

British Columbia Heritage Fairs Society

Travel Support for Outreach in the Kootenays

Project Report

9 February 2016

THE PROJECT

The British Columbia Heritage Fairs Society is indebted to THEN/HiER for its generous contribution and support to provide workshops for teachers, students and parents in Creston, BC. Our hope was to use travel funding to a maximum of \$1,600 to send facilitators to School District 8 (Kootenay Lake) to support the professional development of teachers in the administration and planning of heritage fairs, to spark student interest in heritage fair projects for 2016, and to support the needs of homeschool parents with respect to heritage fair projects for 2016 and beyond. Although we had intended to send two facilitators, we decided to send one due to the anticipated numbers of participants.

THE SOCIETY

The BC Heritage Fairs Society develops young community leaders and critical thinkers. Through participation in school-based, regional, and provincial Heritage Fairs, students engage with the history of their communities, their region, and their nation, and they develop their abilities as researchers, community ambassadors, and public speakers. The BCHFS brings young people together to make history come alive.



REPORT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH -- JANUARY 28-29, 2016

In this two-day initiative, time and energy was spent in explaining how the Heritage Fairs program works. In addition, we examined how the project approach to learning lends itself to applying the inquiry process and skills promoted by the new BC curriculum to ask questions, gather, interpret, and analyse ideas in order to communicate findings to a larger audience. These skills are at the heart of heritage fair projects.



The greatest interest for incorporating heritage fairs projects into the classroom at this point in this region comes from the homeschooling sector and the Wildfire Alternate School Program. Two teachers, Linda Farynowski (Wildfire) and Laurie Riehl (HomeLinks) are very excited about the concept of Heritage Fairs and developing the Creston/Nelson/Cranbrook region into a larger fair than just their school. There is a great deal of support from home-school families and alternate school parents in this region. Linda's multi-grade class also takes the opportunity to work with seniors at a local Seniors' Community Complex and the idea of the students interviewing citizens to retell their stories has sparked a lot of interest and excitement and should yield some great collaborations.



Last year, transportation support for students from SD#8 to the Regional Fair in Kelowna was provided by the school district. While the BCHFS continues to work towards the addition of the Kootenay Valley as a 14th region in the BCHFS network of regional sites that host Heritage Fairs, it recognizes the difficult challenges that geography places on the interested parties. The complex division of the school districts, namely SD #8 (Kootenay Lake – Nelson), SD #5 (Southeast Kootenay – Cranbrook) and SD #6 (Rocky Mountain – Kimberley) does not provide easy travel between communities and contributes to enormous travel expenses when transporting students from one community to another. Rather than limiting participation in a Regional Fair due to school district boundaries, the idea of working collaboratively to overcome particular geographical limitations is being explored.

We are grateful for the support of THEN/HiER as we work to grow the Heritage Fairs program in the Kootenays.

Mary Campone
British Columbia Heritage Fairs