In memory of Greg Kosztinka

Christmas on Campus leads to year-round YK/North Slave Campus food bank

Fort Liard ALBE students run successful Fundraiser

Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program wraps up at Aurora Campus
Contents
3  In memory of Greg Kosztinka
4  Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) program helps build new track
5  Christmas on Campus leads to year-round Yellowknife/North Slave Campus food bank
5  Adult Literacy and Basic Education In-Service
6  Fort Liard ALBE students run successful fundraiser
7  New Contaminated Site Remediation Program is piloted in the Dehcho
7  “My Aurora College” visual arts contest
8  New Community Learning Centre opens in Lutsel K’e
8  Bev Hussey graduates with B. Ed
9  Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program wraps up at Aurora Campus
10  Building Connections with Northern Researchers
10  Aurora Campus student wins Governor General’s Academic Medal
11  Lani Cooke reflects on six years as Board of Governors member
11  Aurora College students hired as Research Assistants
12  Camp stories by ALCIP students
13  Camp stories by ALCIP students

Newsletter

This newsletter is published for the students and staff of Aurora College and is produced by the Office of Communications.

Your contributions and comments are most welcome. Please send them to jturner@auroracollege.nt.ca or phone 867-872-7015
In memory of Greg Kosztinka
By Kerry Robinson

This issue of the Aurora College Currents is dedicated to the memory of one of our own – Greg Kosztinka, Marketing and Communications Officer. On October 6, 2011, Greg was killed when his vehicle struck a moose just south of High Level, AB. It is fitting that we honour Greg here in the Aurora College Currents, as the last thing Greg did at work on October 6th was to send out the Fall edition of this very newsletter to all staff.

For those who never had the pleasure to meet or work with Greg, you missed out on a truly energetic and enthusiastic individual. Greg was active in cross-country skiing, kayaking, and golf. He was also active in the Legion and anywhere that people gathered to have fun. Greg loved being around people more than anything. This approach ensured Greg never missed a party, and his popularity proved true when a standing-room only crowd showed up at the Fort Smith Legion on Saturday, October 22 for a celebration of his life. Though it was a difficult evening of many emotions, and it was painful to see the loss his family was suffering, Greg’s family was awestruck by the impact he had on the community, and the number of lives Greg had touched since he came to Fort Smith.

Jason Panter, Manager of Distributed Learning, Information Systems and Technology, was one of Greg’s closest friends. Jason, like many of us, still can’t believe Greg’s gone. “I keep half expecting to see him at his desk or at my door or at a party, and it is tough to think that won’t happen,” said Jason.

Sarah Wright Cardinal also reflects on the loss of Greg. “Greg worked for us in a variety of casual and term roles for a few years. He was personable and he was really starting to show his talent in graphics and media design. I think it was a small amount of comfort to his family to discover that Greg had been contributing so much to the College through his work,” noted Sarah. “Greg kept us young and he will be missed.”

Sarah wanted to make sure that Greg’s parents had a portfolio of his work to view in years to come, and one was prepared and sent to his family in early December. A copy is on hand in the President’s Office for anyone who wants to view it.

The cover of the portfolio includes a fitting poem.

He kept at true good humour’s mark
The social flow of pleasure’s tide
He never caused a brow look dark
Nor caused a tear, but when he died
-Thomas Love Peacock

In late October Jason Panter and fellow Fort Smithers Don Jaque set up a road-side memorial for Greg. When travelling south from High Level on highway 35, on the right side of the highway about 20 kilometers out, just north of the Parma Creek bridge, you will find a cross fashioned from a vertical kayak paddle and a horizontal golf club.
Staff and students in the Aurora College Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) program can be proud of their contributions toward construction of Fort Smith’s newest sports and recreation feature - a world class outdoor track and field facility that officially opened on September 16, 2011. The facility features pits for shot put and discus throw, and areas for long jump, triple jump, high jump and javelin. The centre of the track also has an international-sized soccer pitch.

