



Kevin Robertson has become a teacher over the last several weeks as he leads a class of six in building a canoe. The Souris River man opened up his workshop to a class from Souris Community School. Even when there is no scheduled class, Mr Robertson and his twin daughters Erin and Grace can be found working on the project. Shannon Mooney photo

## Canoe build highlights Community School projects

By Charlotte MacAulay  
charlotte@peicanada.com

Community Schools have been a tradition on PEI for 50 years, and while stormy weather has prompted a few groups to move their programs to the fall, eastern PEI has six schools that run in winter.

The schools are all about sharing skills and knowledge. Courses range from armchair travel, to learning the violin, to studying Spanish, to pretty much anything the imagination can dream up.

This winter, one group in Souris has taken on the task of building a canoe.

Kevin Robertson, a director at the Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation, SAB, is instructing the course with the federation funding the materials.

He said he thought the course would generate some new interest in community school in the area.

"It goes along well with wildlife," he said.

Fred Cheverie, coordinator of SAB, agrees.

"Our mandate is to promote recreation."

"Anytime people can find ways of passing 'miserable old February' and learn new skills at the same time, it's a good thing," Mr Cheverie said.

Six students are enrolled in the class and none had any hands-on experience initially with building a canoe from the ground up.

However, they have all

developed a sense of accomplishment with the progress made so far, according to Mr Robertson.

Once completed, the small craft will be turned over to SAB.

Community Schools were first introduced in 1965. The concept was conceived to provide life-long learning to students of all ages.

Classes run once a week for nine-10 weeks starting up in September and/or January.

Volunteerism is what gives the program longevity.

All schools are entirely run on a volunteer basis with committee members as well as instructors giving their time.

Most programs are held in public schools throughout the province and when school closes for the day that means there's no community school either.

Therefore, the unpredictable winter weather plays havoc with schedules at times and Souris seems to be having more trouble than most.

Last year they had no program to speak of as they were the victims of the weekly Wednesday storms and so far this year they have had to cancel four nights, said chairperson Patricia MacLean.

"It can be frustrating, to say the least, but still we have some unique courses this year," she said.

It is a bonus the canoe build is off site and they are not beholden to school cancellations.

Morell Community

School, with a registration of 84 students, runs on Tuesday evenings out of the local high school. Despite having to cancel several nights due to bad weather, chairperson Mary McCormack said tradition dictates they continue on.

"Students don't want it to move to the fall.

"They say it makes the winter go by," she said.

St Margaret's School also runs on Wednesdays, but classes are held in the community centre so there's no issue with school closures.

Chairperson June Fraser said the 30 students at St Margaret's are enjoying the unique set up where the crafters can enjoy the sounds of the guitar class as they toil.

Community School runs on Thursday nights in Cardigan and Roger Kelly, chairperson, said they have been luckier than some as far as closures go.

"Because we are so late in the week and some courses are not taught in the school, we have only lost two instructional days so far," he said.

There are close to 50 students taking nine courses in Cardigan.

"A lot of our students go because it shortens the winter, the long dark days of winter," he said.

Montague and Murray Harbour both have winter programs and Vernon River runs in the fall.

A full list of schools across the Island can be found at [www.peicommunityschools.com](http://www.peicommunityschools.com)



Maria Clinton, Hope Higginbotham and Kelly Clements were all smiles as they anticipated starting their run at the 2015 Canada Games in Prince George, BC. The three are also teammates on the Kings County Midget AAA team, which plays out of the Northumberland Arena in Murray River. Submitted photo

## Female hockey players say Canada Games was thrill of a lifetime

By Charlotte MacAulay  
charlotte@peicanada.com

When 14-year-old Kelly Clements walked into the CN Centre in Prince George, British Columbia, surrounded by her PEI Canada Games teammates, she was overwhelmed with a sense of pride.

"It was outstanding.

"Something you will never forget for sure," said the hockey player from High Bank, who traveled to the Games with more than 100 Island coaches and athletes in Week #1 of the Games in February.

When each province entered the stadium, a huge roar erupted from the thousands of people in attendance.

"The energy was crazy in there.

"There were so many people greeting and cheering you," said 17-year-old Hope Higginbotham, of Murray River.

The two girls, along with Maria Clinton, of Souris, and Peggy Yoston, of Cardigan, were members Team PEI's women's hockey team and they are all from eastern PEI.

All agreed the mood was just as exhilarating on the ice.

The team came away from the Games in 10th place overall with a record of one and five.

The girls were pleased with their effort.

"To play against the best people in Canada was an eye opener.

