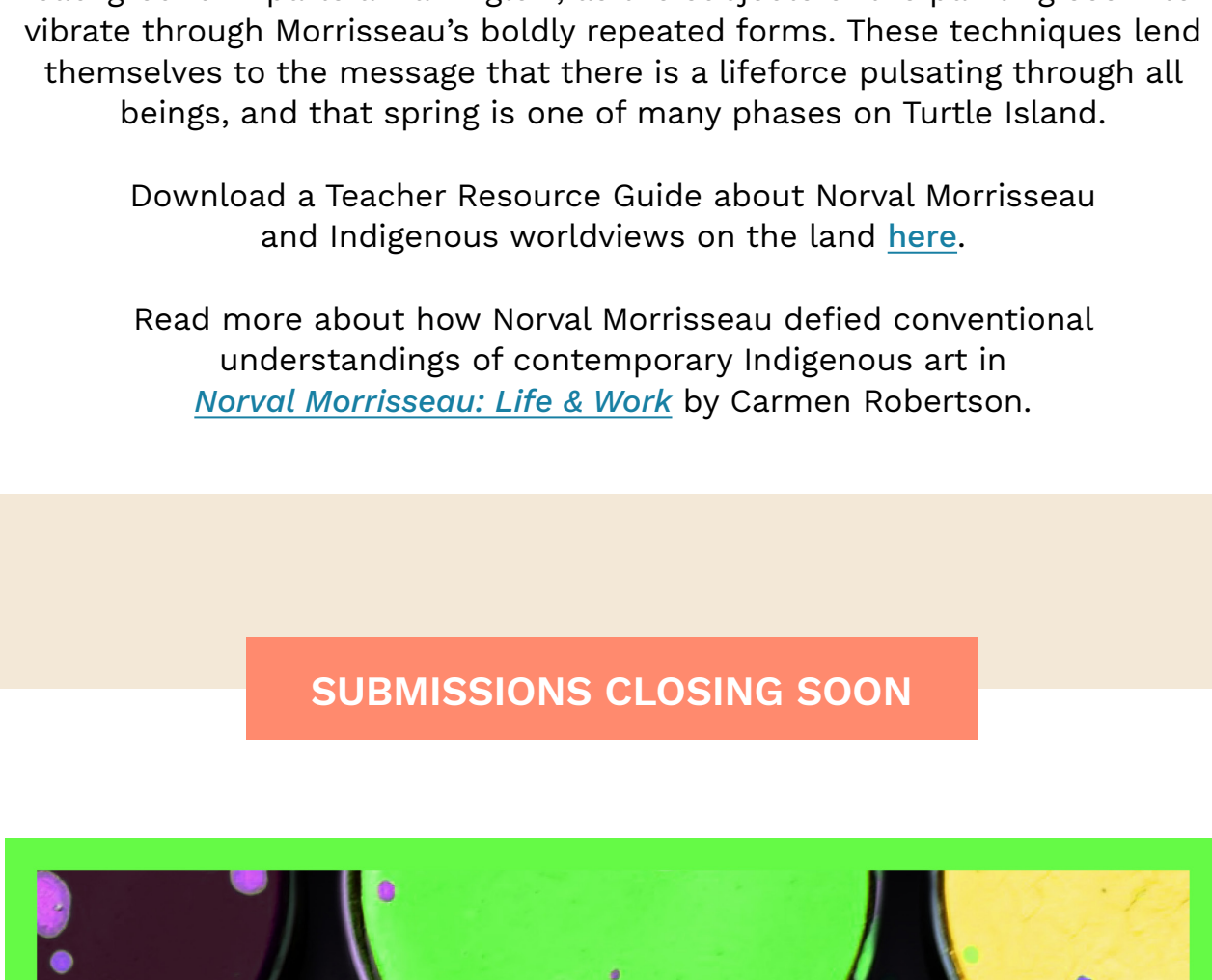
Tom Thomson, *Early Spring, Canoe Lake*, 1917.

For many across Canada, the onset of spring will look almost indistinguishable from the winter that preceded it, much like the scene above painted by Tom Thomson (1877–1917). In *Early Spring, Canoe Lake*, Thomson uses a neutral palette with unexpected pops of ultramarine. This contrast signals that a thaw is forthcoming, and while snow may persist, warmer days are sure to surface. Thomson's unusual use of colour is characteristic of his artistic experimentation. This work serves as a prompt for students to consider how simple strokes of bold hues—in this case, streaks of bright blue to indicate melted ice—can represent phenomena in nature.

Download a Teacher Resource Guide about Tom Thomson, the Group of Seven, and modern Canadian landscapes [here](#).

Read more about Tom Thomson's innovative works on canvas in [Tom Thomson: Life & Work](#) by David P. Silcox.

