

# NNCEA NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2026

ISSUE #8



*Building our  
Nihitho Culture  
Through Generations*

**Tansi! As we wrap up March and April at NNCEA, this issue highlights the incredible learning, land-based experiences, and student achievements happening across our schools. Be sure to check out the newest addition to our newsletter, proudly created and written entirely by our staff and students.**



## IMPORTANT

**Flex Day - May 15  
Victoria Day - May 18  
Kindergarten Grad - June 22  
Grade 6 Farewell - June 23  
Grade 12 Grad - June 24**



Scan QR code to access the NNCEA Facebook Page for regular updates and announcements.



ni ta tā mīskā ti nana kiyāpic i pimitisa ha māhk piyotanāhk nimosomonānak ka kī īsi ayācik. micimāc ōhci nitha nān nīsicawayāsīhk ithinīwak ota ka ōhci ayayāhk. i yako oma nikinān.

nīsicawayāsīhk asīnīska ithinīwak ki naskōhtamwak, i thīnī okīmawin asotamākiwin 1908 kakī pi askiwāhk.

*We acknowledge that we live, work and learn on the ancestral homeland of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, who have existed here since time immemorial. Home of the Asiniskaw Ithiniwak. Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation entered into a treaty relationship with the Crown in 1908 via a Treaty 5 Adhesion.*

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## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Tansi!**

It has been a long winter during the 2025-2026 school year, however warmer weather and sunny days are in the near future! On behalf of NNCEA, we commend our students, staff, parents, elders, and community members for contributing towards our education system. Over the past 5 years NNCEA has expanded to include a second full sized school, several new programs, and more staff to meet the needs of our students. NNCEA is fortunate to have committed stakeholders who put their best foot forward towards the success, prosperity, and sustainability of our community.

During the 2025-2026 school year NNCEA underwent an external school evaluation which will be completed and presented on May 21, 2026 to the community. As part of this process, an external company made several visits to our schools, met with staff, observed operations, and conducted surveys. We are thankful for Kokopelli consulting for taking on this task for NNCEA. Through this school evaluation we hope to build on our current strengths and assets, but also identify areas of improvement so we can continue to build our system, day in and out. A digital copy of our school evaluation will be available to the community as well as an Executive Summary.

For the 2026-2027 school year we will be making some changes to our programming and policies which include:

- An increase in Nehetho Language classes for Grades 1 to 6 students
- An increase in Nehetho Language classes for Grades 7-8 and 9
- The opening and implementation of our Alternative Education program at the OK School
- Revisions to our attendance policy that mandates an 80% attendance threshold for students in grades K-3.

Our main emphasis for the new school will be attendance. The inconsistency of attendance is a barrier to our success, and it takes a community approach to improve this situation. By ensuring students establish strong attendance patterns in the early years, we hope to see compounding success in five to ten years within our education system

**Kinanaskomitin**

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## CELEBRATING OUR STUDENTS: CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

Throughout March and April, NNCEA proudly celebrated our students through the Circle of Excellence. We extend our sincere congratulations to all students who received this prestigious recognition.

The Mitho Pimatisiwin Circle of Excellence honours one student from each grade, each month, who demonstrates exceptional effort in academics, character, behaviour, culture, and language. This recognition reflects not only achievement, but also growth, perseverance, and commitment to learning.

Each selected student is celebrated with a sweatshirt they can wear with pride, a magnet for their home, and a large sticker to recognize their accomplishment. The Circle of Excellence promotes the values we hold as a school community and provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate student growth.



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## CELEBRATING OUR STUDENTS: CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

### MARCH

#### OK School:

N - Dhesa Enano  
K - Casey Moody  
Grade 1 - Chase Spence-Morris  
Grade 2 - Aliece Dysart  
Grade 3 - Malyna Dyer  
Grade 4 - Ashatnie Moose  
Grade 5 - Ronan McDonald  
Grade 6 - Lee Young

#### Staff

Nadine Yetman  
Ron Lewis Sr.  
Brittany Warner

#### NNOC:

Grade 7 - Tyler Mason  
Grade 8 - Vernon Colomb  
Grade 9 - Leander Spence  
Grade 10 - Coriander Spence  
Grade 11 - Ida Francois  
Grade 12 - Riah Linklater

#### Staff

Ashley Fontaine  
Sherene Bell

### APRIL

#### OK School:

K - Robbie Spence  
Grade 1 - Zeke Spence  
Grade 2 - Zeviah Parisien  
Grade 3 - Arrlee Lewis-Hart  
Grade 4 - Kendrick Moody  
Grade 5 - Matilda Spence  
Grade 6 - Lively Hunter

#### Staff

Bernice Olson  
Amanda Phelps

#### Community Member:

Robert Howard

#### NNOC:

Grade 7 - Bryson Linklater  
Grade 8 - Evan Spence  
Grade 9 - Sarah Spence  
Grade 10 - Neo Ryan  
Grade 11 - Teleeya-Jane Linklater  
Grade 12 - Soban Azhar

#### Staff

Bernell Bayer  
Kayla Boucher

#### Community Member:

Lambert Anderson

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## Kitanskoniinanaw – Land-based Youth Gathering

The first Kitanskoniinanaw Land Based Gathering was a success for NNCEA, with 3 visiting communities attending. We are thankful for our neighbours in Split Lake, South Indian Lake, and Lynn Lake for attending this event. During this 3 day event students took part in several land based activities such as ice fishing, trapping, snaring, fire making, snow shoeing, shelter building, and more. The most important part of this gathering was bringing communities together to share the culture and language. As well, during this time students were able to build new relationships with students from other communities.

