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# SANDY LAKE HEALTH & DIABETES PROJECT

Volume 1, Issue 1

December 2006

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*Wishing You a Safe & Happy Holiday Season!  
See You in the New Year!*

## SANDY LAKE "SEIZES THE DAY" WITH PHYSICAL FITNESS.

*By Willow Fiddler*

*Friday, the thirteenth of October, 2006*—Sandy Lake has slept through a night of winds at 57 km/hr gusting through 74 km/hr. Snow lies scooped into wet, eight foot drifts. Although the snow plows are in service at 7am, school for the day is out of the question.

But by mid-morning, those who love the snow are digging out; those who can walk to work are warming up; and those who are creative have a plan in place.

The local radio station crackles. THERE WILL BE A ONE DAY FAMILY SNOW SCULPTURE CONTEST.

The rules are simple. This is a family event. The sculpture must be beside your house. Children are to be helped, preferably by adults within the home. All styles of snow sculpture are acceptable. Judges will start judging at 4pm. Prizes: 5



**From top:** *Could it have been the extreme cold that led this dino to extinction?; Jeff & Jose Rae with their cool kitty-cat; Cedar Fiddler with his ice-cold ski-doo.*

prizes for each of the 5 geographical areas of \$25.00 each, compliments of the NCBS Programs and the Diabetes Prevention Program. Remaining sculptures will gain entry for a prize of a load of fire wood, compliments of the Brighter Futures Program.

By mid-afternoon, people are phoning in their entries. Gary Manoakeesic, Diabetes Prevention Coordinator and Lindsay Meekis, Crisis Coordinator handle the radio station to record and chart the entries.

At 4pm, judges head out. Rod Fiddler, Diabetes Prevention Coordinator and teachers Taryn & Ryan McPherson handle the RC section. Albert Meekis, Brighter Futures Worker along with elementary school teachers Trish McCarthy and Gary Moulaise judge Center area. Glen Fiddler, Cultural Coordinator is joined by artist Ringo Fiddler and Angela Kalamatisit to judge entries

*(cont'd on page 3—see "blizzard"...)*

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER — DOING IT FOR OUR PEOPLE!

*Submitted by: Roderick Fiddler, Diabetes Prevention Coordinator*

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform the community about diabetes and its devastating effects. But most importantly, how to prevent it.

I am hoping this is one of many newsletters over the next year.

Many people still wonder what we do at the Diabetes Project. Just to let you know, there are two parts to the Diabetes Project:

- 1. Research** Headed up by Mary Mamakeesick and gang.
- 2. Prevention** Headed up by myself and Gary Manoakeesic.

Basically, we look at ways to stopping diabetes.

In a nutshell, we do this by doing:

- physical activity programs;
- promoting good nutrition;
- and working with school-age kids in the classroom.

We are on the radio every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. letting you know what we've been up to and also what we plan on doing.

But if you have any further questions about the Diabetes Project or about this newsletter or anything related to the work we do, please feel free to call us.

Talk to us, that's why we're here. Peace Out!



## PUTTING STUDENTS TO THE TEST AT TFMES

By Willow Fiddler

The children in grades 3 and 4 at Thomas Fiddler Memorial Elementary School welcomed the Diabetes Prevention Team into their classrooms this fall.

The Prevention Team was there to look at what they know about physical activity and healthy eating habits. Each child volunteered their body measurements and participated in questionnaires, recalling exactly what was on their menu the day before. They also had their individual fitness level tested by performing shuttle runs in the school's gymnasium.

Studying and recording the eating and physical activity habits of the kids in the community began in September 2005, and will help to understand why Sandy Lake has the third highest diabetes

rate in the world and what can be done to prevent the disease from afflicting our younger generation.

It's also hoped to prevent diabetes in our children through education, awareness, family participation and empowerment to make healthy choices.

Healthy Living and Healthy Eating packages were delivered to all the parents/guardians of the students in grades 3 and 4.