New Beginnings

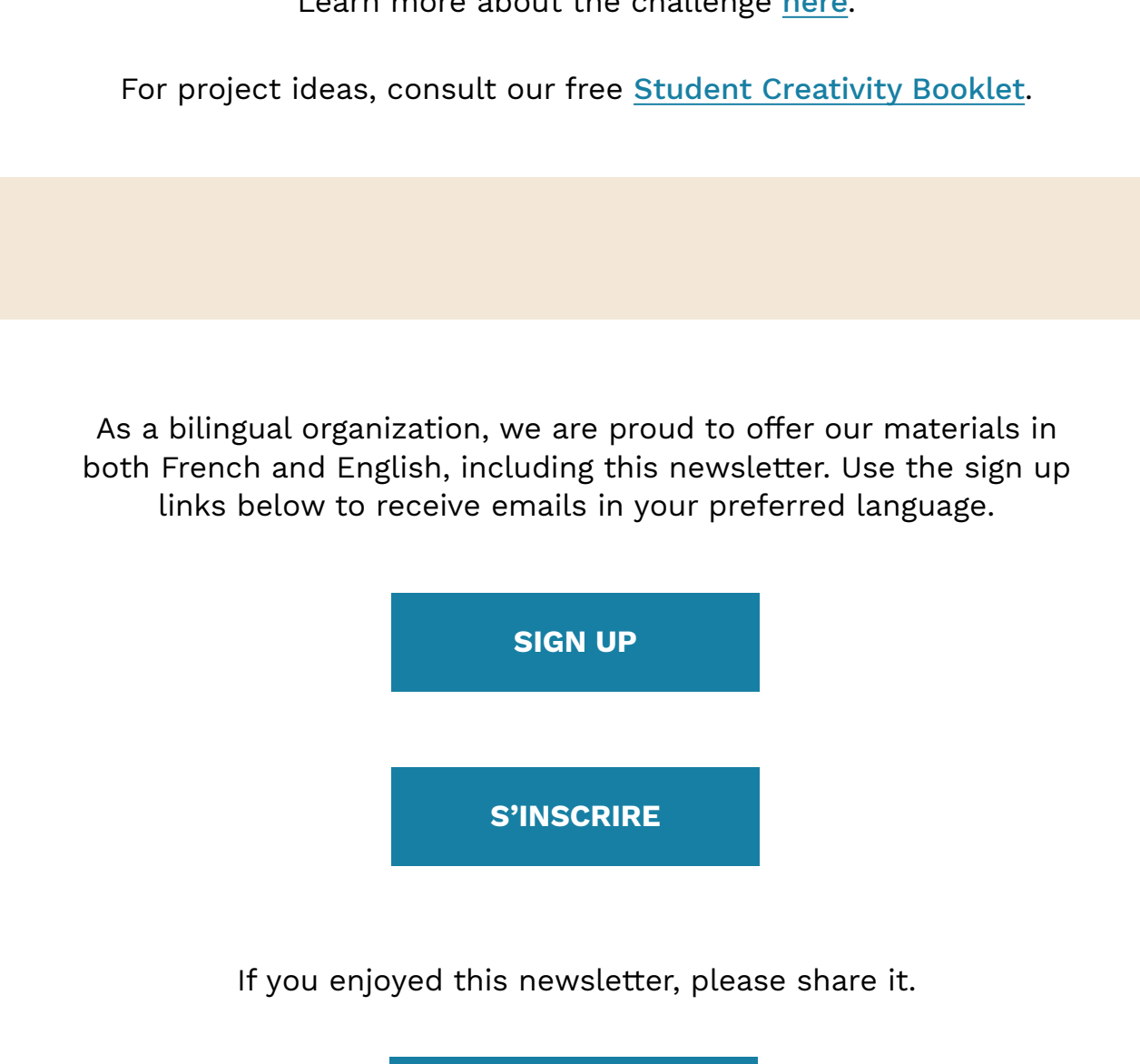


Napachie Pootoogook, *My Daughter's First Steps*, 1990.

Though the landscape differs greatly across the country, there are certain qualities of spring that persist from coast to coast to coast, such as the theme of new beginnings. In this work by Inuit artist Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002), we see a child taking her first steps while her mother waits in loving anticipation. Though this might not be an instantly recognizable depiction of spring, the thawed pool of water and snowless ground suggest otherwise. Like the land ridding itself of the winter frost, this young girl has shed her winter layers. This moving image is a reminder that we can look beyond the landscape to identify seasonal transitions, and that students can draw inspiration from their own family traditions to mark the coming of spring.

Learn more about Napachie Pootoogook's groundbreaking prints and drawings [here](#).

