

Empowering youth to make it a better world

By Andrew Pruden

Students from Winkler, Manitou and Cartwright spent a day focussing on making the world a better place.

Middle years youth from Cartwright School, Nellie McClung Collegiate in Manitou and Parkland School in Winkler took part in the "Goals for a Better World" conference held November 26 in Morden.

Organized by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation, the conference was a chance for students "to investigate what is being done to reduce poverty, how different development projects work and what they can do to ensure a good life for people around the world."

The conference has now become an annual event and a

successful one, using interesting, alternative and exciting methods of developing youth into global citizens.

Through a series of simulation games, circuit sessions and workshops, students discovered answers to important questions such as what is poverty and who experiences poverty.

It goes further though: what is being done to improve the lives of people around the world, how do development projects change the way people experience poverty and what can we do to ensure a good life for everyone?

Several of the teachers, like Grant Caldwell from Nellie McClung are now veterans of the conference and see the value for students.

"The conference is a great chance for students to see the world around them and that not everyone has the benefits

we do."

The benefits that Caldwell speaks of can be something as simple as having shelter and clean water to drink, as the students learned.

The conference was divided into a morning and afternoon session with a multitude of lessons in each.

In the morning, the students were separated into groups by numbers, as organizers feel this encourages cross learning rather than students sticking with their classmates.

Organizers spread out across the room, and the groups of students went from station to station learning new skills and information.

The students had circuit sessions on public speaking, planning and promoting and a hands-on session where students learned about partnerships with developing countries and how these contribute to eradicating poverty.

The afternoon was full of more hands-on activities with future leaders learning how to use the tools of social activism such as video-making, silk screening, theatre and digital photography to further their cause and bring attention to world issues.

The Manitoba Council for International Co-operation is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating youth and creating world conscious citizens.

It receives financial support from the Government of Canada which assists in organizing these conferences.

Executive director Janice Hamilton noted how often she hears back positively from the schools that get involved.

"I am always amazed to hear about the follow-up events the students organize when they return to their schools and communities."

For more information on the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation go to their website at www.mclc.ca or call 204 987-6420.



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