"You don't really realize it living on PEI, but when you go to big events like that you can actually see how much



Peggy Yoston, from Cardigan, is one of four girls from eastern PEI who were members Team PEI women's hockey team. Peggy, who is a goalie, currently plays hockey at Kings-Edgewood School in Windsor, Ontario. Submitted photo

talent there is in Canada," Maria said.

"We learned a lot playing against the bigger teams," Peggy said.

The 17-year-old goalie, said she will never forget the feeling of shutting out the North West Territories, and she has the game puck to commemorate it.

"I always dreamed of scoring goals at Canada Games, so when I did, it was a dream come true," Maria, who plays centre, said.

The 17-year-old, who is in Grade 11 at Souris Regional, scored two goals during the Games, one against Ontario and a tie breaker against New Brunswick.

Kelly, a right winger, was fired up from the second she skated onto the ice as part of the starting line of the team's very first game. That, and the moment Maria scored Team PEI's first goal

of the Games against Team Ontario, really stands out for her.

"Everyone on the bench jumped 10 feet high," Kelly said, referring to her team mate's goal.

All eight goals scored by the Island team were definitely a highlight, according to Hope, the one of the team's left wingers.

"It was pretty exciting scoring against Quebec and Ontario and we celebrated after every goal," Hope said.

The girls also spent time celebrating the accomplishments of other PEI athletes at the Games.

A favourite turned out to be wheelchair basketball.

"It was really fun cheering on all the fellow team mates, and when we went to a wheelchair basketball game against BC, we cheered PEI on so much they thanked us after the game," she said.

From that moment on they became the cheerleaders for the team, attending as many games as possible.

The girls also had plenty of fans at their own games.

Along with several parents, the men's curling team were pretty vocal in the stands.

Maria, Kelly and Hope are all back into their routines at home. That includes playoffs with their team, the Kings County Midget AAAs. Peggy has rejoined her teammates in Windsor, Nova Scotia, at Kings-Edgewood School.

Hope's parents are Krista and Mike Higginbotham; Kelly is the daughter of Alexis and Troy Clements; Maria is the daughter Peggy and Stephen Clinton and Peggy's parents are Joanne and Andre Yoston.

## Rainbow Party celebrates Autumn's victory

By Chris McGarry  
chris@peicanada.com

A very special event called a 'Rainbow Party' was held Saturday evening in celebration of 6-year-old Autumn Newell's victory over cancer.

Autumn, daughter of Stacey and Donnie Newell, of Montague, was first diagnosed with cancer on October 11, 2012, not long after her fourth birthday.

"Autumn had been experiencing flu-like symptoms and frequent infections," her mom Stacey said. "For awhile, we were constantly back and forth between the emergency rooms of both the Kings County Memorial and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals."

Autumn continued to get sicker and on October 10, 2012, the young girl had a bad nosebleed. Autumn's parents took her to KCMH where her doctor requested blood work.

"We went to Charlottetown where Dr. Zelman diagnosed Autumn with acute lymphoblastic leukemia," Ms Newell said.

Two days later, Autumn travelled to the IWK in Halifax to begin chemotherapy. For the next two-and-a-half years, the family was continuously back and forth between PEI and Halifax.

"The treatment regime for cancer in girls is two-and-a-half years. During that period, Autumn was in good spirits," Ms Newell said.

However, during her second year of treatment, Autumn became sicker and developed infections, which were dealt with by antibiotics.

"In 2013, Autumn spent 75 days either in the QEH or the IWK," her mother explained.

Back in September, Autumn started Grade 1. Recently, the chemotherapy treatments eradicated all of the cancer in her system. Although the cancer is gone, specialists at the IWK will follow her until she is 18.

Ms Newell got the idea to throw a Rainbow Party for her daughter after reading inspirational quotes on the Internet.

"I came across the quote

'after the storm comes a rainbow.' That inspired me to host this Rainbow Party."

Saturday's party was held at Pooles Corner. Many people, including Autumn's older brothers Isaac and Connor, her parents, friends and family, got together for an evening of activities. In addition to a slide show, the party featured crafts and coloring sheets. Every card Autumn received while she was in the hospital as well as newspaper articles written about her battle and victory over cancer were put on display for all to see. Guests enjoyed an enormous rainbow cake baked by Cathy Villard and Anne Ellsworth-Dixon as well as music by Frank Whitty and Friends and Dylan Ferguson.

Autumn, now a happy, healthy little girl, feels good.

"I'm glad I don't have to take my medicine anymore," Autumn said.

Go to Autumn on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olAUaQ0o04&feature=youtu.be> to view the slideshow.



Six-year-old Autumn Newell, of Montague, stands with her mom, Stacey, in front of a very special cake. A celebration was held on the weekend for the little girl who beat acute lymphoblastic leukemia after two-and-a-half-years of chemotherapy treatments. Chris McGarry photo