This project has been years in the making. Constructing a new track was originally discussed in the late nineties, as the old track was previously located where the new Recreation Centre now sits. Over the years residents were concerned that Fort Smith was no longer hosting track meets, and that there were not as many youth activities available. It was this situation that resulted in Denise Yuhas, local businesswoman and constituency assistant to the Thebacha MLA, to begin the work of bringing interested parties together.

One of the first steps was meeting with the College on the possibility of using the HEO program to do some work. The partnership would prove beneficial to both the students and the Town of Fort Smith, offering valuable experience to College students, while filling a funding gap through the in-kind contribution from the College. This would not have been possible without the support of local contractors, as the Town’s ability to use Aurora College resources was dependent upon the approval of local construction companies.

HEO Senior Instructor, Gord Mercredi, noted that “the students moved materials to the new site and got to practice their skills driving, grade stakes leveling and sloping using equipment such as graders, dump trucks, crawlers, motor graders and front end loaders”. Mercredi oversaw the project while instructors Danny Dievert and Kevin Young accompanied their classes and guided the hauling and placing materials on site. The students prepared the site to specification for the professional paving crew. “Between twelve and fifteen students from all over the north assisted with the project each semester,” noted Mercredi.

“It was a really good training project for students and good for them to see what they accomplished, especially after it was paved and finished. It really was a community effort.”

Denise Yuhas notes “We knew it would take years and patience but this project is a fine way to show what can happen when people work together. Let us not forget how much of a contribution the College makes to this community and remind people to be thankful and mindful of projects they help with.”

The entire project was made possible by Town of Fort Smith; Denise Yuhas; Claudette James, Business Advisor of Industry Tourism & Investment; the Community Capacity Building Fund; fundraising efforts by JBT students who hosted cupcake and hotdog sales; the Aurora College HEO program; Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA); the District Education Authority (DEA); in-kind donations from Salt River First Nation; support and guidance from numerous individuals such as Roger Vale (promoter) and Shirley Hehn (advisor); the goodwill of local contractors who supported the use of College students to do the work, and countless other volunteers.

Town of Fort Smith Mayor, Janie Hobart, proudly reflects that “this truly is a community facility because so many people in Fort Smith were involved conceptually, giving donations, fundraising and working.”

Let the games begin!
On November 16 and 17, 2011, an Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) in-service was held at the Ndilo Community Learning Centre (CLC) for Yellowknife and North Slave staff. Community Adult Educators, Developmental Studies ALBE Instructors, Student Services staff and non-governmental organizations teaching ALBE attended the session.

The in-service was co-facilitated by Karen Willy, Adult Basic Education Coordinator, Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and I. The overall outcome of the ALBE in-service focused on providing knowledge and training to Adult Educators, ALBE instructors and the Student Services staff on the new ALBE Student Intake Package which will be piloted for 2012 fall admissions. This package will replace the existing ALBE placement packages. The in-service provided a number of opportunities for attendees to participate in group work, partake in mock simulations, mark English writing placement samples and debrief on the new ALBE Student Intake Package.

Thanks go out to Alison Barr for hosting the event at the Yellowknives Dene Community Learning Centre in Ndilo, and a thank you to Lin Maus for driving participants from Yellowknife to Ndilo for the in-service training.

What started as a donation of gifts and Christmas hampers in 2010 has spawned into a year-round food bank at Yellowknife/North Slave Campus. The idea for a food bank arose from the 2010 "Christmas on Campus" campaign. "Christmas on Campus" is an initiative in which staff anonymously donate gifts to students’ children who are under the age of fifteen. Additionally, the Yellowknife/North Slave campus Student Business Association purchases food hampers to donate to the "Christmas on Campus" initiative. With the success of the 2010 "Christmas on Campus" initiative, and a positive response from students self-indicating the need for donations, the leftover food from the 2010 "Christmas on Campus" campaign was used to start the food bank.

