

Sir Alexander Mackenzie School (SAMS)

Inuvik, NT

Take a Kid Trapping Program



FINAL REPORT

Completed by:

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Introduction:

This year students from the Gwich'in Language classes of SAMS, in grades three, four and five took day trips to visit a local traditional Gwich'in camp. The camp belongs to Freddie and Sarah Jerome a Gwich'in family who have their camp by the ice road approximately five kilometers from SAM's school, leaving it very accessible by bus to transport students and staff.

Cultural and Traditional Knowledge:

Freddie and Sarah Jerome live a very traditional lifestyle almost year round at their camp, with Freddie trapping, and Sarah working with the hides furs and fish. They have many years of knowledge and experience of Gwich'in life on the land that has been passed on to them from their parents as well as gained through their own years of experience. Freddie and Sarah both feel it is very important to pass on their knowledge and skills to the young Gwich'in students of Inuvik, so that these traditions and skills are preserved for years to come.

Dates and classes attended:

- Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011 (4A/4B 6 students)
- Wednesday, March 23rd, 2011 (5A/5B 7 students)
- Thursday, March 24th, 2011 (3A/3B 12 students)

Total of 25 students.

Facilitators:

- Freddie Jerome
- Sarah Jerome
- Daryl English (ENR), Conservation Education Officer
- Lloyd Gruben (ENR), Renewable Resource Officer II

SAMS Supervisors:

- Miss Bella Kay, Gwich'in Language Teacher
- Davey Elwood, SAMS Beaver Volunteer

Implementation:

Daryl English and Freddie Jerome coordinated the program, to ensure that the students would get a truly traditional Gwich'in experience of time on the land. The program allowed students to see how daily life is carried out on an everyday working camp, from making fire to treating fur and hide and more. (For detailed information on daily activities see next page.) Transport was also organized from SAM's school directly to the camp and back again. Food and drinks were also provided.



Daily Activities:

1. Introductions:

The first activity that was done for each day was introduction. The students sat in a circle on a caribou rug on the floor. The adults, Freddie, Sarah, Beaver Volunteer Davey Elwood and Gwich'in teacher Miss Kay sat on wooden chairs outside of the circle. Each student introduced themselves by saying his or her full name, their Grandparents name, on both their parents' names. This allowed Freddie and Sarah to really get to know the students and where their relatives came from. Most time one or two students would be related to either Freddie or Sarah. Davey and Miss Kay would also introduce themselves.



2. Setting rabbit snares:

Freddie took us along the river bank by his camp, where there were willows that the rabbit like to eat. At the willows we set several snares. The students watched how to do this skill and asked questions as they went. The students got very excited when they saw rabbit and ptarmigan tracks on the snow. They were not lucky enough to catch any rabbits, but they were happy nonetheless.



3. Snack & Washroom break:

Students have the chance to get a snack and drink. This was provided by Freddie and Sarah, having the choice of healthy orange or apple juice, water, bannock, donuts and nutria-grain bars. The adults also had the choices of tea or coffee. During the snack breaks, the students had the choice to ask Freddie and Sarah about life on the land. Washroom breaks are also available during this time.



4. Making braided yarn:

Beaded yarn is used as a lace for the top of mukluks to stop snow from entering your boot, and can also be used for repairs, belts, ropes and other uses. The skill of making beaded yarn is a very important skill to have on the land, and also helps the students with their qualities of patients and to be quiet. Sarah Jerome and Miss Kay showed the mitt strings to them. They demonstrated with two different colours of yarn to make shoe strings. Sarah stood to the North in the cabin, with Miss Kay standing in the South side of the cabin as they demonstrated how to make a shoe string. Both ladies holding on to the yarn, one would turn it to the left and the other to the right until the two pieces of yarn were twisted tightly together. Miss Kay then walked across to Sarah and took the end of the yarn and held onto them. The pieces of yarn then became a beautiful shoe lace. The students then got the chance to try it out for themselves and to do finger stitching to make their own key chains or bracelets.



