

October 4, 2012 – News Release:

The Bethany College Connection:

Written by Jerry Letkeman, Service Learning Director

Photos by Randy Klassen, Instructor in Biblical and Theological Studies



Bethany College takes Classroom on the Road!

From September 19-27, First and Second Year Bethany College students went “on the road” to engage in various Service Learning Modules.

Sixty First Year students travelled to Calgary, Kelowna, Regina and Saskatoon. In Calgary, thirty students served at The Mustard Seed, Calgary Drop In, Calgary Food Bank, Jesus Loves You Society, Salvation Army and Next Step Ministries. The Calgary leaders were Randi Rempel, Associate Dean of Women; Jelisa Riediger, Residence Director; and Nick Poetker, alumnus. The Kelowna team worked at the Kelowna Gospel Mission under the leadership of Dave Carey, Associate Dean of Men. The males of that team lived in the shelter for the week and the entire team helped out during the day. The Regina team worked with Healing Hearts Ministry under the leadership of Alvin Thielmann, Athletics Director. They experienced various church, para-church and community organizations. The Saskatoon team worked through MCC Saskatchewan’s Chalo program, learning about issues that affect immigrants and refugees; their team leader was Erick Penner, Residence Director.

The purpose of the First Year module is for students to have a strong small group experience early in the school year and become more aware of issues around poverty, homelessness and new Canadians.



Second Years set up tipi at Beardy's

Thirty Second Year students visited three different Cree communities in Saskatchewan. Luke Heidebrecht, Associate Director of Missions, led a team to the Bigstone community in Air Ronge. They were involved in various activities to support the ministry of the Angus Ross family - Angus is a church leader in Bigstone. These activities included running kids clubs, clearing bush, overnighting at a remote cabin, visiting elders and various miscellaneous opportunities. Randy Klassen, Instructor in Biblical and Theological Studies, led a team to the Beardy’s & Okemasis First Nation. They built a tipi, participated in an elder’s panel, were involved in a local radio broadcast,



Second Years' Camp

helped in elementary classrooms and much more. Jerry Letkeman, Service Learning Director, led a team to Hall Lake where they played blind volleyball, street hockey, badminton and helped out in elementary classrooms. Both the Beardy’s and Hall Lakes teams coincided their visits with an annual Culture Camp that the respective schools hold in

Nurturing Disciples and Training Leaders To Serve

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September. These camps allowed our students to snare rabbits and catch fish; eat moose meat, bannock and duck soup; create beaded bracelets, hear stories and have lots of fun with children, youth, adults and elders.

The purpose of the Second Year module is for students to live and relate in a Cree community so they can make new friends and gain greater understanding of the strength of our First Nations communities and an awareness of the issues they face. Bethany College teams have been intentionally connecting with Cree communities for over a decade and we

are delighted with the strong relationships we enjoy due to the continuity of our team leaders. When asked about this experience and its impact, Randy Klassen commented: *“Each year the Beardy’s community has been wonderfully welcoming to our Bethany team. They share with us their stories, their humour, their food and their friendship. This year, as we listened to the elders and their stories of the residential schools, we learned about hardship and abuse, resilience and forgiveness. We see their reverence for the Creator, we pray the Lord’s Prayer with them, and we share the love of Jesus. It’s an experience of service learning that is already leaving a legacy in the Beardy’s community, even as it is reshaping our students.”*



Kaeli Fineday and Randy Klassen inspect tipi

Over the past few years, Bethany College has enjoyed an increasing number of First Nations students who have enriched our community. For more information and team pictures visit www.bethany.sk.ca.

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