

## Westglen students pedal into mechanical knowledge with new bike mechanics class

Students at Westglen School in Didsbury have been gearing up with new mechanical knowledge about bicycles thanks to a new option class, and some support. Grade 8 students had the chance to sign up for “bike mechanics”, a new option class this year.

The program is a recipient of a \$5,000 Flourishing Stories and Innovation Grant from the Chinook's Edge Board of Trustees, which was used to purchase 10 mobile bike stands, 10 mobile tool carts and the appropriate tools to fill them.

“We are very grateful that the Board is so willing to invest in launching this program at Westglen,” said Carolyn Massel, Principal of Westglen School. “With the equipment we’ve purchased through the Board’s grant, this program will be sustainable over many years.”

### Program beginnings - looking for opportunities in mechanics

The class was the idea of teacher Dustin Moreau. “Dustin came to me at the end of June, excited about the bike repair program he was hoping to take over the summer,” said Massel.



“Since his arrival at Westglen a few years ago, he has shown his commitment to finding engaging, skill-building opportunities for our students,” said Massel.

Moreau said the idea started last year when he could see that his middle school students were enjoying taking engines apart, but putting them back together was too complex. He wanted to find something that would allow students to see a project through from start to finish.



“Students this age aren’t driving motorized vehicles yet, but many are riding bikes, so it seemed bike mechanics might be a natural fit,” said Dustin Moreau. Moreau, who teaches shop and makerspace classes, as well as math, science and physical education, decided to take a bike mechanics continuing education class over the summer at the University of Calgary.

“My question going in was if there would be enough content for an options course at the middle school level, and I could see right away there was plenty to keep students engaged,” said Moreau.

### Students learn the repair basics

The class focuses on basic bicycle repairs including to the gears, chains, wheels and brakes. Students have been able to bring in their own bikes to repair, and have worked on donated bikes as well.

“A bicycle tune up costs about \$100, and it should be done annually,” said Moreau. “This class provides students with the ability to do their own tune ups and, hopefully, that results in more enjoyable riding for them. Also, some of the students didn’t realize how much work goes into a bike repair, and I think this has increased their appreciation of people who do this work. It also exposes students to a possible career option.”



### Students were looking for hands-on learning

“I like being in this class because it helps me be self-sufficient,” said Landen Fazakas, a Grade 8 student. “In my family we do mechanical stuff. My Dad is in construction and we farm. I have mechanics in my brain. I like working with the chains and bearings in this class, and I’m glad I know about them now.”



“I signed up for the class because I wanted to learn how to fix my own bike instead of spending money on that,” said Olivia Boucher, a Grade 8 student. “I also thought it would be good for my future to think about a possible job.”

Madi Jardine, a Grade 8 student said, “I signed up because I wanted to learn some skills for my life, like in foods class. Bike mechanics was something new and exciting that I can take into my life.” Jardine said the class has been fun and challenging too, such as when she and her partner couldn’t get a pin to go through the other side of the bike’s chain. “There were times when I wanted to give up, but I’ve learned about perseverance,” she said. Jardine also said when she was placed in a group without her friend, “I learned to be friends with someone else; this class is teaching us to work with other people.”

### Looking forward

Moreau and Massel are excited to see where the class might go in the future. Moreau can see possibly engaging students with painting and graphic design to soup up bikes. Both are considering possible community partnerships to enhance the bike mechanics program or to begin new programs.



# Amazing Race Canada winners inspire École Olds High students with Indigenous history and resilience message



Left to right: James Makokis, ÉOHS Principal Meaghan Reist, CESD Superintendent Kurt Sacher, and Anthony Johnson

École Olds High School students recently had the opportunity to hear from winners of the Amazing Race Canada. On November 23, Dr. James Makokis (Cree) and Anthony Johnson (Diné) an Indigenous, two-spirit couple, visited ÉOHS and spoke to students about Indigenous history in Canada.

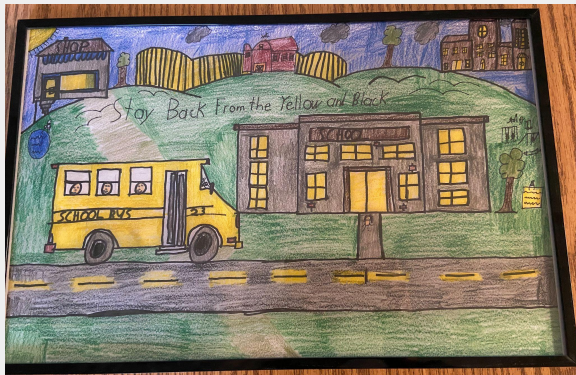
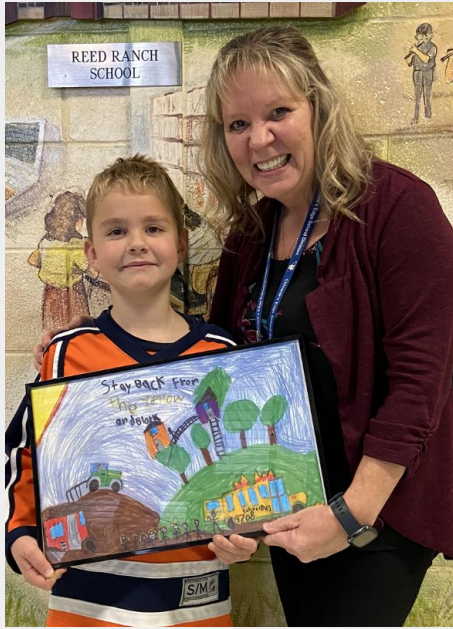
École Olds High School Principal, Meaghan Reist, said, “We appreciated the opportunity to hear from Dr. Makokis and Mr. Johnson about their experiences on the Amazing Race, and also their insights about Indigenous history. This was one step in reconciliation for our school, and an opportunity to be reflective about the journey we are on.”

Reist referred to Makokis and Johnson’s team name on the Amazing Race - “Ahkameyimok” - a Cree term for “don’t give up, keep going, use whatever you have to get something done.” Reist said, “this message, to move forward in a positive way, is a powerful reminder for all of us walking the journey of reconciliation.”



# Congratulations to winners of Chinook's Edge bus safety poster competition

Chinook's Edge congratulates the winners of the Bus Safety Poster Competition for 2023. One winner per grade received a framed copy of their poster, personally presented by Transportation Director Corinne Varga and \$25. Also, a draw was made and Olds Koinonia Christian School student, Michaela Del Mar, won a bus charter for her class. Each of the winning entries has been entered in the provincial competition. This year's theme was "stay back from the yellow and black".



Top row (left to right): Kindergarten student Charlea Crawford from Poplar Ridge School, Gr. 1 student Jace MacFarland from École Olds Elementary School, Gr. 2 student Weston Block (and Principal Cherie Sanche) from Olds Koinonia School.

Middle row (left to right): Gr. 3 student Ethan VandenBroek from Reed Ranch School, Gr. 5 student Michaela Del Mar (and Principal Cherie Sanche) from Olds Koinonia Christian School, Gr. 6 student Addison Marshall from Penhold Elementary School.

Left: Artwork by Grade 4 student Petrus Hofer from Rainbow Colony School

