

Character Development through the Seven Teachings

About the project ...

Character Development through the Seven Teachings at Moosonee Public School provided students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate character attributes through engagement in a range of classroom, school-wide and outdoor activities connected to learning about the environment and safe, positive, inclusive schools. The activities included:

- Learning about ecology by attending a provincial park program in which students biked through wetlands, hiked through old-growth forests and were introduced to wilderness survival skills and the use of GPS.
- Learning from local Elders who shared their perspectives and experiences with *The Seven Grandfather Teachings* and taught Grade 7 and 8 students about snaring, fishing and making blinds.
- Writing persuasive letters to their town council which led to student leadership and participation in a 'Clean Up the Town' event.

Following the learning activities, all members of the school community – students, teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and community members – came together for additional activities to celebrate the character attributes of the students. Celebrations included a 'Respect' Remembrance Ceremony, a 'Humility Can' Drive and an Earth Day Photo Contest. In the final celebration of the year, students made personal shields in which they symbolized two character teachings that they practised and two character teachings that they will strive to practise next year.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- Students participated enthusiastically in fundraising events to benefit local and global charities and took pride in raising money to help others.
- The provincial park ecology program's focus on student leadership and group dynamics led to improved student relationships as students interacted in real-life learning situations.
- Students are knowledgeable about the *Seven Grandfather Teachings* and are often observed reading about the actions of their peers which are posted on the school's character bulletin board. This learning has provided students with opportunities to reflect on their own character and to learn from the actions of others.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

A June survey requesting teacher and administrator feedback about the character education program brought forward the following recommendations:

- A focus for next year should be on encouraging and supporting students in recognizing their peers through the character cards program.
- Character education literature will directly assist in embedding character learning into curriculum.
- Teachers are interested in forming a focus group to further support the school's character development initiative.
- Teachers are interested in investigating programs that would directly place character education within the classroom learning environment.