During this event we had several key contributors that assisted with the implementation. NNCEA would like to thank the following organizations for their support:

**Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation**

**Nisichawayasihk Justice**

**Nisichawayasihk Womens Shelter**

**Nisichawayasihk Medicine Lodge**

**Nisichawayasihk Parks and Recreation**

**Nisichawayasihk Family Community Wellness Centre**

**Manitoba Hydro**

**Vale Inc**

Additionally, we would like to acknowledge our staff members and elders who assisted with the coordination, implementation, and teamwork during this event.

**Ekosi**

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## Kitanskoniñanaw – Land-based Youth Gathering



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## Kitanskoniñanaw – Land-based Youth Gathering



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## Kitanskoniñanaw – Land-based Youth Gathering







# NNCEA STAR STAFF

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## NNOC STAR STAFF



### **Madison Baker**

#### **Administrative Assistant**

Madison is a valued member of the NNOC team who consistently demonstrates professionalism, dedication, and reliability in her role as Administrative Assistant. Highly organized and dependable, she helps ensure daily operations run smoothly and efficiently while providing strong support to both staff and students. Maddison takes initiative in her work and regularly goes above and beyond to ensure responsibilities are met and tasks are completed with care.

Motivated to continue learning and building her skills, she is committed to supporting the school community in meaningful ways. Along with her strong work ethic and excellent attendance, Maddison brings a positive energy and great sense of humour to the workplace, helping create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone at NNOC.

### **Fred Shannon**

#### **Woodshop Teacher**

Fred Shannon is a highly valued member of the NNOC team whose dedication to students and staff is evident in everything he does. Collaborative and supportive, he consistently works alongside staff to help bring projects and ideas to life while remaining a strong source of support for students both in and out of the classroom. Fred's patience and approachable nature create a safe, encouraging environment where students feel comfortable learning, growing, and building confidence. He goes above and beyond by offering an after-school club that provides students with additional opportunities to stay engaged and develop new skills. Through his woodshop program, Fred creates meaningful hands-on learning experiences that promote independence and valuable life skills, making him an essential and greatly appreciated part of the NNOC community.

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## EA STAR STAFF



### Jaden McKay

#### NNOC EA

Jaden McKay is a dedicated and valued member of the NNOC team who consistently gives 100% to the students he supports. Always willing to lend a hand, whether assisting students or supporting staff, he approaches his work with commitment, care, and a positive attitude. Jaden has built strong, meaningful relationships with students, creating a supportive environment where they feel encouraged, understood, and set up for success. A true “go-getter,” he brings strong energy, reliability, and an outstanding work ethic each day, consistently going above and beyond to support the NNOC community.

### Cheryl Buffoe

#### OK EA

We are pleased to recognize Cheryl Buffoe as our Star Staff Educational Assistant. For the past two years, Cheryl has worked alongside Bernice Olson in Kindergarten, building strong, caring relationships with students and staff. She is known for her kindness, patience, and genuine love for the children, always creating a calm and welcoming classroom environment. Cheryl is also a wonderful colleague who brings positivity and warmth to our school each day. Her caring nature, dedication, and support for students make her a highly valued member of the OK School family. We are grateful to have Cheryl on our team and proud to celebrate her in the March/April Newsletter!

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As we approach the end of the year, we are also excited to celebrate our graduates. Graduation will take place on June 24, and we look forward to honouring the hard work, growth, and accomplishments of our students as they reach this important milestone. More details will be shared with families in the coming weeks.

Moving forward, we are committed to:

- Continuing home visits throughout the year
- Strengthening communication with families
- Creating more opportunities for connection through school and community events
- Supporting student attendance, engagement, and success

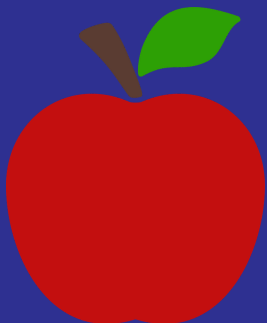
As always, our focus remains on building strong relationships, maintaining consistent routines, and supporting every student each day. These final months are important, and together we can ensure our students finish the year strong.

Thank you for being our partners in education.

## NNOC Potential Graduates:

1. Soban Azhar
2. Julia Bunn
3. Taylen Connel
4. Sienna Harper
5. Coral Hart
6. Tito Howard
7. Riah Linklater
8. Tatum Moore
9. Hailey Spence
10. Jerome Spence
11. Mya Spence
12. Hanson Tait

We are proud of all our potential graduates and encourage everyone to continue supporting and encouraging them as they work toward crossing the stage and reaching this important milestone.



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## MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATION: STRENGTHENING OUR CONNECTION WITH FAMILIES

### Tansi Families

As the seasons change and spring arrives in our community, we are reminded of growth, renewal, and the importance of coming together. At NNOC, this time of year is not only about the final stretch of learning, but also about celebrating progress, strengthening relationships, and supporting each student on their journey. We are grateful for the partnership we share with families and the role you play in the success of our students each day.

As we move into the final months of the school year, we want to take a moment to thank our families and community for your continued support. This is an important time for our students, and the connections between home and school play a key role in their success.

This year, NNOC staff have been out in the community completing Grade 7 and 8 home visits. These visits have been a meaningful way for us to connect with families, learn more about our students, and strengthen relationships. We are grateful for the warm welcome many families provided and for the opportunity to spend time together outside of the school setting.

Through these visits, we have seen the importance of staying connected. We have learned more about how to better support our students, including their attendance, well-being, and learning needs. We also recognize that we can continue to improve by providing more notice for visits and creating more opportunities for families to engage with the school.

On April 29, we shared a smile across NNOC as students and staff enjoyed Tim Hortons Smile Cookies together. It was a simple but meaningful moment that brought joy to our school community and reminded us of the importance of connection, kindness, and taking time to celebrate together.

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## LITERACY NEWS FROM NNOC

We want to share why teaching virtues is such an important part of your child's learning.

Virtues are simple qualities like honesty, kindness, respect, responsibility, and patience. When children learn these, they don't just follow rules—they begin to understand why their choices matter.

