

FNSA News

The Newsletter of the First Nations Schools Association

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First Nations Parents Clubs - Growing stronger

Over the past year the First Nations Parents Club has continued to be a great success. Based on the concept of helping parents to help their children achieve educational success through assistance with homework, nutrition and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the Parents Club provides an important support network to First Nations parents throughout British Columbia (BC). Currently there are 114 Parents Clubs in BC with a total of 2580 members. 16 of these clubs were formed during 2004.

The FNSA supports Parents Clubs by providing regular newsletters, which include recipes for healthful meals and snacks, and interesting articles on parenting issues. The FNSA also produces a Parents Club calendar and distributes prizes, games and books as incentives for parents to actively participate.

In 2004, the FNSA was also able to provide grants of \$1000 to Parents Clubs to assist with the facilitation of parenting workshops, in-service training for parents, or set-up costs for new Parents Clubs. 64 Parents Clubs were allocated grants.

Of this funding, 40% was used to conduct workshops, 26% was used to support Parents Club meetings, 11% was used to support literacy programs, and the remainder was used for traditional crafts, books and games, and language initiatives.

In 2004, the British Columbia Confederation of Parents Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) asked the FNSA to recommend First Nations parents to facilitate a workshop at its Annual General Meeting and Conference. The workshop was intended to provide a First Nations perspective on parenting.

James and Loretta Cook (pictured) of the Nanoose First Nation Parents Club rose to the challenge and provided an extremely informative and humorous session, which highlighted the work being done by First Nations Parents Clubs throughout BC.



Career Fair & Field Trip Initiative

In 2004/2005, FNECS and the FNSA were once again able to offer grants for **Career Fairs and Field Trips**. A record number of proposals were submitted, but unfortunately only 22 of the 113 proposals could be funded with the \$100,000 in available funding. The successful initiatives included field trips to tertiary institutions, field trips to career related conferences, community specific career fairs with an emphasis on local economic development opportunities, and presentations by local role models. Congratulations to those successful schools and communities and good luck with your initiatives.



Upcoming FNSA AGM & Conference

The 2005 First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) AGM & Conference will take place on April 22nd and 23rd 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. The theme for the upcoming Conference and AGM is **First Nations Schools: Striving for Excellence**.

This theme is meant to explore the many ways in which First Nations schools are working to create positive learning environments for students, and the efforts they are making to monitor their success.

The FNSA AGM and Conference provides a unique opportunity for educators working within First Nations schools in BC to come together, share stories and experiences, and celebrate successes. It is an opportunity to learn from one another and from a variety of professional development opportunities.

If you are interested in attending this year's AGM and Conference, please contact the FNSA office or visit www.fnsa.ca for a registration package. Everyone is welcome to this event!

ArtStarts Provides Great Start

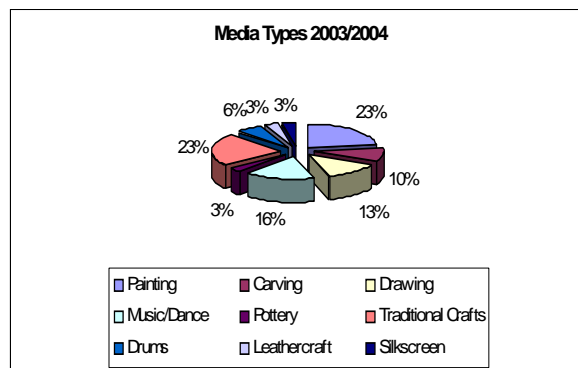


ArtStarts in Schools was founded in 1996 and is a unique not-for-profit organization offering a broad range of programs, services and resources to promote arts and creativity among young people in British Columbia (BC). ArtStarts in Schools plays a leadership role in transforming the way children and youth are engaged in the arts, and in promoting the value of the arts in young lives.

Since 2003 the ArtStarts in Schools project has been offered to the members of the First Nations Schools Association. The grants have been offered to randomly selected schools with fair representation given to schools throughout the BC Region.

A variety of successful performances, workshops and demonstrations have taken place as a result of this funding, including the following.

- ◆ *Aché Brasil Dance Group*
- ◆ *Traditional craft, dance and art demonstrations and lessons*
- ◆ *Pottery lessons*
- ◆ *Mural drafting and painting*
- ◆ *Illustration classes*
- ◆ *Silk screening*



ArtStarts in Schools Initiatives - 2003/2004 - Types of Media

2004 Regional Sessions Update

FNESC enjoyed another successful and informative series of Regional Sessions in 2004. The sessions were conducted between September 20th and December 3rd and took place in Prince Rupert, Merritt, Lytton, Port Alberni, Campbell River, Brentwood Bay, Williams Lake, Prince George, Cranbrook, Kelowna and Agassiz. The sessions were well attended and updated participants on the following issues.