"The food bank is now a year-round, student-driven initiative," notes Social Work Program Instructor, Heather Fikowski. "I serve as faculty support for the initiative, while a committee of students seek funding and manage and maintain the food bank. The food bank is additionally supported by financial donations from the Student Association, fundraising events, food donations from staff, and the "Face Off" food drive competition held in October," notes Fikowski.

Jane Arychuk, Vice President, Community and Extensions, has also initiated a few different fundraising activities, including a jewelry sale on campus and Christmas craft sale that was held in late fall. With those funds, gift cards were purchased from a local grocery store so that families in the Christmas on Campus program could purchase a turkey, ham or other foods. In addition, each student got a very small gift bag of bath products.

Accessible year-round and open during weekday hours, the food bank is located in the Yellowknife/North Slave campus student lounge. Students are advised of the food bank at the general assembly and information posters are posted in classrooms.

Christmas on Campus leads to year-round Yellowknife/North Slave Campus food bank
By Heidi Selzler

Left to right: Melissa Macdonald, Noelene Byrne, Chelsey Armstrong, Anne Mackenzie (back) and Sarah Kelly

Left to right - standing: Alison Barr, Jim Stauffer, Wilson Shea. Left to right - seated: Pam Dunbar, Vincent Casey from North Slave Corrections, Paula (Cookie) Letemplier and Barb Curtis
Fort Liard ALBE students run successful fundraiser

By Christine Abela

On November 18, 2011 the Fort Liard Community Learning Centre (CLC) hosted the best lunch in town. The lunch was an event run by ALBE students to raise funds for a trip to Fort Smith during Aurora College week. The upcoming trip will be the culminating activity for the Career/Lifework course, and will give the students a chance to experience campus college life.

Each person in the large crowd of community supporters who bought lunch enjoyed homemade chili and stew with bannock, a drink and a tasty dessert. The delicious food sold out fast and the event was an overwhelming success. Kudos to the many local businesses who generously donated fabulous prizes for a draw, and congratulations to the students for their hard work in planning and executing a prosperous event!

The ALBE students involved in the fundraiser were: Cheryl Bertrand, Charmain Capot-Blanc, Debbie Duntra, Linda Duntra, Kristen Kotchea, Karen McLeod, and Dianne Sassie.
Aurora College’s Land and Environment Programs delivered a new community-based training program in Fort Simpson this fall. The Contaminated Site Remediation Coordinator Program trains students to meaningfully participate in contaminated site clean-up. The program was sponsored by Dehcho First Nations and brought together 13 students from Jean Marie River, Fort Providence and Fort Simpson.

“Students are learning to be liaisons between the public and local communities, environmental specialists, remediation project staff and contaminated site owners,” said Instructor John Blyth. The program was co-instructed by John Blyth and Melissa Bacon. John Blyth has been instructing environmental training programs across the NWT for several years and Melissa Bacon is a remediation engineer from Quebec who has worked on contaminated sites across the North.

This new 210 hour program is one of a suite of community-based programs offered by Aurora College since 2006. This program and the Environmental Monitor Training program share common core courses, but each have a unique specialization. The programs are delivered in partnership with the Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR) Learning Institute (a project of ECO Canada) and the curriculum is based on National Occupational Standards, which have been developed in conjunction with industry, government and Aboriginal communities across the country. This ensures that participants are focusing on the necessary competencies (knowledge and skills) required for participation in contaminated site remediation activities.

“The Contaminated Site Remediation Program was requested by our member First Nations organization, due to the growing concerns of contaminations near the communities of Wrigley and Trout Lake, NT” said Mavis Wasp-Colin, Executive Director of the Dehcho Futures Society. “The communities believe it would be beneficial to have certified and qualified individuals who are available and on hand to take immediate action when a spill occurs. Most communities are remote and isolated and often times when this situation occurs the communities have to wait for personnel from out of town to come in and examine and investigate the situation. This waiting period can cause the damage to get worse and the problem can escalate into a bigger problem that could otherwise be prevented. This program can greatly benefit our First Nations peoples in preserving and protecting our land. The land and water are essential to the Dehcho First Nations and this program will bring us one step closer to protecting our lands and waters.”