This helps them:

- behave positively at home and at school
- make good decisions even when no one is watching
- build strong friendships and handle conflicts better
- grow into responsible and caring individuals

While school teaches children what to learn, virtues help guide how they live and interact with others every day.

This month, our school focused on the virtue of truth.

We encouraged students to understand the importance of being honest, speaking truthfully, and taking responsibility for their actions. Learning about truth helps children build trust with others and develop strong character.

By practicing truthfulness, students learn that it's okay to make mistakes—as long as they are honest and willing to make things right. This supports positive behavior, stronger relationships, and better decision-making both at school and at home.

We appreciate your support in reinforcing this important value with your child.

Thank you!

Mrs. Natalie Tays

Vice-Principal

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## NNOC CULTURE CLASS:

Culture class has been on the go all term! Finished up trapping and now into ice fishing, fire-building, and some archery! With warmer weather we are looking ahead to begin moose hide rattles and continue talking about the seasons and the 13 moons! We are finishing up our Mini-Teepee's with inspiration from traditional Cree Teepee building techniques and processes. Highlighting the importance of each pole and the teaching it carries.

We are thankful for our Elders Ken, Harvey and especially Kim and Clinton who helped us set a net through the ice last week.

Kinanaskomitin.  
Mr. Monias



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## NNOC CULTURE CLASS PHOTOS:



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## NNOC CULTURE CLASS PHOTOS:



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## NELSON HOUSE WARRIORS BADMINTON

The Nelson House Warriors badminton team has had an excellent month of practice, showing growth in skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The team's commitment in practice helped prepare athletes for an exciting trip to the Zone 11 competition in Thompson, where they had the chance to compete against students from across the region.

### A Month of Progress

Over the last month, team members have worked hard during practices to improve their badminton fundamentals, sharpen their game strategies, and support one another as teammates. Just as strong school badminton programs highlight weekly training, skill development, and positive team culture, the Warriors showed steady improvement both on and off the court.

### Zone 11 Experience

Three Nelson House Warriors students travelled to Thompson to compete at zones, representing the school with pride and determination. Each student won a game during the tournament, which was a great accomplishment against strong competition from across Zone 11. The event gave the athletes valuable experience, helped build confidence, and showed them what high-level competition looks like.

### Character and Sportsmanship

The team's success was not measured only in wins, but also in the way the athletes carried themselves throughout the season. The Warriors demonstrated respect for opponents, encouragement for one another, and strong sportsmanship, all of which are important parts of school athletics.

### Looking Ahead

This season has been a very positive experience for the team, and it has created a strong foundation for future growth. Congratulations to the Nelson House Warriors badminton players for their effort, improvement, and excellent representation of the school at zones.



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## NELSON HOUSE WARRIORS ATHLETICS – NEW SEASON KICKOFF

As we head into a new month, the Nelson House Warriors are excited to launch an action-packed spring sports season! This is a great opportunity for students to get involved, stay active, and represent our school with pride.

### Track and Field

Get ready to run, jump, and throw! Track and field offer something for everyone, whether you enjoy sprinting, long-distance running, relays, or field events like shot put and long jump. It's a fantastic way to challenge yourself, build endurance, and be part of a supportive team environment.

### Softball

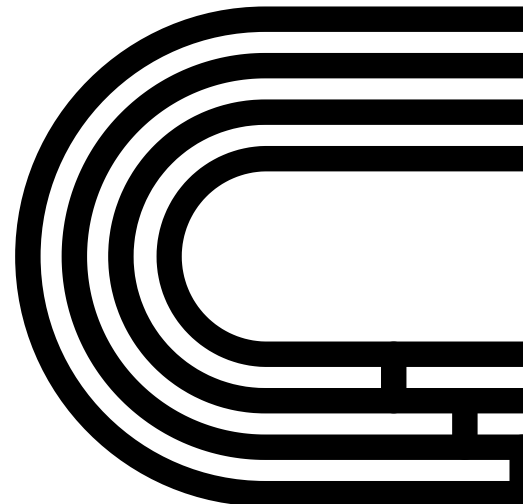
Step up to the plate! Our softball program is gearing up for an exciting season of teamwork, skill-building, and competition. Players of all experience levels are welcome—whether you're learning the basics or refining your swing, there's a place for you on the team.

### Baseball

Batter up! The Warriors baseball team is ready to hit the field. This sport is perfect for students who enjoy strategy, coordination, and teamwork. Come out to practice, develop your skills, and enjoy the spirit of the game.

### Get Involved!

We strongly encourage all students to try out and participate in one or more of these sports. Joining a team is a great way to stay healthy, make new friends, and build confidence. No matter your skill level, your effort and enthusiasm are what matter most.



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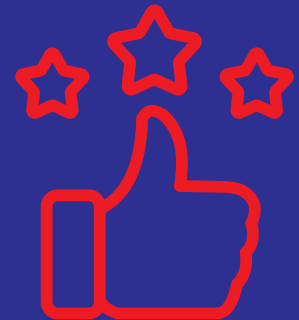
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## WELCOME STUDENT TEACHERS

NNOC was also fortunate to welcome three student teachers: Ms. Ahn (Queen's University), Ms. Hart (Brandon University), and Mr. Plett (University of Winnipeg). We extend our sincere thanks to the mentor teachers who generously shared their time, knowledge, and classrooms to support their growth.



## CONNECTED NORTH RECOGNITION

NNOC is proud to share that we have received a School Community Certificate of Recognition from Connected North.

This recognition acknowledges our school's participation in the Connected North program this year, which has provided students with meaningful virtual learning experiences, cultural connections, and opportunities to engage with educators and communities from across the country.

We thank Connected North for this recognition and look forward to continuing this valuable partnership.



