



Connecting in Nunavut

By Barbara Green Parker

Fresh from an Aboriginal Youth Outreach Camp at Baker Lake, Nunavut, Barbara Green Parker jotted down some thoughts about the session:

I am pleased to report the Mining Matters program was very well received. Conducting the program on the Agnico Eagle Meadowback site was amazing! Arriving all at the same time, the kids and I established an immediate rapport. And, on the first day, we attended the mine site orientations together. What a great opportunity to see such state-of-the-art procedures.

When I started the Mining Matters program on Monday, the kids were attentive, engaged, curious, and so quick to pick up the material; what a pleasure to work with them. The seven boys and seven girls were Inuit from Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, Chesterfield Inlet, and Coral Harbour.

I asked two young mentors (ages 22 and 23) to speak to the kids about IT and Environmental Science. Both had dropped out of school but are now getting university degrees because they love their jobs so much. The kids were very quiet as they "told their story." I couldn't have written a better message myself.



Our three Guiding Circle activities went over well. The kids had a great time constructing headframes and naming them. The "Pain Crane" won, with a close second going to the "Tower of Peace." The "Pyramid of Disaster" lifted its required weight but the too-large skip jammed in the upper portions of the structure!

Exploration mapping on the tundra was a huge hit, and the stone carving at night resulted in some truly beautiful and thoughtful cultural work. Our campers didn't want to go to bed because they were so enjoying the program.



I introduced a new activity: "the Elements for Life." We talked geochemistry, and then the kids, in three teams, tackled unopened puzzle boxes and raced each other to construct. Competitive but fun, the activity combined lots of laughing with yells of "Where's carbon?", "I've got zinc!", or "Hurry with the gold!"

Our campers loved their Mining Matters hats, T-shirts and completion certificates. When the time came to go, I got big hugs from everyone, along with pleas for five days of programming next year!