Teachers of the grades 3 and 4 also received classroom appropriate packages which included many activities relating to healthy living and eating. This is in addition to the school's current diabetes curriculum.

The Diabetes Prevention Team will be back to see the grades 3 and 4 in May 2007.



**A student gets his body measurements taken as part of the continued diabetes studies at TFMES.**

## Research Team Discovering What's So Complicated About Diabetes

Submitted by: Mary Mamakeesic, Edith Fiddler, Tinia Noon & Tony Hanley of the Diabetes Research Team

Diabetes can lead to a number of long-term complications, including problems with the eyes, the legs and feet, the kidneys, and the large blood vessels (which can cause heart attacks and strokes).

In 2001 we did a survey in which we invited everyone in the community with diabetes to be tested for complications, as well as measuring the risk and protective factors for diabetes complications.

We found that the most common complications are kidney and nerve problems. Even the severest forms of eye problems were found not to be as common.

These complications cause a lot of health problems and become an inconvenience for people with diabetes.

Despite the very high rates of diabetes in First Nations communities, very little is known about the burden or causes of diabetes complications.

In addition, we found that you can lessen the chances of diabetes complications by controlling your blood sugar, keeping your blood pressure at a healthy rate and avoiding smoking.

Those who have been diabetic for a shorter period of time also have a better chance of getting the disease under control thus, preventing diabetes complications.

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***“the most common complications are kidney and nerve problems”***

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## CIHR SHOWS SANDY LAKE THE MONEY

Submitted by: Mary Mamakeesic, Edith Fiddler, Tinia Noon & Tony Hanley of the Diabetes Research Team

We are very happy to report that the Sandy Lake Diabetes Research Team has been granted 5 years of continued funding by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canada's leading health research funding agency.

The grant application was put together by Tony Hanley, Mary Mamakeesic, John McKay, Stewart Harris and Bernie Zinman.

This continued funding is a reflection of the outstanding reputation of the partnership between Sandy Lake First Nation and health researchers. It also recognizes the progress made by our partnership to increasing the understanding and addressing the burden of diabetes in First Nations communities.



*The Diabetes Research Team back in the summer of '98: Dr. Robert Hegele, Dr. Tony Hanley, Mary Mamakeesic, Connie Kakegamic, Tinia Noon, Dr. Stewart Harris, Harry Meekis, Dr. Bernie Zinman, Margaret Fiddler, Annette Rae, Brit Saksvig, & Baby DJ Rae*

## OUTDOOR RINKS, CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING & SNOWSHOEING LEAD WINTER ACTIVITIES

By Willow Fiddler

The Diabetes Prevention Program is once again working hard to keep our community's families active throughout the winter months.

There are a total of 6 outdoor rinks currently in the works. Gary Man-oakeesic, Diabetes Prevention Coordinator has been working with several volunteers and hopes to have all the rinks completed before Christmas.

The rinks are at the following locations, available for anyone to use:

1. Stanley Rae—River
2. Gordon Fiddler—Centre
3. David Beardy Jr.—Old Saw Mill
4. David B. Fiddler—Airport
5. Touchan Fiddler—R.C.
6. Robert Kakegamic—Ghost Point

The rinks are specifically located as close to the lakes as possible, making the transportation of water easier. Outdoor lights, shovels, and water pumps have all been purchased to maintain the rinks for the rest of the winter.

Gary spearheads many of the only organized physical activities in our community throughout the year with financial assistance from partnering programs Sandy Lake Health Authority, NCBS, Welfare Program and Western University Diabetes Research Team. He strongly believes in the importance of having something in place for the kids who may not otherwise have the opportunity to do so. Stating, "that's my job", Gary says he is after the non-active children in the community to pursue healthy eating and staying active.

Parental involvement and regular physical activity have been identified

by the Diabetes Prevention Program as major factors to decreasing children's chances of getting diabetes. All of the organized activities sponsored by the Diabetes Prevention Program welcome and encourage parental involvement. Whether it be helping to maintain the outdoor rinks or lacing up your own skates to join the kids on the ice, there is always room for volunteers, especially from the parents.