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## MESSAGE FROM ATTENDANCE OFFICER:

### 1. How do you balance enforcing attendance policies with supporting students?

I balance attendance expectations with student support by being consistent while also remaining understanding and student-centered. I believe attendance is essential for student success, so I make expectations clear and hold students accountable. At the same time, I recognize that many students face real-life challenges that can affect their attendance. I focus on building positive relationships so students feel safe sharing what they're going through. My goal is to address barriers early and provide support while still reinforcing the importance of showing up.

### 2. Can you walk me through your process when a student's attendance becomes a concern?

When a student's attendance becomes a concern, I start by reviewing their attendance data and looking for patterns or changes. Then I meet with the student to have a supportive conversation and understand what might be affecting their attendance. After that, I reach out to the family to share concerns and work collaboratively toward solutions. Together we develop realistic goals and supports that help the student improve their attendance. I continue to monitor progress and follow up regularly to make sure the plan is working.

### 3. How do you handle families?

When working with families, I focus on building trust and maintaining respectful, open communication. I approach conversations with understanding and without judgment, recognizing that families may be dealing with challenges that impact attendance. I make sure families understand the importance of attendance and how it connects to student success, while also listening to their concerns. My approach is collaborative – working with families as partners to support the student and help them succeed.

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## NNOC STUDENTS HEAD TO THE FOREST OF READING IN TORONTO

Our students from NNOC will be attending the Forest of Reading in Toronto, May 11<sup>th</sup> to the May 15<sup>th</sup>. They come into this program with a strong foundation. In September, they engaged in cultural teachings and attended White Wolf Camp, where they practiced these teachings through hands-on, land-based learning. Since then, they have continued to deepen their understanding by reading and discussing cultural teachings in the classroom.

In addition, students have been actively developing their skills as young authors by learning how to write children's books. Through this work, they are not only building literacy skills but also preparing to share their own voices and stories.

Our students carry great potential. They are developing the confidence and knowledge to contribute meaningfully, bringing forward a wealth of Indigenous ways of knowing, storytelling, and cultural understanding. Their participation in the Forest of Reading will further strengthen these skills while allowing them to engage with Canadian literature in a meaningful and empowering way. We are proud to support our students on this journey and look forward to the growth, creativity, and inspiration that will come from their participation.

Thank you for your continued support.

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## START OF D-MAC TOURNAMENTS

In April, we kicked off the 6th Annual D-Mac Memorial Tournaments with volleyball. Eight teams took part, creating an exciting and memorable experience for everyone involved.

The final game brought great energy as the NNOC Staff faced off against the NNOC Girls in a competitive and hard-fought match. Despite the sore muscles and tired minds, NNOC Staff rallied for a comeback to take the championship.

A special thank you goes to Candishia Spence for her dedication and hard work in ensuring the D-Mac tournaments run smoothly and most importantly, for continuing to honour and carry forward the legacy of David MacDonald within NNOC.

As always, the tournament is more than just competition. It is a time to reflect on the impact and legacy David MacDonald left on NNOC and NCN. We extend our gratitude to Mrs. Tays for sharing meaningful words with students about who D-Mac was, his contributions to NNOC Athletics, and the lasting impact he had on all who knew him.

You are deeply missed, D-Mac, and your legacy continues to live on.



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## START OF D-MAC TOURNAMENTS



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## START OF D-MAC TOURNAMENTS



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## NNOC WOODSHOP CLASS:



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## NNOC WOODSHOP CLASS:



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## SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

March and April were busy and exciting months at NNOC, filled with a wide range of activities including land-based learning, staff vs. student events, and inspiring guest speakers.

In March, NNOC hosted a land-based gathering at the Culture Camp, welcoming students from neighboring communities. Participants engaged in meaningful hands-on experiences such as trapping, shelter building, and other traditional activities.

We were also pleased to host Live Different, who worked with students to build confidence and leadership skills. Their sessions also supported our Junior Chief and Council in strengthening their roles as leaders within the school and community.

One of the month's highlights was the Staff vs. Students Hockey Game at the Gilbert McDonald Arena. In a thrilling 10-8 matchup, staff skated away with the win in a true nail-biter.

To wrap up March, the Junior Chief and Council organized snowshoe races and a hotdog sale, creating a fun and positive lead-in to Spring Break.

April kicked off with the 6th Annual David Macdonald Memorial Volleyball Tournament. The event featured eight teams, including the Wellness Centre, boys and girl's student teams, Spirit Horse, OK staff, and NNOC staff. After an exciting double-elimination tournament, NNOC staff proudly took home the gold medal. Congratulations to Boys Youth MVP Blayde Hart and Girls Youth MVP Mya Spence for their outstanding performances.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all staff who helped chaperone, organize, and support these events. Your dedication makes these opportunities possible for our students.

-Mr. S

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## NNOC'S JUNIOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL

We are proud to share that NNOC's very own Junior Chief and Council has been asked to take over the Annual Youth Fishing Derby. This accomplishment demonstrates the commitment and dedication of our youth to making a difference in the lives of others.

Currently, the Junior Chief and Council are involved in a workshop that is focused on creating and implementing a community safety plan for our community. This initiative is a crucial step in addressing safety concerns in Nelson House, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. As a result of this workshop, we are creating a safe space called the "Safe Haven" here in our community. We have plans include a Student Exchange Trip, which will take place in 2026/2027 School year. This trip will allow our students to experience new cultures, broaden their horizons, and strengthen relationships with other youth. It's an exciting opportunity that will contribute to their growth as leaders and community members.

We're incredibly proud of our Junior Chief and Council for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to making positive changes both in our community and beyond. Stay tuned for more updates on their journey and future initiatives!

