Guiding girls to greatness

Taloyoak forms its first Girl Guide troop in 20 years

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by Kassina Ryder
Northern News Services
Taloyoak/Spence Bay

For the first time in 20 years, a classroom at Netsilik School in Taloyoak was filled with the sounds of Girl Guides working to earn their badges last month.

More than 40 girls from the community have been registered with the Girl Guides since it began over a month ago, teacher Jocelyn Myatt said.

It is the first time the community has had a Girl Guide troop in more than two decades, Myatt said. The group comprises all age levels, including Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers. She said she started the group because she knows what it's like to grow up in a small community.

"When I was younger, I lived in a really small community. I had about 11 kids that went to school with me from Grade 1 to Grade 6," she said. "Outside of school, there weren't very many things for us to do in the evenings."

She said joining Girl Guides benefited her while growing up.

"When Girl Guides started in our community I joined up and it's something that really affected me as a girl," she said. "It gave me self-confidence and gave me a time to be with other girls."

Sixteen-year-old Ranger Joanne Aleekee agreed.

"It's only girls and it's fun," she said.

So far, the older girls have worked towards their sewing badges by making homemade Magic Bags for Mother's Day while the younger girls made beaded bracelets.

Taloyoak elder Kublu Tucktoo volunteered to help the girls sew, Myatt said. She said elders from the community will be invited to teach the girls skills, such as sewing.

"We're trying to incorporate bringing in as many elders as we can to work with the girls," Myatt said. Learning sewing and other activities teach the girls skills they can use for the rest of their lives, she said.

"I think those skills are transferable to kids doing other things as they get older," she said.

Nine-year-old Guide Joni Tulurialik said she has already learned how to cook.

"I mostly like cooking," she said, adding that she has learned how to make both popcorn and chocolate sauce during her evenings spent with the Girl Guides.

Myatt said she is a supporter of the Girl Guides slogan "Girl Greatness."

"I really buy into that whole philosophy and I think this is something that is needed in the community for the girls."

"It developed lifelong friendships for me," she said. "It's something you go through together with other girls."

Taloyoak Brownies and Sparks *pose for a picture at Netsilik School. Front row from left, are Jenny Uqugtuq, Kenia Pike, Shalane Kootook, Jocelyn Ashevak, Jodee Tulurialik and Paniak Karoo. Back row, from left, Helen Saittuq, Charlotte Totalik, Tamara Totalik, Leanna Kootook and Elizabeth Oleekatalik.*

NORTHERN Lights

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Taloyoak's Girl Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers *pose for a photo. Front row from left, are Andrea Illiqiq, Delilah Aleekee, Pierrette Karoo, Heidi Totalik and Joni Tuluralik. Second row from left, are Sharlon Poodlat, Lisa Aqqaq, Sharlene Pauloosie, Maggie Aqqaq, Sarah Kingnatook and Hayley Totalik. Third row from left, are Kendra Jayko, Janice Neeveacheak, Miranda Karoo, Joanne Oleekatalik and Andrea Alyout. Back row, from left, Dana Totalik, Suzanne Qavavau and Sam Oleekatalik.*

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