5. Mans Survival Bag:

Freddie explained how it is vital that every man should always carry a survival bag with them when they are out on the land and at their cabin, especially now when there are so many natural disasters across the world. Freddie explained how a man's survival bag should always be maintained, and if things get used they need to be replaced straight after. No one is to use the bag only the owner as everything has its place in the bag. The owner of the bag then knows exactly where to find things in an emergency. The only other person allowed to handle the survival bag, is the man's wife. It is her job to ensure that all supplies are there. If the man has ate all his food or things have been damaged, it is the wife's job to replace and repair things, so it is ready for use at all times. Freddie took the items of the bag out one at a time, explaining each items purpose. The students listened carefully and got to ask questions throughout the session

Contents of bag:

- Knife
- Map
- Wooden matches
- Cup
- Tea bag
- Sugar bag
- Salt
- Bible
- Tin can with a candle in it (flashlight)
- Food for energy and for when traveling

6. Women's Bag:

Sarah also showed how the lady in the house also has a bag of great importance. The ladies bag is full of knives to work with animal hides and meat. Every single knife in the bag has its own individual purpose, from knives to cut hair from the hide of moose or caribou, to knives used for cutting the meat and to working with dry fish. Each knife is carefully looked after and wrapped up separately. Sarah knows exactly where every knife is in her bag, and what each knife is used for. In the bag there is also caribou and moose bones that have been sharpened into tools for working with hides. Nobody but the lady owner of the bag is to touch it or take anything out of the bag. The students again listened very carefully, getting the chance to ask questions and pass the caribou and moose bones around.

7. Shelter building:

The students were told of how important it is to be able to make shelter when on the land for survival. Freddie showed the students how to make a quinzhee and how the snow has different layers, each with their own good uses, such as how the layer of snow that



is most like sugar is best for turning into drinking water. The students got a chance to work on their own quinzhee.

8. Spruce gum:

Freddie showed the students spruce gum on the trees, and talked about the importance of having knowledge of what plants and trees etc on the land can be used for medicine and for food.

9. Making Fire:

Freddie gathered the students in a circle to show them how to build fire. He showed them how to use the dead branches on the bottom of pine trees, and how to make shavings off sections of chopped wood to use as fire starters, then how to build the fire up into a stronger fire that keeps you warm or allows you to cook food. Freddie stressed the importance of being fire safe, how you must never play with matches or play around the fire, that fire must always be respected and proper care and attention should always be used when dealing with fire. The students then got the chance to start their own fires. The students found this very interesting and showed appropriate caution around the fire and matches at all times.

10. Lunch:

A large tablecloth is placed on the floor. The students sit around the tablecloth and wait quietly to be served hot caribou soup, delicious bannock, donuts, juice, and a berry dessert. Miss Kay blesses the food before lunch begins. Then everyone enjoys a beautiful lunch while listening to CBC radio.

11. Fox Presentation:

RRO Lloyd Gruben from the Dept of Environment & Natural Resources came out to give an informative presentation on the fox, the types that are in the North, how they live, the danger of rabies, and what to do if you come across a fox. The presentation was very interesting and the students were very intrigued by the information, which encouraged them to ask even more questions.

12. Skidoo Ride:

The students were placed in sleds and towed behind skidoos out through different trails along creeks, through forest and across lakes, both to see the land and also to look for animal tracks in the hope of seeing animals such as the moose.

13. Return to school:

After the skidoo ride the students have time for a final snack, juice or water, and time to use the washroom before returning to the school with the bus.



Gwich'in Vocabulary used on the trips:

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| • Geh | Rabbit |
| • Gyah | Snare |
| • Zhoh | Snow |
| • Geh k'ii | Rabbit tracks |
| • Zheh | House |
| • K'aii | Willow |
| • Ts;iiivii | Tree |
| • Troo | Wood |
| • Daagoo | Ptarmigan |
| • Daagoo K'ii | Ptarmigan tracks |
| • Dinjik | Moose |
| • Vadzaih | Caribou |
| • Neegoo | Fox |
| • Kwan' | Fire |
| • Ediigwit'an | Whiskey Jack |



Conclusion:

The day trips were enjoyed by all. The students remained interested and focused throughout the days, while learning more new skills and traditions from their culture. There were no incidents to report. All facilitators done an excellent job, the students had a lot of fun, and overall the program was considered a great success.