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## Upcoming Important Dates

MMIWG2S+ Assembly - May 5

April VIP Party - May 12

Flex Day - May 15

Victoria Day - May 18

Grade 6 Visits to NNOC - May 19, May 20, May 21



Welcome to Kindergarten - May 26

Spring Festival - June 1-5

Kindergarten Grad - June 22

Grade 6 Farewell - June 23



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## ADMINISTRATION MESSAGE:

Since the last newsletter, there's been so much to celebrate at OK School! One of the highlights was our 2026 Science Fair, where students showcased incredible curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. We're especially proud to share that two Grade 6 projects earned silver medals at the Northern Regional Science Fair, held on April 11 at Riverside School in Thompson, MB. This is a fantastic accomplishment, and we couldn't be prouder of our students and staff who supported them.

Our students have also been deeply engaged in land-based learning over the past several weeks. Many classes have been out on the land fishing and connecting with traditional ways of learning. A highlight has been students learning how to make pemmican, gaining hands-on experience with important cultural knowledge, food preparation, and survival skills. These experiences are incredibly meaningful and reflect the strength of learning that happens beyond the classroom.

As we move into the final two months of the school year, there's a real sense of excitement building throughout the school. We're busy preparing for some meaningful end-of-year celebrations, including our Kindergarten Graduation and Grade 6 Farewell, which are always special opportunities to celebrate and our students and their journeys. We're also looking forward to our Spring Festival happening in early June, which will bring our school community together for a week of fun and celebration.

Thank you, as always, to our students, families, and staff for continuing to make OK School such a vibrant and caring learning community. The final stretch of the school year is shaping up to be a memorable one!



Ashley M. Boutin, OK Principal

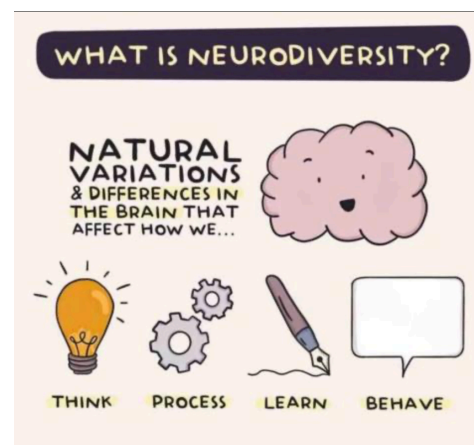
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## WORLD AUTISM MONTH

APRIL 2026

At OK School, we recognize that neurodiversity means every child thinks, learns, and experiences the world in their own unique way. These differences are a natural and important part of who we are as a community, and they strengthen our classrooms.



University of Waterloo

### Neurodiversity 101

It's a big word for a simple idea!



= a range of different kinds of human brain

neurodiversity is not

a belief system  
a personal opinion  
a political position  
a theory

by itself, it is just a neutral fact of human life:

neurodiversity exists!

more and more, people are saying they are pro-neurodiversity support neurodiversity celebrate neurodiversity those are personal opinions; people may agree or disagree that neurodiversity is a good thing, but that it is REAL is undeniable.

#### bonus neurodiversity vocab words:

neurotypical: having the most common, typical kind of brain  
neurodivergent: having any kind of brain that is not neurotypical  
neurodiverse: having a variety of people with neurotypical and neurodivergent brains; refers to a group or group environment, such as a family or workplace

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for more information:  
erinhuman.com  
autisticfamilies.org

We recently wrapped up World Autism Month with a thoughtful presentation by Ms. Warner, who helped students understand that everyone thinks, learns, and feels in different ways. Through conversations like these, we continue to build a school environment rooted in respect, inclusion, and appreciation for all learners.



# OK NEWSLETTER



## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Amanda Phelps, Alternative Education Teacher

The Alternative Education program has grown significantly since it began in September 2025 at OK School. We have built a strong and dedicated team of Educational Assistants, along with a co-teacher and other essential support staff. Together, we support students with exceptionalities and complex behavioral needs.

Our program focuses on individualized support, with customized schedules that may include Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), access to a sensory room, counselling, and any additional resources each student requires. We currently serve 77 students, all with varying levels of need and support.

Within our program, we have a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Educational Assistant who works one-on-one with students to help build emotional regulation and social skills. Students also benefit from land-based learning, time in the Grandpa Cabins, and enriched Cree teachings led by our Cree teacher, Ms. Linda Linklater.

OK School's Alternative Education program offers an individualized approach to learning, accessible to any student who needs extra support. In addition to programming, the space is open during both lunch periods for Lunch Club, a safe and calm environment for students who prefer that.



We have also developed a strong partnership with Jordan's Principle, working collaboratively to support students who previously did not have access to appropriate programming due to the complexity of their needs. This partnership has helped bring more students into school who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to attend.

In recent months, we have seen further growth with the addition of a new bus to support student transportation. Most excitingly, we now have a new building that includes two large classrooms, a fully functional kitchen, on-site laundry, and plans for a new playground.

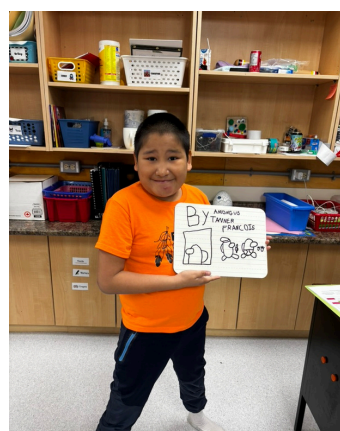
We are very excited about moving into this new space and continuing to grow and strengthen our program to better serve our students.

