



GENDER EQUITY IN RECREATIONAL SPORT

Success Story

Girls Canoe Camp Offers New Skills and Lasting Bonds

FOR RHEA STEINER, THE VILLAGE OF Teslin's Girls Canoe Camp was more than just a chance to canoe along Yukon's water ways.

It refreshed her canoe and water rescue skills. It connected her with other women and girls who have the same interests. It gave her back her confidence.

"This opportunity came at a perfect time," said Rhea, 58. "It was a good chance to experience one of my passions with all ages of girls and women, learning from and sharing with each other."

Thanks to funding from the CPRA's Gender Equity in Recreational Sport, which is funded in part by the Government of Canada (Sport Canada), Rhea and 11 other female participants spent the first few days of the summer strengthening their canoe skills and forming lasting bonds.



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Village of Teslin Canoe Camp



Village of Teslin Canoe Camp Participants

“This project was unique because it included a great mix of female participants of all ages, and increased skill set and interest in canoeing.”

Lindsay Johnston, Recreation Manager for the Village of Teslin

“Sharing the wilderness experience with the kids was wonderful. It really was all ages and abilities,” said Rhea. “Even the children had something to teach as we were in the middle of nowhere navigating this body of water. It really fostered that kindred spirit amongst us.”

The program, which ran June 23-July 1, 2020, brought together girls, mothers and women over 55 years-old to learn paddling skills and how to safely navigate bodies of water in a canoe. The camp was led by a Paddle Canada instructor, who helped participants canoe across the Village of Teslin’s water ways and focused on different skills on flat and moving water.

Additionally, the camp offered a dry-land leadership development component to the program, where older youth learned the skills to run their own canoe groups and trips. The camp also culminated in a multi-day canoe trip down the Nisutlin River for three camp participants.

Lindsay Johnston, recreation manager for the Village of Teslin, said the canoe camp was a great experience for women and girls of all ages.

“This project got several people who had never canoed before comfortable on the water, and with paddling a canoe,” said Lindsay, adding that hosting the program in the community was a perfect fit. “There is a rich history of First Nation canoeing in the community, and this program helped to rejuvenate that.”

Even though they had to change their original program plans because of COVID-19, Lindsay said the pandemic allowed them to open the program to females of all ages, which helped them reach age groups that don’t typically participate in their programs. She added that the program encouraged family groups to participate, so that boat pairings could be from the same family and safely travel together.

“This made for a really great mix of mothers and daughters, and we had a great group of 12 females participate in the first couple days of the program,” said Lindsay.

The camp also broke down financial barriers that some women might have had, delivering it free-of-charge to ensure full inclusion.

Lindsay added that this project was unique because it included a great mix of female participants of all ages, and increased skill set and interest in canoeing.

“Canoeing is a very inclusive activity and it is great to have mixed age groups in canoe programs in small communities,” she said. “Canoeing provides a unique physical activity opportunity that families can participate in together. It also is a great way for people to get outside!” 🍁