

## John Bapst student wins poster contest, donates prize money to women's advocacy

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### Body

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Up Beat is a new section of the Bangor Daily News dedicated to uplifting stories. Look for tales of people helping people and things that will make you smile.

Tong Wu is the first to admit he did not know much about the women's movement in this country when he arrived in Maine from China last fall. But what he learned about the historical movement while attending John Bapst High School this past year made a deep impression. An impression so deep that he combined what he learned with his artistic talent to win the 2020 Penobscot County Bar Association Law Day Contest.

But Wu did not stop there. Before returning to China at the end of the school year, the 17-year-old asked that the \$500 first prize be donated to Partners for Peace, a Maine-based organization that helps community members impacted by domestic abuse.

"For him to donate his prize to a local organization really shows his understanding and appreciation for the work they do," said Christopher Largay, president of the Penobscot County Bar Association. "His kindness shows that he truly embraced this year's theme, and we wish him the very best in what clearly is a bright future ahead of him."

[image id="2984022" size="half" pos="right" /]

This year's Law Day contest invited students to consider the women's suffrage movement through the lens of today's state of politics and the law.

Wu won for his poster that depicts a timeline of women in different eras as they gradually gain power and inroads into traditionally male-dominated careers.

"I used a warm yellow color when drawing women in the past, showing their pains and depressions," Wu said in an email from his home in China. "In contrast, I colored modern women with high saturated vital blue and green to show their energies and optimism."

Wu included smaller details in his work, including worms eating plants and flowers which he said indicated the injustices toward women which have not yet been solved.

Wu said he was inspired by what he learned in his American History class at John Bapst about the historical status of women in the United States.

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"I learned that women at one time period did not have the right to vote and they could only do house work at home," Wu said. "However, through several movements and rising attention women slowly gained equities in society. I wanted to draw a picture that can show this drastic and admirable change in history."

Wu said he always knew he'd donate any winnings to a local women's advocacy group, but he said he did need some help finding one, so he asked the bar association for some guidance.

"When they asked me if Partners for Peace was a good option I strongly agreed," Wu said. "I think women who are abused by their family members need help the most. Injustices happening outside the home will mostly get reported or seen by the public. However, abuses at home are not easily exposed. This is why I believe my cash prize belongs to this particular group."

Amanda Cost, facilitative director for Partners for Peace, said she was extremely grateful for Wu's donation.

"We are honored that Tong Wu chose to donate his winnings to Partners for Peace," she said. "We want to thank him for supporting our work to address domestic abuse in Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties."

Donating his winnings to Partners for Peace demonstrates Wu's appreciation for what he learned and a strong desire to pay it forward, Largay said.

Wu hopes his act of kindness will carry over into other areas of Chinese-American relationships and the people of both countries can learn from, and respect each other.

"I realize that the relationship between the US and America is changing. From trade wars to airline restrictions, the relationship is getting worse," Wu said. "The differences in culture and system caused misunderstandings. I hope Americans and Chinese can learn more and accept each other's culture. I really wish everyone on Earth can accept each other and live peacefully regardless of gender, beliefs and race."

Do you know of an uplifting story in Maine? Bangor Daily News Features writer Julia Bayly is on the lookout for Up Beat stories of people, places or things that bring smiles and laughter to your day. Her email address is [jbayly@bangordailynews.com](mailto:jbayly@bangordailynews.com)

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