# OK NEWSLETTER



## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Amanda Phelps, Alternative Education Teacher



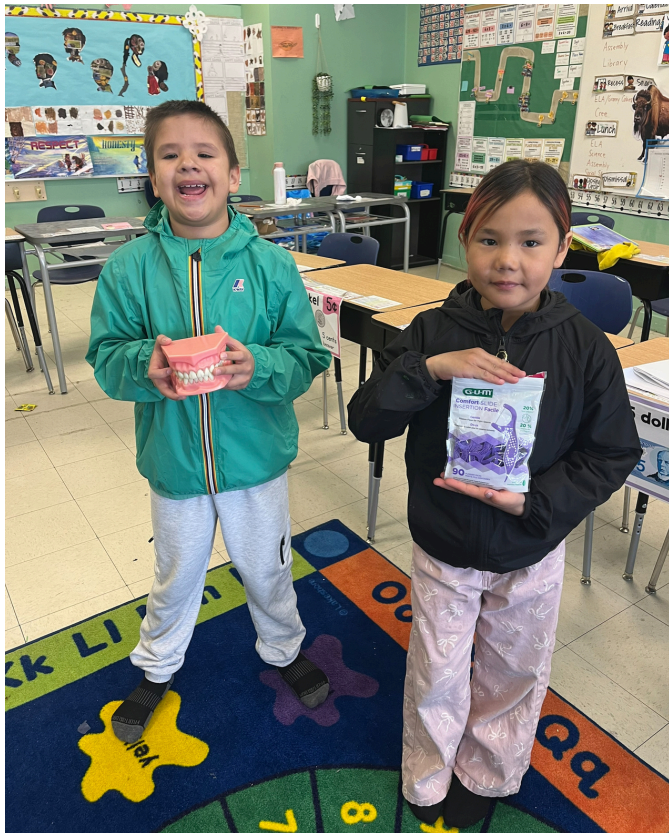
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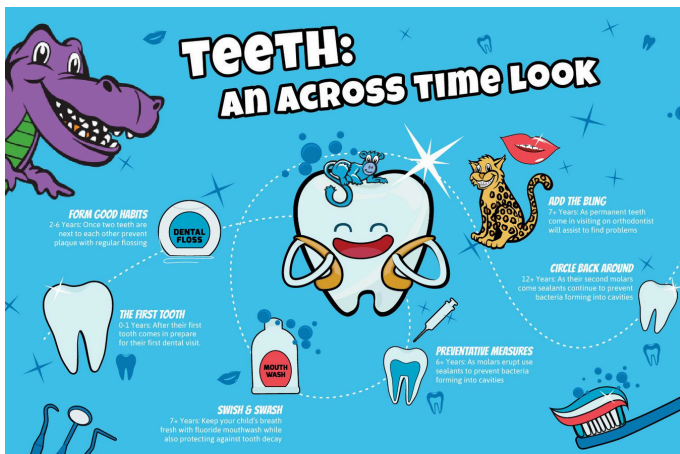
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## Learning Healthy Habits in 3A



Students in 3A have been learning all about personal hygiene, with a special focus on keeping their teeth clean and healthy. Recently, they practiced how to floss properly, learning how to floss reaches the spaces between teeth that brushing can miss. Alongside flossing, students reviewed the importance of brushing twice a day and taking care of their gums. The class has also been exploring how nutrition plays a role in dental health. They've discussed how eating nutrient-dense foods--like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products--helps keep teeth strong, while limiting sugary snacks can prevent cavities. Through these lessons, students are building lifelong habits that support both their oral health and overall well-being.



According to the American Dental Association, plaque bacteria produce acids after eating that can attack tooth enamel and lead to tooth decay, which is why brushing twice daily is essential.

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## A Peek Inside Grade 5C

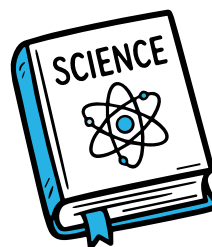
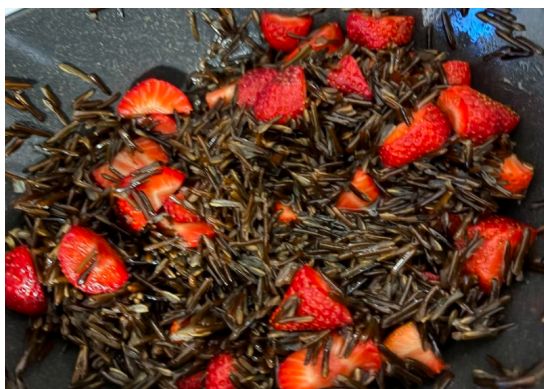
Jocelyn Whalen, 5C Teacher



On March 17th, for St. Patrick's Day, we learned about the history of the holiday and Irish culture. We also made stories about "How to Catch a Leprechaun" and created our own trap. Unfortunately, we didn't catch a Leprechaun this time!



In Science, we're learning about Human Body Systems and healthy choices. We learned about healthy eating and Manoomin, and we ate a dish together made with Manoomin, strawberries and maple syrup.



# OK NEWSLETTER



## Land-Based Education

Travis Grieves & Justin Hart

Over the past several weeks, our students have been actively engaged in rich, land-based learning experiences. From storytelling and time on the land to hands-on skill development, students have been immersed in opportunities that connect them to culture, community, and traditional knowledge.

A recent day at camp highlighted this learning in action. Students learned how to fillet fish and cook over an open fire, preparing and enjoying whitefish (atihkamik) and walleye (okaw) alongside baked potatoes (askipwâwa). Throughout the past weeks, students have also been making pounded dry meat (wahikanak), learning how to skin animals, and gaining an understanding of what fur buyers look for. Fishing has been a major focus, with students catching multiple species, including pike (osawaskwapis), walleye (okaw), and burbot (mithacos).



# OK NEWSLETTER



## Leading the Way: Jr. Chief & Council Updates

Jocelyn Whalen, 5C Teacher



To honour Pink Shirt Day, on February 16th, we talked about Bullying Awareness and created an Anti-Bullying bulletin board in the Front Lobby.

We organized a St. Patrick's Day Bake Sale on March 17th and raised more money for our end of the year trip.



