

MECCS

A newsletter for Mother Earth's Children's Charter School to share its successful traditional and innovative programming.

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MECCS is on Facebook!



Find driving directions and more at www.meccs.org

Spirit North Cross-Country Ski Program



From the beginning of February to the beginning of April, we had the great opportunity to welcome Leah Reid, Program Leader from Spirit North, to the school to teach the students how to cross-country ski.

Founded in 2009 by Olympic and World Cup medal holder Beckie Scott and partner Laura Filipow, Spirit North works in more than 30 Indigenous communities across Alberta, BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to introduce Indigenous youth to cross-country skiing and the fundamental joy of movement.

Spirit North community outreach leaders, expert coaches and trained volunteers work cooperatively with schools and communities to teach basic skiing techniques, play games, develop skills, and make sure students and teachers have a positive and supported experience.

Our students had never seen cross-country skis before but it didn't take long before they were on their feet and moving. The program encourages active enjoyment of the outdoors and engages youth through games, skills instruction and practical experience.

Mariah Mustus-Bull trying cross-country skiing during a recent Spirit North program.



Left to right: Emily Bird, Teanna Paskemin and Lazura Roan trying their new cross-country skiing skills.



Left to right: Jaina Lafleche-Arcand, Dylan Boxall and Drake Bird.

Leah had our students skiing like pros in no time. At first they were worried it would be too hard. Those fears soon vanished as the fun took over. By the last session, all students had managed to gain enough skill so that they could enjoy their time outside (and spend more time on their skis and less picking themselves up). Even teachers strapped on the skis and learned a thing or two.

We had wonderful weather in our last session. Leah was joined by Annika Oleson, a Program Leader who usually runs the Fox Lake program, and Bill Moore, a program volunteer.

We are very pleased we will be able to welcome Spirit North back again in the 2019–20 school year. We look forward to giving our students these opportunities to continue to grow and learn.



Left to right: Braiden Bowes, Francis Brown, Jolissa Potts, Annika Oleson, Azarius Rain and Leland Letendre.



Left to right: Francis Brown, Joselle Potts and Shauna Bird; Mariah Mustus-Bull; and Annika Olsesen helping Azaria Rain.



Above, from left to right: Jacob Bull; Alec Bird; Mark Ehnes; and Azarielle Kimiksana.

Right: Samuel Bird lacing up before a cross-country ski lesson.

Below: Leah Reid, Annika Olesen and Bill Moore preparing to teach MECCS students.



Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Map



Students from MECCS and Academy at King Edward learning together as they explore the new Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Giant Floor Map, created by the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and other consultants.

On April 10, our longtime partner school in Edmonton, Academy at King Edward, invited MECCS elementary students to explore the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Giant Floor Map with them. Our students joined Academy at King Edward partnership coordinator Mr. Varughese, Ms. Oakes and their students to learn about the map together and share a pizza lunch. Edmonton Public School District FNMI consultant Jeremy Albert also joined the students.

The map measures 11 by 8 metres (36 by 25 feet), and has to be packed and shipped inside of a hockey-type duffel bag. It is so large that it took up the floorspace of a double classroom (and still barely fit).

Academy at King Edward had the privilege of being one of the first schools in the Edmonton Public School District to have access to the giant map. The map is already booked well into the next school year so we were very lucky to share access to this amazing resource through our ongoing partnership.

Students used the map to learn about residential schools, treaty areas in Canada, Indigenous languages, animal migration patterns, famous Indigenous people, human rights issues and much more. The language data shown on the map is taken from the 2016 Canadian census. It highlights not only what languages and language groups are spoken but also how many people in that area speak

this language or language group. The larger the letters, the more people speak a particular language in that area. According to the data, more than 70 Indigenous languages have been reported, 36 of which had at least 500 speakers.

The border of the Giant Floor Map shows a timeline that outlines key historical events of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada. A schoolhouse indicates the location of a residential school that existed in Canada. The first residential school was opened in 1831 and the last one did not close until 1996.

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society created the map along with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as one of the official partners and a number of other consultants. “What’s important is we’re seeing kids understand what this country is and how long this country has not been Canada, how long it’s been Indigenous land,” the RCGS states.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Academy at King Edward and providing students with an awareness and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture, history and traditions through the activities we share. Later this spring we will be inviting students from Academy at King Edward to join us for a day with everyone’s favourite author and another partner of ours, David Bouchard.