



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Media Information

June 9, 2008

Hand-carved Paddles, Hip Hop Singer, Art, and a Smudge to Celebrate Aboriginal Culture Springvalley Middle Students Display Handmade Paddles at Ceremony

Kelowna, BC: On June 10, at 3pm, Kinnie Starr, a popular Aboriginal hip hop singer will kick off a ceremony at Springvalley Middle School to celebrate Aboriginal culture. Following several weeks' worth of effort and training, students will unveil their hand-carved paddles alongside a full-size paddle and a canoe created by their teacher and Vernon artist Gordon Marchand. The ceremony will also include the first display of five Okanagan Nation paddles created by Marchand. Leonard Raphael, a member of the Thompson Okanagan Nation who specializes in ethnobotany, will bless the display using a smudge of indigenous plants such as sage and cedar.

“The paddles will have a plaque that has the Okanagan translation of each word in the acronym REACH (Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Cooperation, Honesty),” says Principal Scott McLean. “This project is our way of formalizing the partnership between Springvalley Middle School and our Aboriginal community. Celebrating this partnership brings a cultural richness and a sense of history to all of our students, regardless of their background.”

Each Wednesday for six weeks, Marchand visited the school to teach students the traditional techniques for carving birch wood paddles. The carving involves a straight-edged tool (in this case a basic, straight blade). The students' paddles are miniature size, ranging from 30cm (12 inches) to 40cm (16 inches). The paddles are made from birch, the species typically selected for this purpose by Okanagan peoples. Students who participated are able to carve a paddle for a keepsake.

The ceremony will also feature art work by Aboriginal students who attend Springvalley Middle School.

Did you know?

The BC Ministry of Education defines an Aboriginal Student as a person who is identified by their family as having Metis, Inuit, or First Nation Ancestry. The Federal terms, status and non-status, do not apply to this definition.

For comments, please contact:

Moyra Baxter, Chairperson of the Board (250) 767-6153

Mike Roberts, Superintendent of Schools (250) 860-8888

Scott McLean Principal, Springvalley Middle School

For background information, please contact Lisa Harrison lharriso@sd23.bc.ca or 470-3284