In addition to the outdoor rinks, Gary has added cross-country skiing and snowshoeing to this year's list of physical activities. Last fiscal year, the program was able to purchase \$6,000 worth of new sports equipment.

So far, children participating in Jason Mawakeesic's tae-kwon-do class have utilized the new equipment for some outdoor adventures.

Contact the Prevention Program at 774-1216 for more information.

### (cont'd from front page) Four Hundred People Enjoying A "Blizzard To Remember"

at Ghost Point. Melody and Sonny Mamakeesic have been commandeered to judge the Old Saw Mill section. And Anthony Bekintis and Carlson Kakegamic are still out in the bush getting the prize load of fire wood.

Douglas Crowe, Recreation Coordinator and Band Councillor Frankie Crowe cover the River area. An elder stops him, "judge my entry", she says. Douglas looks around for her snow-sculpture. "There!", she says, pointing to the mound of snow left by snow plow driver Bernie Crowe who had made her driveway passable earlier in the day. "Its called *free-form*". Doug grins. "Call the radio station. Tell them we are at Clovis Meekis' house. We have done this end. We're heading for Melton Mamakeesic's and Lisa Meekis' next." The radio adds the report, noting all judges are now accounted for and will be returning to award prizes shortly.

The outcome? Ninety-four entries judged. At least 4 people participating in the creation of each sculpture. Four hundred people being physically active and enjoying the results of a "blizzard to remember". And Sarah Mamakeesic happily putting prize fire wood into a hungry stove.



#### Reduced-Fat Pie Pastry

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons *cold* margarine (cut into pieces)
- 5 to 5 1/2 tablespoons *ice* water

Combine flour and salt in a medium bowl; cut in margarine with pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Mix in water 1 tablespoon at a time, stirring lightly with fork after each addition until dough is formed. Wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

#### Num-Num Corner



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The SLHDP was conceived in 1991 as a partnership between the Sandy Lake community and diabetes researchers. It is a model for community-based primary prevention programs in diabetes, and incorporates the principles of participatory research. The investigators and community leaders meet regularly to discuss all aspects of the project, including study protocols, funding, new initiatives, personnel, and publications. All project protocols have been approved by the Sandy Lake First Nation Band Council and the University of Toronto Ethics Review Committee.

*This publication was produced & edited by Willow Fiddler (December 2006). Special thanks to SLHDP, SL Health Authority & SLFN for their contributions. Comments, ideas, suggestions, photos and submissions can be forwarded to the SLHDP or to Willow at the Band Office and by emailing: [willowfiddler@knet.ca](mailto:willowfiddler@knet.ca). MIIGWETCH!*

## Using Our Own Resources Critical To Achieving Healthy Living

*Submitted by: John McKay, Health Director for Sandy Lake Health Authority*

Health is a personal responsibility. We are each responsible for our own well-being. From childhood we are told by our parents, teachers and people around who care about us the process and rules to follow on how to live in this world. It is up to us individuals to discern what is good for us and to understand our decisions impact our futures and those we cross paths with. Attitude is everything (so goes the saying) and it is our attitude that determines our choices and ultimately what kind of life we lead. Our surroundings, beliefs

and customs shape our attitudes.

There are things in our lives that we can change and those we can not. One of the biggest things in our community that affects everyone is diabetes. If you don't have diabetes, chances are you know someone who does. We are told Sandy Lake First Nation has the third highest per capita in the world since 1997. The community has spent many years trying to convince and educate its people of this reality. The community has seen many people affected by the complications of this terrible disease. The children are taught in the schools of the same concerns and we are seeing more and more

young people diagnosed with diabetes.

We don't know what the future has in store for Sandy Lake First Nation but we can be sure if we don't start addressing the diabetes individually and change our attitudes, if it needs changing, our children could have more challenges with this illness. The experts do not have a cure at the moment but the limited knowledge we have goes into our prevention programs.

Our Nursing Station and health staff are doing what they can to be a resource, should you decide to do something about it.

