

Rotary Club of Norfolk Sunrise helps northern reserve programs

Jim and Marjorie Dawson of Port Dover recently visited the northern reserve of Pikangikum First Nation (north of Red Lake, Ontario) to continue the association that Rotary Club of Norfolk Sunrise has with the school programs. Jim and Marjorie, who are experienced canoeists, helped teach two classes of students, Grade 6-7 and Grade 11-12 on a flat water canoeing certification course, a part of the outdoor program that Rotary is supporting.

"It was very rewarding to see students, whom at the start of the week were not sure which end of the canoe was which, to doing a short paddle against a strong wind at the end of the three days. They really came a long way in a short time," said Marjorie.

By happy coincidence, another program supported by the local Rotarians was performed on the Thursday night of their visit -- the music program's annual concert and Battle of the Bands.

Jim said that "it is amazing to see what these students can do with a guitar." Students who are often too shy to talk in class can build the confidence to go in front of an audience of over 100 to play their instruments in a competition styled after American Idol, complete with a professional band giving them tips. The program has been supported with prizes such as guitars, six-channel digital record-



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er, area microphone, distortion pedals and smaller prizes of guitar strings and cables by Rotary and Hobo Cafe for the last three years.

While visiting the reserve, the Rotarians were able to see firsthand the many issues and difficulties facing this community. They

said it was great to meet face-to-face with the staff and teachers and get to understand their needs. Despite all of the problems we hear about in the south, the truth is there is a lot of great people and bright kids trying to hone their skills in an difficult environment.



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