



Little Shuswap Indian Band Shows that Every Step Counts

July 2008

The Little Shuswap Indian Band community members and employees have held a friendly competition each year to see which team tracks the most steps on their pedometers. This year, the 50 registrants in the Every Step Counts six-week walking program logged more than 7,000 kilometres collectively.

Kicking off on Move for Health Day (May 10), the challenge gets people out walking, leading up to the community's Aboriginal Day celebration on June 21.

"It seems to work well in terms of the season and the length of time," said challenge organizer Laura Jameson, the Band's Health Coordinator. *"We include*

recognition of the walkers in our Aboriginal Day celebration on June 21."

Since the challenge's first year in 2005, Jameson has noticed more people out walking throughout the year.

"Staff would head out the door on their lunch hour and walk the various trails in the area," Jameson noted. During the six weeks, participants walked independently or in small groups.

"We are interested in promoting health and encouraging walking." Jameson added. *"Creating teams to encourage participation and friendly competition has worked well."*

Community members from the Tappen and Skwlax reserves and staff from the Band Office formed three teams. This year, staff from the Band-owned Quaaout Resort and Talking Rock golf course formed the fourth team.

Each participant received a free pedometer, log book, and t-shirt, funded through the Band's health program. The pedometers were distributed at the Move for Health Day kickoff walk from the Band office to the Quaaout Resort, about a kilometre away. At the end of the group walk, participants gathered for a community lunch, where they heard about the benefits of walking and received tips on walking.



Okanagan – Little Shuswap Band

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- Laura Jameson

All teams increased their distance walked from previous years, but it was the Band office staff that came out ahead.

The challenge gets community members from ages 3 to 60 out the door. The children and staff at the daycare joined the challenge, while youth became involved by signing up with their families. The Chief and Council also joined in.

"There is a real benefit in annual events so that it becomes a tradition in the community," Jameson said. *"I think that is an important part of our success - being consistent and sticking with it."*

"Our Chief [Felix Arnouse] is very active himself and is a good role model for physical fitness and activity," Jameson noted.

Little Shuswap Band registered as an Active Community through the BC Recreation and Parks Association in 2006, committing to work towards the provincial goal of increasing physical activity levels.

Some barriers for individuals to get active in the community are the hot weather in the summer and the lack of a recreation facility on-reserve. Although the community has a good trail system, enhanced by the new resort development, band mem-

bers have to drive to Chase to work out or attend fitness classes at a recreation facility.

To create opportunities for indoor fitness on-reserve, the Band recently offered a program called Try Something New. The program provided a series of free, instructor-led fitness classes at the Band hall: yoga, tai chi, country dancing, aerobics, and self-defence.

"We offered five different activities consecutively so that people could come out and try yoga or try tai chi and see whether it was something they wanted to do," Jameson said.

Participants showed an interest in yoga, so the instructor came back the following year to offer classes at the Band hall.

"It rolled into a regular program," Jameson noted.

Recently the Band conducted a lifestyle survey of its membership. Questions from the Active Communities measurement tool were added to the survey to measure physical activity levels. This baseline measurement will assist in determining if the Active Communities goal is reached in 2010.

Little Shuswap Band Highlights

- Started an Every Step Counts walking program in 2005
- Six-week walking program launches on Move for Health Day May 10
- Community celebration of walkers on Aboriginal Day June 21
- Hosted a Try Something New program with yoga, tai chi, country dancing, aerobics, and self-defence
- Band health program measured physical activity levels through its lifestyle survey
- 50 residents and staff registered for program in 2008
- Daycare children and staff joined the challenge
- Chief and council members participated in the walking program
- Band's health program purchased pedometers for participants
- Band staff logged the most steps in 2008
- Quaaout Resort staff joined the walking challenge

Little Shuswap Band Info

Population of approximately 320 members, with approximately 250 living on the reserve

- Little Shuswap Band has five reserves totalling 7,747 acres
- Located 12 km east of Chase near the Shuswap Lake on Little Shuswap Lake and 12 km west of Salmon Arm
- Band-owned Quaaout Lodge & Conference Centre and Talking Rock Golf Course, with a championship tournament-style 18-hole golf course, opened in August 2007

www.littleshuswaplake.com
www.talkingrock.ca