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Join in a design challenge at Six Degrees Muskoka

BRACEBRIDGE – A full slate of activities is planned this summer at Six Degrees Muskoka, the arts hub located in the historic Queen's Hotel in downtown Bracebridge.

Digital animation classes, a huge hit last year, are being fine-tuned for registration in June.

Since last fall, the focus at Skinner Properties, which owns Six Degrees, has been on the massive renovation of the 125-year-old gem. All hotel rooms have been removed creating vast open spaces. Thirty-two tons of old materials have been removed from the old hotel, and four tons of structural steel has been inserted. Window openings, bricked over for decades, have been opened and 54 windows have been replaced.

"We respect the past and honour it, but we

also give it a contemporary edge and technological advantage; an adaptive reuse that results in the 'wow' factor that we strive for," said Don Skinner. Don and his wife Jen own a number of historic buildings in downtown Bracebridge.

"We decided to shake things up a bit this time as far as the art component goes," said Jen. The result? Six Degrees is hosting two very different design challenges.

"If these walls could talk" developed as an exhibit idea as materials were being removed that date from as far back as 1885. Muskoka hemlock studs, hand-forged square nails and tin ceiling panels were found.

"We always strive to reuse materials in unexpected ways and locations," said Don.

The twist with this design challenge is that

artists from Muskoka are invited to participate. A "kit of historic parts" will be made available to be reinterpreted, judged and exhibited during the G8 and beyond.

Prizes, including a MacBook, two iPads and three iPods, will be available.

"Just like last summer with the student competition to name our Digital Animation Studio, we really want to make the judge's job difficult," said Jen.

The Digital Animation Studio challenge led to three local students receiving laptops for their winning submissions.

Replacing the "Welcome to Downtown Bracebridge" sign, located on top of Six Degrees with something more interpretive and fresh is the second challenge. The winning idea will be built and mounted in the future. The challenge is open to all and the exhibit will be held in August. Great prizes will be available.

See sixdegreesmuskoka.com for all details.



HISTORIC FINDS. Six Degrees Muskoka is hosting a design challenge called 'If these walls could talk' this summer. Artists are invited to participate by picking up a 'kit of historic parts' to reinterpret and then exhibit. The kit will include materials salvaged from the restoration of the Queen's Hotel, such as this tin ceiling.