The program begins with 5 Core Skills modules in Communications, Environment, Technical Skills, Health and Safety and Local Knowledge that ensure students have the knowledge and skills to participate safely in fieldwork activities. The Contaminated Site Remediation specialization then consists of another four modules: Introduction to Contaminated Site Management; Development of a Site Remediation Plan; Implementation of a Site Remediation Plan; and Remediation Validation. The specialization begins by providing students with basic knowledge of contaminants and how they interact with the environment. Students then learn the technical components of contaminated site management steps, including environmental site assessment and site remediation through the development and implementation of a mock site remediation plan. Finally participants learn the skills necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of a site remediation plan and develop skills to design and deliver a long-term monitoring program of site health and recovery.

Create a visual presentation about your experience at Aurora College using the phrase “My Aurora College” for a chance to win one of many cash prizes. Create a short video clip, a poster, or a photo collage.

Submit entries to jturner@auroracollege.nt.ca


Vote for your favourites online at our website www.auroracollege.nt.ca

Check out www.auroracollege.nt.ca for contest details.
New Community Learning Centre opens in Lutsel K’e

By Michael Bridgman

After many months watching this unique structure take shape, November 23rd, 2011, marked the official opening of the Aurora College Lutsel K’e Community Learning Centre.

Dignitaries from the Government of the Northwest Territories joined with those from Aurora College, Chief Antoine Michel and Lutsel K’e Band Council members to officially open the new centre. The event was open to the whole community who participated in a traditional fire feeding ceremony and smudging led by J.C. Catholique, the Band’s Cultural Coordinator. After the ribbon-cutting and welcoming remarks, a huge feast was enjoyed by all, with a combination of traditional fare supplemented by fresh vegetables and fruit, a stupendous cake and one hundred cupcakes, made to honour the occasion.

Michael Bridgman, Aurora’s community adult educator in Lutsel K’e, expects the new centre to be used extensively by the community. “Lutsel K’e is one of the most scenic spots in the NWT, and this new building is structurally and functionally a beautiful piece of architecture that fits in nicely with the surrounding panoramic landscape.” The fully accessible facility boasts a large classroom, and an up-to-date computer lab, a small lounge area and vaulted ceilings that let in natural daylight. The Centre has been open since September, when seventeen community members registered, so the future looks bright for adult learning in Lutsel K’e.

Bev Hussey graduates with B. Ed

By Paula MacDonald

Congratulations go out to Bev Hussey, who completed her Bachelor of Education Degree at the University of Saskatchewan during the 2010/11 academic year. Bev Hussey joined the Developmental Studies team at Thebacha Campus in the winter semester of 2005. At that time, Bev was teaching in the Pre-technology program. After teaching at Aurora College for a few months, Bev decided she wanted to earn her Bachelor of Education Degree. While she was teaching senior high school science courses, Bev took education courses offered at the campus, and she also undertook to do her first practicum at PWK High School, all while teaching a full course load in Developmental Studies at Thebacha Campus. Fellow staff members and the administration did everything to make her challenge doable.

With the support of the Aurora College Professional Development Fund, and through her hard work and dedication, Bev returned to the College having successfully completed her program. Unfortunately, Bev was unable to attend her convocation in October 22nd, 2011; however, her staff mates had a small celebration for Bev. Once again, congratulations on a job well done!
Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program wraps up at Aurora Campus

By Doug Robertson

On November 22, 2011 seven students from around the Beaufort Delta completed the Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program at Aurora Campus. The students began on August 9th by taking preparatory courses for the program, including Orientation to Industrial Workplace, First Aid and Carpentry Math. They started the actual 12-week Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry (PAC) program on August 29th. The Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program is based on the level one Carpenter curriculum. Twenty five students applied to the program and eight students were accepted. Eight students began the program.