Growth and Rebirth



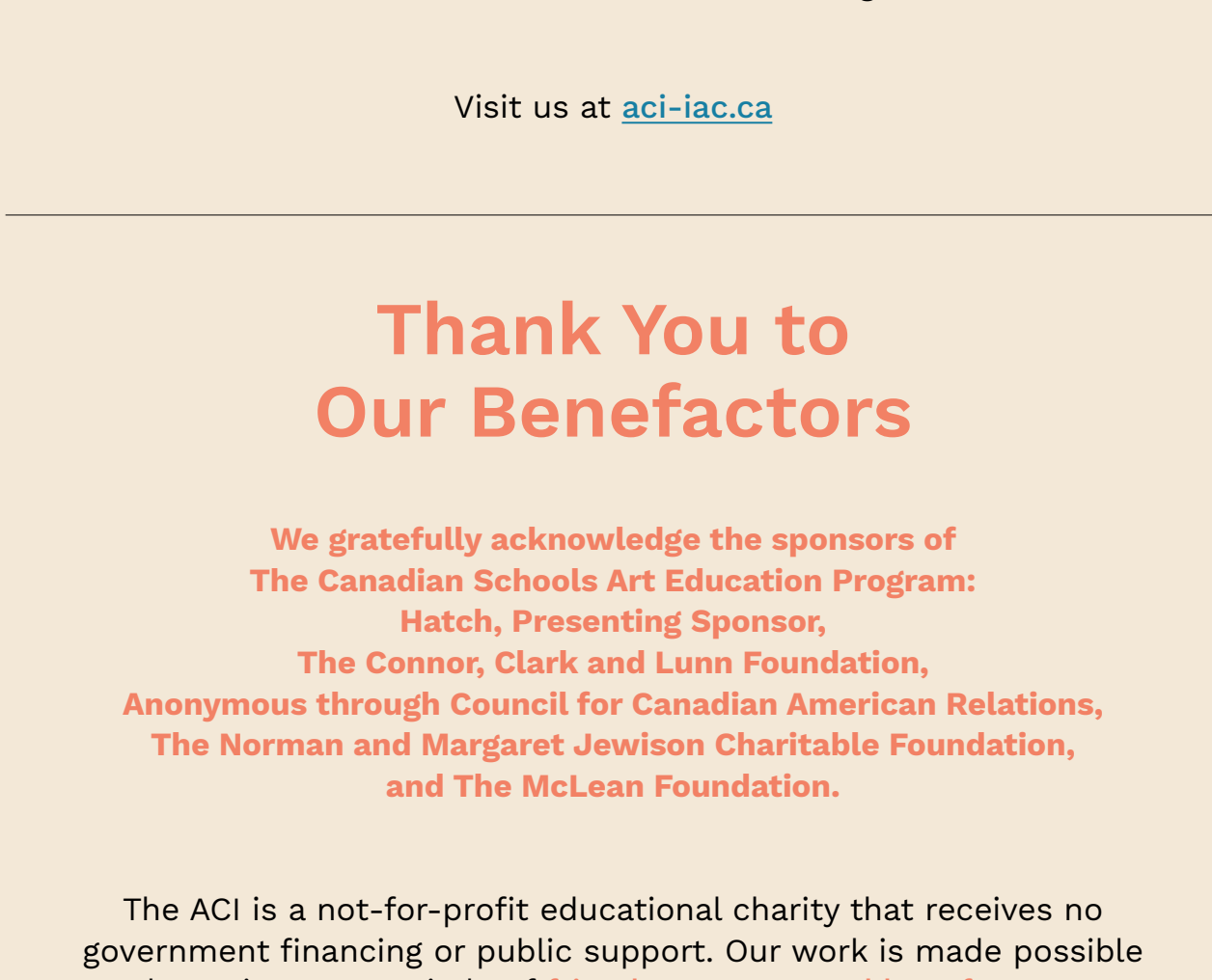
Norval Morrisseau, *Children with Tree of Life*, c.1980–85.

The painting *Children with Tree of Life* perfectly symbolizes spring, with themes of life, regeneration, and bright beginnings emanating from the canvas. In his characteristic Woodland School style, Anishnaabe artist Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007) creates a vibrant scene with a naabede tree of life surrounded by children, creatures, and plants. The sunshine yellow background imparts a warm glow, as the subjects of the painting seem to vibrate through Morrisseau's boldly repeated forms. These techniques lend themselves to the message that there is a life force pulsating through all beings, and that spring is one of many phases on Turtle Island.

Download a Teacher Resource Guide about Norval Morrisseau and Indigenous worldviews on the land [here](#).

Read more about how Norval Morrisseau defied conventional understandings of contemporary Indigenous art in [Norval Morrisseau: Life & Work](#) by Carmen Robertson.

SUBMISSIONS CLOSING SOON



Submissions are closing soon for the 2025 edition of the Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge, ACI's flagship initiative for students from grades 7 through 12. March 21st is the deadline to submit your students' works for a chance to participate in a special showcase at Art Toronto. You can learn more by heading to our website.

Learn more about the challenge [here](#).

For project ideas, consult our free [Student Creativity Booklet](#).

As a bilingual organization, we are proud to offer our materials in both French and English, including this newsletter. Use the sign up links below to receive emails in your preferred language.

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Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

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