

News and Information

November 28, 2013

Raising Awareness for Our Own Voodoo Olympian

Kelowna, B.C. –

We are contacting you on behalf of Rutland Middle School. We have initiated a school-wide project that is focused on building awareness about a local Canadian athlete, Eric Neilson. Our initiative begins in the community of Rutland but our goal is to reach as many supporters across Canada as possible. Eric Neilson is a skeleton racer who grew up in Kelowna and attended our school. His mother, Fiona Neilson, has been a Certified Education Assistant in our school for many years, thus building a stronger connection between Eric and the Rutland Middle School students and staff. We want to create excitement about Eric's pursuit of his Olympic dream in Sochi 2014 and, at the same time, build our school pride and sense of community.

Eric is already an accomplished athlete and was just selected to be on the 2013/14 World Cup Skeleton team for Canada. He placed 4th at the 2013 World Championships and will be representing Canada at the 2014 Sochi Olympics. He has been an integral part of this project from the beginning, and is continuously communicating with our students.

While our entire student body is engaged in this project, each Mentorship class is creating a unique product to help communicate our message: radio podcasts, various video projects, letters to businesses and different levels of government, articles and flyers for newsprint, various social media, digital advertising and fine arts projects like quilting, T-shirt design, posters and murals. Throughout the process, the students will be learning important 21st century skills and traits, while focusing on an engaging topic that is both relevant and completely authentic. Students will see the results of their project unfold, especially if we are able to gain the support of media outlets in order to reach a larger national or international audience. Our project will be running until after the Olympic Games in Sochi as our contact with Eric will continue.

We are asking members of the media in our community to assist us in rallying support for Eric Neilson. Your participation could range from including a story about our recent efforts, to visiting our school and witnessing students planning and creating their individualized products, and/or highlighting some of our student work in your medium.

We would welcome any input you have that could assist us in this endeavor. If you would like to be a part of this exciting community initiative, or have any further questions, please contact Kathy Weninger, Principal of Rutland Middle School, or either of the Mentorship planning teachers, Chris Werry or Deanne Collinson, at (250) 765-2988.