

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

Culture Camp Update: Outdoor Skills

MECCS is fortunate to be able to access people with outdoor skills to teach our students. Principal Erin Danforth's stepfather is one of these people. Hart Wichern, who has many years of experience working with outdoor projects, recently spent two days with our students.

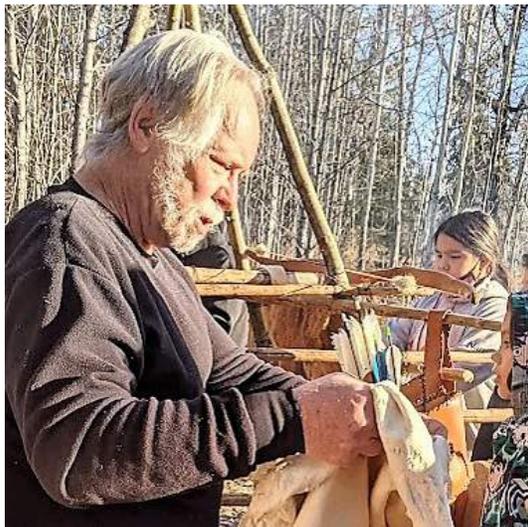
Hart grew up in Edmonton at a time when the south edge of the city ended where the Whitemud Freeway currently sits. He spent many childhood days exploring the creeks and wooded areas there.

Fascinated with hunting and trapping from a young age, Hart began collecting animal furs and skulls along with other curiosities that fostered his lifelong affinity for the outdoors and the natural world.

Through his love for nature and inspired by the writings of author and survivalist Tom Brown, Jr., Hart spent many years learning

Jolissa Potts examining one of Hart Wichern's taxidermy samples.





and refining his outdoor skills, gaining knowledge and experience in stalking and tracking, outdoor survival, and skills such as making fire from friction without the aid of matches or a lighter. Hart has presented workshops on these skills at national and international outdoor conferences and jamborees, and he is always happy to share these skills and his love of nature with anyone.

On his first day at our culture camp, he showed students some of his collection, including animal hides and skins and some small animals that he had taxidermied. Students also had the opportunity to try on various articles of clothing made from hides and furs.

On the second day, Hart demonstrated how to make and use a bow drill to start a fire. The students then spent the rest of their time creating their own bow drills and trying to start a fire. The activity proved to be challenging at times—students had to make several attempts before they succeeded.



Left, top: Hart Wichern showing students one of his tanned hides.

Left: Maxine Hildebrandt holding up another of Hart's tanned hides.

Left, bottom: Lazura Roan modelling a tanned hide outfit.



Right: Superintendent Ed Wittchen wearing a fox skin hat.

Below: Faith Littlechild wearing one of the outfits made from hides.



One of the big advantages of our culture camp outdoor classroom is that we can bring out small groups of students over the day for some very focused learning. Already in the early stages we are seeing the potential we thought the culture camp had becoming realized in many ways.

Staff are excited to create new learning opportunities. Students are enjoying being engaged in outdoor learning and taking part in keeping the camp clean by keeping it free of leaves and snow.



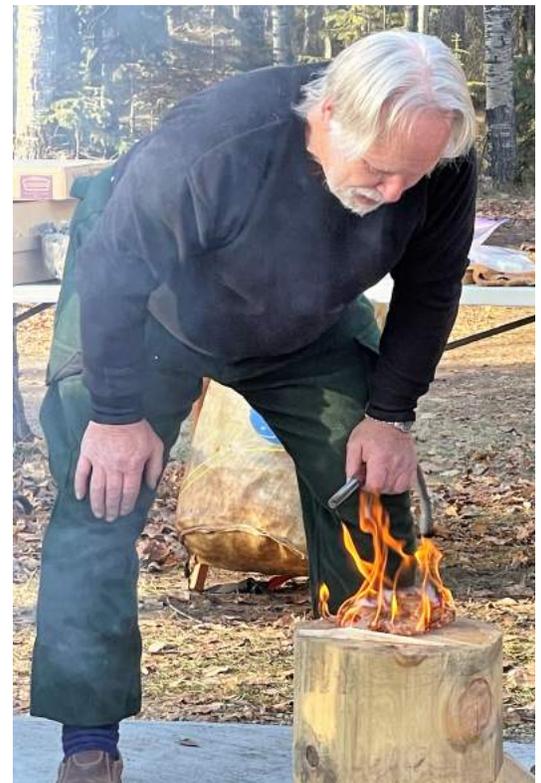
Right, top: Hart showing students how to make fire using only a bow drill.

Right: It takes a lot of hard work to make fire from a bow drill.

Right, bottom: Success!

Left: Francis Brown trying out his bow drill.

Below: Instruction time with Hart Wichern at the culture camp.





Left: Hart talking to Tenzin Bird about the project.

Right: Azarius Rain getting ready to use a bow drill to try to make fire.



Left: Mr. Ehnes's K-1 class learning about hides at the culture camp.

Right: Part of the set-up for making fire with the bow drill.



Below: Lily Bird successfully making fire.



Learning outdoor skills at the MECCS culture camp