In the Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program, students who achieve an overall average of 65% are eligible to write the first level Apprenticeship Carpenter exam. At the end of the program seven students were able to write the exam. The program wrapped up with a completion ceremony on November 22nd.

The objective of the program was to allow people to gain apprenticeship level training that might not be available otherwise due to lack of opportunities. The students gained technical and shop training and will now be more attractive to potential employers.

The students who finished the program were Glenn Alexie Jr. (Fort McPherson); Michael Francis (Fort McPherson); Richard Gordon Jr. (Inuvik); Charlie Haogak Jr. (Sachs Harbour); Elizabeth Ilkasiak (Aklavik); Eric Kagyut (Ulukhaktok); and John Brandon Steen (Tuktoyaktuk).

This fall the NWT Apprenticeship Board provided a 5-year accreditation of the Mobile Trades Training Lab (MTTL) to deliver Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry training. Students can count up to 300 hours from the Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program towards their apprenticeship, pending employer approval.

The program would not have been a success without the dedicated support of the instructor Greg Nissen, the Industrial and Oil/Gas Coordinator, Rory Voudrach, and the Building Inuvialuit Potential Society (BIPS). BIPS provided funding to Aurora College for program delivery, provided money directly to students in the form of living allowances, and also provided funding for accommodation and travel expenses.

Sponsors of the MTTL include CIBC, Education, Culture and Employment (GNWT), Gwich’in Tribal Council; Inuvialuit Regional Corporation; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Mackenzie Aboriginal Corporation.

Front row, left to right: Richard Gordon Jr. (Inuvik), Glenn Alexie Jr. (Fort McPherson), Elizabeth Ilkasiak (Aklavik), Eric Kagyut (Ulukhaktok), Charlie Haogak Jr (Sachs Harbour), John Brandon Steen (Tuktoyaktuk), Michael Francis (Fort McPherson)

Back row, left to right: Greg Nissen (instructor), Brandon Johnson (BIPS), Jeff O’Keefe (Aurora College), Bill Hval (Aurora College), Doug Robertson (Aurora College), Angela Littlefair (ECE), Verna Pope (ECE), Mary Ann Ross (Gwich’in Tribal Council), Rory Voudrach (Aurora College)
Building Connections with Northern Researchers

By Sarah Rosolen

In November 2011, two researchers toured across the territory as part of Aurora College’s Scientific Speaker Series. The purpose was to talk to students about a project aimed at repatriating Inuvialuit culture. Charles Arnold, past curator of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, and Mervin Joe an Inuvialuit community member, visited with students at our three campuses and provided an engaging look at how one community is learning about their traditional way of life.

“Mervin, you are like a superhero for bringing your culture back – thank you!”

Student - Thebacha Campus

In the mid-1860s, the Smithsonian Institution collected clothing, tools, art and other objects from Inuvialuit who lived near the Anderson River area in the Beaufort Delta. These materials were essentially lost and forgotten from the community. In 2009, a delegation of Inuvialuit elders, youth and educators traveled to Washington, DC to see the collection and to explore ways to bring it home, virtually. Charles and Mervin spoke about the visit and about a website they are building to connect Inuvialuit to the collection that has been inaccessible to them for 150 years, and to the traditional knowledge that goes with it. The presentation seemed to be a huge success with students, who really enjoyed exploring ideas about bringing their culture back.

The speaker series, which has been funded by ConocoPhillips Canada, was developed to strengthen awareness of research taking place in the north, to provide opportunities for northern youth to access research and researchers, and to inspire youth to seek out opportunities to participate in research.

Aurora Campus student wins Governor General’s Academic Medal

By Doug Robertson

First awarded in 1873, the Governor General’s Academic Medal is given at four levels: bronze – secondary school; collegiate bronze – post-secondary diploma; silver – undergraduate; and gold – graduate level.

