

# SCHOOL NEWS

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## Sioux Mountain students get fit while learning

*Written by Beth Dasno*

On the morning of September 16, 22 Grades 4 and 5 students navigated themselves around the Cedar Bay lakeshore area in search of clues to a word puzzle. The Sioux Mountain School students were working on their mapping skills as part of their social studies unit, and at the same time they were taking part in a new program called LearnFIT.

LearnFIT is an educational program that provides interactive learning adventures for children and youth from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Available to all schools in Sioux Lookout and Hudson, LearnFIT is a program of New Vision Unlimited.

LearnFIT has been made possible through a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotions' Communities in Actions Fund and several schools and local organizations that have come together to support the program through in-kind donations.

The LearnFIT program aims to increase the level of physical activity of school children during school hours and to introduce human powered modes of transportation as an earth-friendly form of lifestyle fitness. Facilitated by a qualified teacher, the program provides opportunities for interactive, experiential outdoor learning that is relevant to the provincial curriculum expectations for each grade.

In efforts to sustain this innovative program beyond the year of current funding, a participation fee of \$5 per student per half-day program is in place. Additionally, a fundraising initiative called ACT Challenge 2009 has been established. ACT Challenge 2009 encourages school groups to use human powered modes of transportation such as walking, snowshoeing, canoeing or skiing to travel to an outdoor classroom. Each distance traveled by a class during a LearnFIT program will be recorded on a distance thermometer. Local businesses and organizations will be approached for financial contributions to help accomplish the accumulated distance goal of 2009 kilometres by June 2009.

Craig Mahoney's Grades 4 and 5 class was the first to participate in LearnFIT. During their field trip, Mahoney's 22 students each walked 1.5 km. to the lakeshore facility at Cedar Bay from the lower parking lot and moved around the cabin area in search of orienteering signs. The class' total distance traveled by foot was 33 km. (22 students x 1.5 km.). This distance will be added to the distance thermometer at Sioux Mountain School in efforts to meet the goal of 2009 accumulated kilometers!

Since Mahoney's class, five other classes from Sioux Mountain and Queen Elizabeth High School have participated in LearnFit programs. Teaching topics have ranged from habitats to mountain biking, and community leadership, to seasonal changes. To learn more about the LearnFIT program visit

[www.newvisionunlimited.org](http://www.newvisionunlimited.org) or e-mail Beth Dasno at [newvisionunlimited@yahoo.ca](mailto:newvisionunlimited@yahoo.ca).

*Submitted by Beth Dasno  
Photo by Craig Mahoney*