We put together grow kits for Grade 4 and 5 classes to grow vegetables in their class. These plants will be transplanted into the greenhouse and the raised garden beds in the Courtyard when they're ready.

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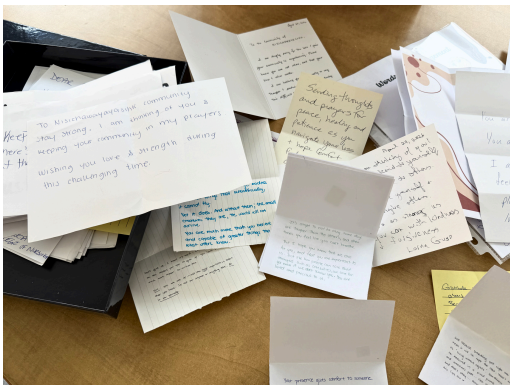
## Messages of Hope for our Community

In response to the current state of emergency surrounding the suicide crisis in our community, OK School recently received an incredibly meaningful gift of kindness and support through the efforts of Elaine Mordoch. Through her fundraising and letter-writing initiative, our students and staff were gifted Smile Cookies along with heartfelt letters reminding us that we are not alone.

The letters came from people across Manitoba, including University of Manitoba students from a variety of faculties,

nursing professors, Elaine's own grandchildren, and members of her neighbourhood community. Each message carried words of compassion, encouragement, and care during a time when our community continues to grieve and heal.

These acts of kindness serve as an important reminder that people beyond our community are thinking of us, holding us in their hearts, and standing beside us.



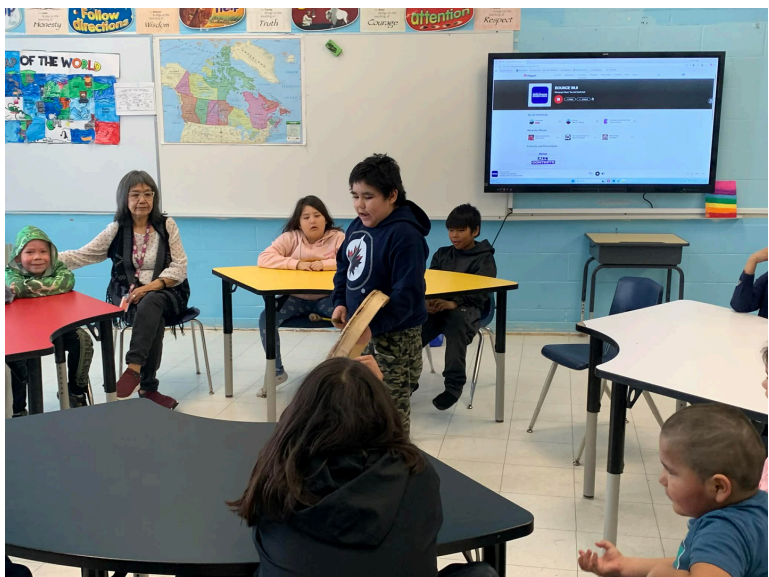
We are deeply grateful to Elaine and to every person who took the time to write a letter, share encouragement, and support our students and staff in such a meaningful way. The OK School looks forward to sharing the letters with the community once the students have finished reading them.



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## Drumming in 3D

On April 28, Owen Linklater (3D, Mr. Jefferson Cook) shared a traditional drum song with his class, the Elders, and Mrs. Susan Francois-Moore's Kindergarten class.

## Growing our Literacy Skills in 2B

Students in Ms. Ruby Kaura's class take turns flipping over cards to find matching pairs of words. As they play, they practice recognizing words, sounding them out and building connections between words and their meanings. The game encourages concentration, memory, teamwork, and taking turns.



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## Young Entrepreneuers in 3A & 5C

Ms. Brittany Warner's 3A Classroom Store has become an exciting way for students to learn about business and money in a hands-on way. Students create and sell their own items, including stickers, magnets, baked treats, and more. From planning what to make to setting prices and handling sales, they are experiencing what it's like to be young entrepreneurs.

The project also helps students apply math skills in real-life situations, such as counting money, making change, fractions, division, and tracking profits. Their hard work has paid off--they have raised about \$100 so far! These funds will go towards the 3A end-of-year trip to Paint Lake in June. The store has been a fun and meaningful way to combine creativity, teamwork, and learning.



Jersey Spence-Hunter and her classmates have also been selling hand-made paper stuffies in the 5C Stuff Store

## \* \* 3A Class Store! Grand Opening!

Room 310 — 1:00 PM — 2:00 PM  
April 10th

\$1 Cake Slice



\$0.50

Sticker

"Please bring exact change — thanks!"

All proceeds support our June field trip

| Teaching money skills & creativity!

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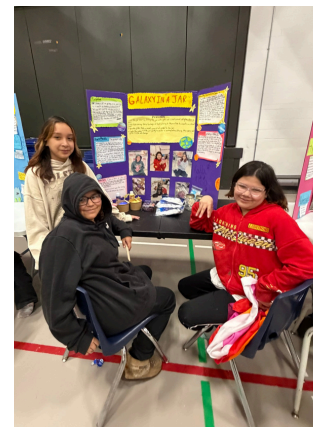
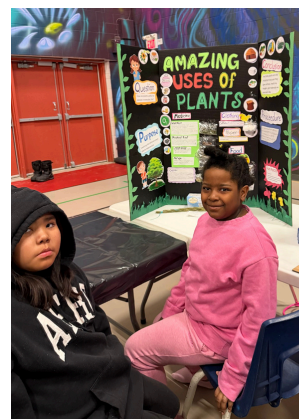
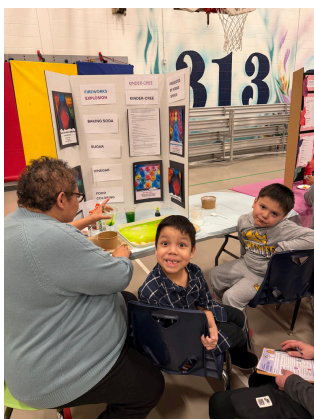


## 2026 OK School Science Fair



### 2026 Science Fair Judges

- Matilda Gibb
- Nic Campbell
- Const. Ryan Linklater
- Corp. Gunther
- Rose Andrews
- Chantelle Spence
- Eric Champagne
- Braedan Mitchell
- Lisa O'Grady



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## Science Fair Success: Model Water Treatment Plant Wins Silver

Otayitiskiwin Kiskinwahamakamik  
Elementary School

### School Science Fair Projects



Can Fruit Produce  
Electricity?