On hand for the presentation of the award to Malcolm were Jeff O’Keefe, Vice-President, Education and Training, Aurora College, and Doug Robertson, Director, Aurora Campus as well as many students and staff members recognizing Malcolm for his dedication and commitment to his education.

For the first time, a student at Aurora Campus has won the Governor General’s Collegiate Bronze Medal.

The medal is given annually to the student at Aurora College with the highest overall average upon graduation from a diploma program. The 2010/2011 recipient, Malcolm Gorrill, completed the Business Administration diploma program this past May with a 94% average. Malcolm began the program in 2005, and has worked at Aurora Campus since 2002. Malcolm is an administrative assistant for academic programs and continuing education at the college.

But the celebration did not stop there for Malcolm. With the Governor General’s visit to Fort Smith on December 9, 2011, work began to see if Malcolm could have the award presented by the Governor General. Through the efforts of committed Aurora College staff, and with the support of the GNWT protocol office, arrangements were made and Malcolm flew to Fort Smith and was presented with his award again, this time by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.
Interviewing Lani Cooke regarding her six-year tenure as Aurora College Board of Governors representative for Yellowknife provided a picture of a driven, dedicated and highly motivated individual. Lani is passionate about education in the NWT, and the role that Aurora College plays in the development of Northerners.

It was in in 2005, just as Lani completed a thirteen year run as the Executive Director of the Association of Community Living in Yellowknife, when she saw a newspaper ad calling for a Yellowknife representative for the Aurora College Board of Governors. Lani submitted her application, and a short time later was excited to receive her appointment from then Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Charles Dent.

During her time on the Board, Lani served on a number of sub-committees, including: Policy and Planning, Ad Hoc Capital Planning, Committee of the Whole, Finance and the Executive Committee.

One of Lani’s priorities was to strongly advocate and seek support for a new Yellowknife campus. “In the beginning there was not as much support around the Board table for a larger Yellowknife Campus that would serve more citizens in the capital,” noted Cooke. “But by the end of my time my fellow board members felt it was important to get a new campus. The Board also understood that a good, proper sized Yellowknife campus does not have to take away from Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith or the Aurora Campus in Inuvik.”

When asked which other accomplishments she is most proud of, Lani speaks to the results of her push for best practices of Board governance. The Board now has an excellent understanding and commitment to using best practices, with members fully understanding their roles and responsibilities. At Lani’s last meeting in October 2011, the Board committed to developing its own governance policies. “These successes are very fulfilling,” noted Cooke.

Additionally, Lani is pleased with the support from past President Maurice Evans, and current President Sarah Wright Cardinal, to work towards more independence from government and to provide Aurora College with more academic freedom. “The College will better serve our NWT citizens as an independent academic institution rather than being as controlled by government as it is now,” noted Cooke.

Overall, Lani enjoyed getting to know the other Board members. She learned a lot from her colleagues, sharing ideas, debating and discussing. They worked hard together and made difficult decisions to direct a College that all Northerners can be proud of. Lani added that “the Board also had a lot of fun together. It was not all work.”

Now that Lani has completed her time with Aurora College, she is interested in supporting a fundraising campaign for the Yellowknife campus. She has her own consulting business “Lani Cooke & Co.” which works with government, the non-profit sector, and businesses in the areas of organizational and community development. No doubt Lani will continue to be busy and will continue to advocate for a strong Aurora College.

---

Aurora College Students hired as Research Assistants

By Dr. Pertice Moffitt

It is my pleasure to announce that Marshi Maurico (Nursing Student) and Anne Mackenzie (Social Work Student) have been hired as Research Assistants at the North Slave Research Centre in Yellowknife. The North Slave Research Centre is part of the Aurora Research Institute (ARI), a division of Aurora College. ARI is responsible for licencing, conducting and coordinating research in the NWT, in accordance with the NWT Scientists Act.

