

Student Travel Program

First Prince Rupert group 'blown away' by Capital

A field trip to the province's capital was an experience of a lifetime for students from Prince Rupert's Roosevelt Community School.

"These children come from an area of socio-economic poverty and have a lot of special needs," explained principal Steve Riley. "But they are rich in pride, culture and in giving, and rich in talented teachers who worked all year to make this trip possible."

The idea for the field trip, he said, came as a result of a visit to Prince Rupert last fall from members of the Provincial Capital Commission. Outreach Director Denis Johnston visited area schools to talk about various educational programs offered by the PCC, including student travel subsidies for trips to the capital.

"It is great that there's funding available to enable this kind of program."

Teachers Debbie Carter and Nadine Leighton were interested and spearheaded a lengthy fund-raising drive. "But it was the PCC's help that made it possible," Riley said.

"One of our missions is to connect and celebrate the capital with all British Columbians," said Ray Parks, chief executive officer for the PCC. "Our student travel subsidy program is a very successful method of helping students come to their capital and experience the many special attractions the city has to offer."

It was especially gratifying to be able to help this group from Prince Rupert, he added, as they were the first students to travel from the North Coast under the PCC program.

The three-day visit to Victoria was "brilliant," said Riley. "It was all so different than anything the kids have ever seen before. To be in a vibrant city down by the waterfront, seeing all the buskers and artists was great. It was all strange – a totally different environment. It blew them away."

The students toured the Royal BC Museum and visited numerous tourist attractions including Craigdarroch Castle, Butterfly Gardens, Miniature World and the Bug Zoo, a highlight for most of the youngsters. They watched two films on the large screen at IMAX, visited the University of Victoria, toured the oldest Chinatown in Canada, took a horse and carriage ride and swam in an Olympic size pool.

North Coast MLA Gary Coons also paved



Prince Rupert students learn about the Parliament Buildings. Below, MLA Gary Coons explains the workings of the Legislative Assembly.



the way for a special tour of the Legislative Buildings, taking time out to shepherd the Prince Rupert group into areas usually off-limits to the general public, including the Legislative Chamber and the original jail cell deep in the basement of the historic building.

A former teacher of 28 years, Coons appreciates the value of educational field trips. "It is vital for kids, especially those from northern communities," he said. "It is great that there's funding available to enable this kind of program."

For more information on the PCC's Student Travel Subsidy, visit www.bcpc.com.