

MANS High School Students Take Leadership in Mission Outreach



This May, the high school students of Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) took mission outreach to a new level. The school actively cultivates an attitude of outreach and “giving back,” starting formally in Grade 2 with kids baking and delivering cookies to neighbourhoods in Ponoka and Wetaskiwin. The result: this spring, students not only attended the BC Native Camp Meeting but also led out in worship as a praise team at Port Hardy’s Avalon Adventist Academy, conducted the children’s programs at the camp meeting, and delivered 85 blankets to individuals on the Tsulquate Reserve.

The blanket distribution was the initiative of a Grade 11 student named Hope. This past fall, seeing people around her on the Maskwacis reserves who faced winter without heat in their homes, Hope decided that she wanted to help. She decided that distributing blankets was something she could do. Her friend agreed, and soon the staff and other students devised a plan for a blanket drive to support what became known as “Hope’s Mission.”

The blanket distribution project was intended to last two months, ending in December, but the joy Hope experienced as she witnessed the positive effects of the effort lit a fire in Hope’s heart. She continued to spearhead the blanket project for another four months, culminating in the Tsulquate Reserve distribution. Over the six months that Hope’s Mission collected blankets, more than 200 blankets were distributed and hundreds of people warmed by the spirit and practical outreach of MANS students.

The students’ worlds were expanded by their encounter with another First Nations culture and the kindness of First Nations Adventist James Walkus, who took them out on the ocean in one of the boats from his fishing fleet—the first time any of the MANS students had ever been on a power boat.

“Everyone had to taste the water,” said high school vice-principal Mike Willing, who helped plan and raise funds for the trip. “No one had ever tasted saltwater before. We spent six hours on the beach,” he said, observing that the BC experience was “transformational for these kids.”

The students will always remember their first taste of the ocean, BC Native Campmeeting, and their first view of the Rocky Mountains. But just as important is the confidence and knowledge that Hope’s Mission inspired. Hope and her classmates know they can work together to make a difference, and nothing can take that experience from them. ■

Above: MANS Student Praise Team leads out in worship at Avalon Adventist Academy before diving into leadership in the children’s divisions during BC Native Camp Meeting at Port Hardy, B.C.

Top of the page: On Sabbath afternoon, MANS students experience the joy of distributing the 85 new blankets they amassed through the student-inspired and student-led “Hope’s Mission” project.

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