

MECCS

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

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Continued Partnership With Spirit North

We continue to initiate, develop and sustain partnerships with schools and organizations to enhance learning opportunities for our students.

This is our second year partnering with Spirit North, and we look forward to future years as this has proven to be an outstanding program. With our unique location featuring access to kilometres of outdoor space, we are a natural fit for winter activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

From early January to the end of March, we were honoured to have had the opportunity to welcome to the school Leah Reid, Program Leader, and Marshall German, Program Coordinator, from Spirit North to teach students how to cross-country ski.

During this year's session, full sets of boots, poles and skis were left at the school so teachers and students



Left to right: Dylan Boxall, Darius Raine-Mackinaw, Lily Bird and Adam Bull.

could continue learning on their own during the weeks that Spirit North instructors were not available to us.



Adrianna Bull.



Amira Bird.



Azarius Rain.



From far left:

- 1. Drea Bull-Mustus.*
- 2. Darius Raine-Mackinaw getting set to try again.*

Below, from left:

- 1. Leah Reid, one of the instructors from Spirit North.*
- 2. Lily Bird and Dylan Boxall.*





Spirit North instructor Marshall German leads Drayanne Raine-Mackinaw, Chloe Hazzard, Tristen Lafleche, Olyn Baynes, Ty Houle, Azarielle Kimiksana and Jacob Bull.

Many of our students had never seen cross-country skis before last year's program. It didn't take long, however, before they were on their skis and moving.

Leah and Marshall were quite pleased to see how fast the students remembered the basics when they started this year. They were able to quickly start teaching more advanced techniques.

The Spirit North program encourages active enjoyment of the outdoors and engages youth through games, skills instruction and practical experience. Spirit North uses sport, play and land-based activities to engage, inspire and educate children and youth. Its goal is to spark inspiration for health and help develop community-led sport and activity programming that promotes leadership and increases the positive development of Indigenous children and their communities.

Spirit North runs free of charge in communities, offering outreach program delivery to Indigenous youth of all ages and abilities. While the program focuses on providing sport and activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, it also helps communities and schools to build ski clubs, develop trails, certify coaches, acquire equipment, and provide mentorship to foster programming owned and led by the community.

Last season, Spirit North delivered programs to over 6,000 Indigenous youth in 57 communities and 77 schools across BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. In addition to the on-site school sessions, students have additional opportunities to develop their skills. Every Saturday from January through March, Spirit North hosted a free drop-in program at Victoria Park in Edmonton. No experience was necessary, all equipment was provided and new skiers were able to explore the five kilometres of trails at Victoria Park on their own or with a Spirit North coach. Our MECCS students also got to take a mid-week field trip to Victoria Park so that all students and staff could experience it.

About Spirit North

Founded in 2009 by Beckie Scott, CEO, and partner Laura Filipow, Program Director, Spirit North is a national charitable organization committed to improving the health and well-being of Indigenous children and youth through the transformative power of sport and play.

Spirit North uses sport, play and land-based activities to engage, inspire and educate children and youth. It works in more than 30 Indigenous communities across BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario to introduce youth to cross-country skiing and the fundamental joy of movement in sport.

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.

About Beckie Scott

Spirit North CEO Beckie Scott is an Olympic gold medal winner (2002, Salt Lake City) and silver medal winner (2006, Turin, Italy). She has also won 17 World Cup titles.



Beckie is an Officer of the Order of Canada. She has been elected to the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame, Canadian Ski Hall of Fame, Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame and Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.



Clockwise from top left:

- 1. Big snowy smiles from Azarius Rain.*
- 2. Spirit North instructor Marshall German coaching McKenna Roan-House.*
- 3. Maxine Hildebrandt.*
- 4. Nevaeh Hazzard.*
- 5. Mark Ehnes and Naomi Ethier.*