LED Light & Hydroponic  
Lettuce Growth



Model Water  
Treatment Plant



The Otayitiskiwin Kiskinwahamakamik Elementary School community is proud to celebrate the incredible efforts of its students at this year's science fair. At the school level, students explored a variety of innovative topics, including the effect of LED light duration on plant growth in hydroponic systems and the ability of fruits to generate electricity through chemical reactions.

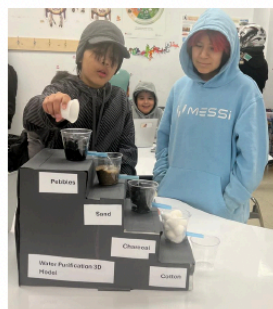
Among several innovative projects, **Grade 6B students Dreily Lobster and Theoron Soulier** advanced to the **Northern Regional Science Fair** in Thompson, Manitoba, where they earned a **Silver Medal**.

Their project, "Model Water Treatment Plant," demonstrated how water can be purified using natural materials. A 3D model used layers of pebbles, sand, charcoal, and cotton to filter dirty water step by step, showing how each layer removes impurities and improves water clarity.



The judges praised the project for its clear scientific concept, practical application, and effective demonstration, which ultimately led to its success at the regional level. Altogether, these projects encouraged students to think critically, ask meaningful questions, and connect science to everyday life.

— Grade 6B, Ms. Jamia Butt's Class



# Northern Regional Science Fair

April 11, 2026

Northern Regional Science  
Fair Silver Recipients

**Dreily Lobster (6B)**  
**Theoron Soulier (6B)**  
**Louis Spence-Morris (5B)**

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the students' teachers, **Mrs. Eugenie Bennett (5B)** and **Ms. Jamila Butt**. Their guidance, encouragement, and commitment to student learning played an important role in helping these students create thoughtful and successful science fair projects. Thank you for the time, care, and enthusiasm you continue to bring to our students each day.



# STUDENT NEWSLETTER

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As we wrap up another exciting 2 months at NNOC, this student-led newsletter highlights the voices, experiences, and accomplishments of our students. Inside, you'll read reflections from the first annual land-based gathering through the eyes of students, updates from the graduating class as they prepare for their next chapter, and celebrations of the dedication and success of NNOC athletics throughout the year. We are proud of the leadership, growth, and school spirit our students continue to demonstrate both inside and outside the classroom.



Scan for a  
reminder  
that you  
matter





# STUDENT NEWSLETTER

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## Grad Class Building Skills for the Future

By: Mya Spence

As graduation approaches, our class has been busy preparing for life beyond high school. Over the past few weeks, we've been working on important real-world skills that will help us in the future. We completed our sponsorship papers and took part in mock job interviews, which gave us a chance to practice professionalism and build confidence.

We've also been learning how to create strong resumes and manage our finances by practicing budgeting skills that will be essential as we move into adulthood. Alongside our classroom work, we've been fundraising for a potential trip happening next month, giving us something exciting to look forward to as we wrap up our final year.

Overall, it's been a productive and memorable time for our graduating class as we get ready for the next chapter



# STUDENT NEWSLETTER

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## kitanskoniñanaw – Land-based Youth Gathering

### A First-Time Experience at the Land-Based Gathering

Attending the Land-Based Gathering was a new and meaningful experience for me. As someone who is not Indigenous but lives in an Indigenous community, this was my first time being part of something like this, and it gave me a deeper appreciation for the culture, traditions, and way of life.

There was so much happening throughout the event. One of the highlights was the Indigenous puppet show, which was both entertaining and educational. There were also many friendly competitions that brought everyone together, including trap setting, snowshoeing, moose calling, goose calling, fire starting, and shelter building. Each activity showed the skills and knowledge that have been passed down through generations.

Many northern communities came together for this gathering, including South Indian Lake, Lynn Lake, and Split Lake. It was great to see people from different places connecting, sharing experiences, and supporting one another.

The event also included opening and closing ceremonies, which made the gathering feel special and respectful. There was plenty of good food, and the overall atmosphere was welcoming and positive.

Overall, this experience helped me learn more about Indigenous traditions and strengthened my appreciation for the communities around me. I'm grateful I had the chance to attend and be part of it.

-Soban Azhar



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## Stronger Than the Scoreboard

By: Mya Spence

Making it to the finals of the 6th Annual D-Mac Memorial Tournament was one of the best feelings I've had as an athlete. Knowing that all of our hard work, practices, and dedication paid off made the moment feel even more special. As a senior, it meant a lot to compete at that level with my teammates and represent our school. Even though we lost in the finals, I don't look at it as a loss. I see it as a learning experience that made us stronger as a team. One of the most enjoyable parts of the tournament was getting the opportunity to play against our classmates, teachers, counsellors, and even family members, which made the experience even more meaningful and fun. Throughout the tournament, my teammates and I continued to support each other, stay positive, and push through challenges together. This experience taught me that success isn't always measured by winning, but by the growth, memories, and lessons you take with you afterwards.



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## Frozen Moments: A Season of the ice.

By: Matthew L. Spence