- √ Special Education
- √ SchoolNet
- √ New Paths for Education
- √ Youth Employment Strategy Programs
- √ Schools Assessment Project
- √ Jurisdiction Negotiations
- √ Aboriginal Language Sub-Committee
- √ First Nations Parents Club
- √ Education Partners
- √ Indian Studies Support Program
- √ Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
- √ Post Secondary Sub-Committee

FNESC received good direction and feedback on these issues and will make every effort to act on recommendations from participants in the coming year.

Historica Fairs

In May 2003, Historica and the FNSA committed their combined resources to providing First Nations and public schools with the opportunity to explore and share their unique histories. The primary objective of this partnership was to increase BC involvement in the Historica Fairs Program, a hands-on approach to making learning about history and heritage fun. The joint goal was to make the Fairs available to the 127 BC First Nations schools and to promote partnerships with local public schools.

To date, the partnership between Historica and the FNSA has been very successful and fits well with other current strategies undertaken by FNESC and the FNSA, such as the Anti-Racism initiative.

In 2003/2004 the FNSA and Historica continued to expand upon their partnership and implemented the *Community Historica Fairs Program*. The FNSA and Historica submitted a proposal to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for funding to support the Fairs Program and were successful in receiving \$20,000. The FNSA matched that contribution and the funding was then made available for First Nation schools along with a neighboring provincial school to participate in and jointly develop a Community Historica Fair.

The 2003/2004 *Community Historica Fairs Program* involved 736 students, as well as parents and teachers. The Fairs provided inspiration to the many participants who were able to explore their own particular interest in history and, in many cases, their own personal histories.

"I claim our project to be successful because students who participated informed other members of the exciting knowledge received as a result of participating. Now we have more students/members interested in future Historica Projects" **Kitselas Band Council, Education Coordinator**

"The Historica Fairs Program was a success, as you will read in the final report. This year, the intermediate grade students were the main participants. Their involvement, participation and co-operation was commendable. There are times when students are not willing and/or not interested; well, this time they were. They were a success."
Stein Valley N'lakapamux School Principal



Seventh Generation Club

The Seventh Generation Club, a club for First Nations students throughout British Columbia (BC) is a growing concern! Currently the club has over 7200 members. At the beginning of the school year members were provided with informative and handy *Daytimers*, to help them organize their time and assignments. Regular school attendance is rewarded with incentive prizes such as Canucks t-shirts and hats, backpacks, and even trips to Canucks games (well back in the good old days!).

Club members are kept up to date through the regularly published newsletters and via the Seventh Generation Club web site. A recent addition to the web site is the Healthy Living section, which has a great selection of nutritious recipes, exercise information, and tips for taking care of yourself. Why not check it out at <http://www.seventhgenerationclub.com>?

Gala 2005

One highlight each year for the Seventh Generation Club is the Fundraising Gala which takes place annually just prior to the FNSA AGM and Conference. This year's Gala evening, scheduled for April 21st, 2005, includes a silent auction, a banquet dinner, and wonderful entertainment. If you are interested in attending the gala, or if you are able to donate an item to the silent auction, please contact the FNSA office. All support is greatly appreciated.

Special Education Update

Newly Announced Funding

The February 23rd, 2005 federal budget announcement included an increased national commitment of \$120 million of special education funding over five years for First Nations children living on reserve (approximately \$24 million per year). The proportion of this funding that will be allocated to BC has not yet been determined. While this news is positive in that it will mean increased resources for children with special needs in First Nations schools in BC, the total funding amount still falls short of the unmet special education needs expressed by First Nations in Canada. It is anticipated that lobbying for adequate resources in this area will continue.

Special Education & Lending Library

Special Education resources are available and include the *Connections* Special Education Newsletter and the Special Education listserv. For information about these services or if you would like to receive *Connections* via email, please contact the Coordinator of the Special Education Resource Line, Lisa Ellis at 1-877-547-1919 or lisae@fnesc.ca.

Lending Library

This library offers great resources for use by FNSA member schools. If you have any questions, please contact Patti Yamamoto at the FNSA or email her at pattiy@fnesc.ca.

First Nations Schools Association Board of Directors

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