The students will be working with Heather Fikowski and me on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded five year project entitled “Northern and Rural Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence.” Funding for these positions was secured through a successful complementary grant application to the Nasivvik Centre. We are all excited to be working together for such a worthwhile research project.
Camp Stories by ALCIP Students
By ALCIP Fall 2011 students

From September 13 to 21, 2011 students in the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program (ALCIP) participated in a fall culture camp at Sandy Creek, near Hay River. Below are some stories, kindly shared by the students. Each story is in English and Dene Suline, or English and South Slavey.

Łona Dżi

Marsi Catherine Boucher ẓerëhti’s hîlë
Ten days I stayed in the bush at Sandy creek near Hay River. There each day we did little jobs. We set nets to make dry fish. Set rabbit snares, caught two rabbits. Picked up a lot of cranberries. Beautiful out every morning. You could hear birds singing. I’m very happy I stayed in the bush. Brought memories when I travelled with my grandfather. I will never forget it.


Mâhî cho Kathy Mouse Yedût’êh
We all camp out at Sandy Creek with our instructor for ten days. It was awesome sitting by the campfire listening to other stories. Setting snare, chicken hunting and canoeing until sunset was very nice. The smell of burning wood in the morning and evenings was nice too. It was nice to be in the bush but I miss the wood burning smell. I am very thankful for the time we were in camp.

Tagáa Gondîe

Mâhî! Elizabeth Minoza yedût’êh
A very short story about camping out in Sandy Creek. All the students, visitors and guest gather around the fire for feeding of the fire. Frank Fabian and Michael drum the prayer song and Georgina does the feeding of the fire for the group. The weather was beautiful. Not too cold and no rain. We all took safety course on firearms and basic survival skills. The instructors name was George McGarth. George and Edith Smallgeese were the elders and they involved themselves in all of our activities and it was nice of them to be part of the group. I would like to thank Dorothy and Manny Buckley for putting great effort into making this a successful and enjoyable camp as well as the students. It was a learning experience and I enjoyed myself with various activities throughout the ten day camp.
Yesterday I slept warm in the morning I got up and made some coffee for everyone. In the afternoon Manny, Michael and I fixed the fish nets and after that we set nets in the water using a canoe. Around 5 o'clock we went to check the nets, wow! There was lots of fish. We caught so much fish that we had to take the nets out of the water.

Marsi Dennis Drygeese

Last September we spend a week out on the land, which was part of our training and bring out on the land with other trainees and living there was excellent. We lived out there, slept there and it sure brought a lot of memories and feelings back to me. I am glad I spent time out there because it is something that I rarely do by myself. Fall time is my favorite season because of all the colors and changes that is happening.

Sandy Creek had some cabins and we stayed there and did some activities all together. Set snares, picked cranberries, herbal medicines and spruce gum. Whenever I am out on the land my exploring instincts comes out full force and so I like walking, listening and looking for plants rocks, etc. Fall time moonlight, quietness and exploring the land inspires me because I feel closer to my culture and the elders that are no longer here with us. Thank you creator and our elders for this time with you on the land.

Máhsi cho Georgina Fabian Yedîîtå’éh

Camping in Sandy Creek

In the past Fall time when we started the program we went out to Sandy Creek for a week. We stayed in cabins that were fixed up by Manny. Every cabin had a stove and was very comfortable. We gathered wood for our cabins, cooked on open fire. Spending time with elders that came to see us was real nice, a lot of good stories and a lot of good laughs. The guys set a net, we made dryfish. Some of the students set snares for rabbits. We did some plant gathering for medicines, picking cranberries.

We learnt about basic survival skills, gun safety and boat safety with the instructor George. Spending time with each other and helping one another was real good. Thank you to Dorothy and Manny for all they did to make us comfortable, I enjoyed my time at camp and got to know other students. Hope we can do another camp in the future.