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RROWING TOGETHER

NEWS & RESOURCES FOR THE BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START ON-RESERVE PROGRAM



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TAYLOR JAMISON AND CLINT PETERS JR.

Keeping the Circle Strong

WE WANT TO KEEP OUR TRADITIONAL ST'AT'IMC SONGS ALIVE. In November of 2005 we started to host monthly drumming nights at the community hall. We felt this was important to do. The purpose of hosting these events is to come together in times of celebration. So often at funerals people mention we shouldn't

just get together when people die. We want community members to have an opportunity to learn and practice our traditional St'at'imc songs and dances on a regular basis. We continue to invite our neighbouring communities from Seton and Mount Currie to join us. We also realize that the event needs to be open to

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RIGHT: MARGARET PETERS,
WOMEN'S WARRIOR SONG.

BELOW: NORA ALEXANDER AND KAREN
THEVARGE SCRAPING THE DEER HIDE.



everyone and that it be a welcoming environment in the hall.

We bring art supplies for people to express themselves and be creative. We bring our local hand-picked herbs for making tea. Food is very important! We ask that everyone bring healthy snacks to share. As we hosted these Drumming Nights, we realized that most of the drummers were adults and that we wanted our preschoolers to start learning our songs. We talked to Margaret Peters, our Ucwalmicwts instructor/cultural teacher, and asked her to help us find some deer hides to make some drums for the preschool. She talked to Darla Thevarge about our request and Darla was able to find two deer hides for our class.



We use the drums at circle time, we take them on our walks to the lake and we've brought them to community events to share with others. The children have embraced drumming and dancing, which is so exciting for us to see. They will request drumming a few songs at circle time when we hadn't planned to. They will also request to bring them with us when we go out for a walk. Some of the children take the drum out and use it while we

are walking which is a little more challenging. They are learning our St'at'imc songs! The children are learning about rhythm and tempo. They are learning how to dance to our songs and they are having so much fun

Drum-Making Diary

April 13th. We started making our drums at Margaret Peters' house (she teaches us Ucwalmicwts, our St'at'imc Territory language). She told us about how to start our drum-making process and the appropriate protocol we needed to follow. Every time we went to Margaret's house, we lit some smudge and talked about what we were doing, how we were going to do it and why we were doing those things. At the end of every session at her house we also did some drumming and dancing.

May 15th. We went to check on our deer hide that had been soaking in the creek for the last month. We pulled the fur off the hide and cleaned it off.

May 17th. Everyone had a turn using the knife to scrape the deer hide. Both sides of the hide had to be scraped clean. The hide was put in the freezer on the weekends so that it wouldn't get stinky. When the hide was clean, we stretched it out, cut four circles out then used the remaining material to make the lacing to secure the hide to the frame. All the children helped to stretch the hide and used the hose to spray it down. The teachers and children had to work together to stretch the lacing into longer pieces.

May 29th. We used sand paper to sand the drum frames.



doing it. After a drumming session, we hear them singing the songs throughout the rest of the day.

We want our preschoolers to learn these St'at'imc songs and dances while they are young, so that they will sing and dance to them with confidence and teach their children's children. We know that the inter-generational impacts of residential school affect our community and we want to help heal those wounds with drumming and dancing. We know that the rhythm of the drum is magical. We find comfort in that heartbeat. The hand drum is used at funerals here in our area. We know that drumming truly brings people together and we remember that we are more similar than we are different. We all have a heartbeat. We sing together, cry together and laugh together; we are keeping the circle strong when we drum our St'at'imc songs.

Lisa Sambo
Assistant, N'Quatqua Head Start Preschool Program



During our two-month drum-making process, Nora Alexander, a dedicated parent/skilled drum maker, came and helped us. At the time we did not have a camera and we are extremely grateful to Wirt Thevarge and Wendy MacDonald for photographing our drum-making project. We are now able to show parents and community members a slide show of our drum-making project. We plan on making some more drums in spring of 2007.

ABOVE: KIO THEVARGE AND CALI-ANNE ROBERTSON
HAND DRUMMING AT MARGARET'S HOUSE

May 31st. The children took turns using the hammer and nail to punch holes in the hide.
June 1st. The children, parents and teachers worked together to lace the hide onto the drum frame. One parent helper was extremely knowledgeable about getting the tension just right on the lacing.

June 5th. The children made their drumsticks and decorated them.

June 7th. The drums were completely dried and ready for use. We had a coming out ceremony for our four new drums at the Drumming Night held at the community hall.



HALLIE COOPER