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## Serious science sweeps Kivalliq

*Camps across region aimed to bring whole new world home to budding scientists*

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### KIVALLIQ

A dollop of dentistry, a medley of math and a sprinkling of science added up to a whole lot of fun for children and youth in the Kivalliq region this summer.

Since June 26, organizers with Actua have been running week-long science camps in each Kivalliq community. The camps wrapped up in Arviat on July 21.

The hands-on camps walked participants through the various ways in which science can be found in their communities, according to Jenifer Spencer, senior manager of communication and outreach with Actua.

"The whole point, and what we're trying to achieve throughout the week, is really so youth can identify that STEM is in their community," Spencer said.

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Over the course of each week, youth were exposed to a bit of each category.

Jeanie Malone, one of the camps' outreach instructors, said the activities are tailored each week to the interests of the youth who attend.

"We pick and choose what to do depending on what the group is into," she said, speaking to Kivalliq News from Arviat on July 20.



In Rankin Inlet, Actua instructor Daren Saumik helped Gianna Kaludjak and Tiana Misheralak with their goal rockets - finding the best balance between the variables to maximize the chemical reaction. - photo courtesy of Jenifer Spencer

Arviat's camp differed from the other ones Actua ran. Malone said a literacy camp was running at the same time, which allowed instructors to break the group of youth up into older and younger age groups, trading off with the literacy camp throughout the week.

"That helps us tailor the activities a little bit," she said.

Camps kicked off with what Spencer calls a STEM Selfie - participants got a Polaroid snapshot of themselves and identified their skills. Throughout the week, instructors and students added to that list as they learned more about STEM.

"They end the week with a whole bunch of new skills they didn't know they had," Spencer said.

Some of the activities students took on included brewing "elephant's toothpaste", a mixture of hydrogen peroxide, dish soap, food colouring and yeast that resulted in a safe explosion; a lesson in how electrons move through circuits which had participants form a human chains to test them out; and exposure to dentistry, where youth were given teeth molds and actual dentist tools and learned how to remove plaque from teeth.

Spencer said many of the camps in the Kivalliq region also brought youth to local health centres for field trips, or brought nurses into the camps to talk about what they do.

"Mentorship is a really big part of the camp experience," she said.

That was helped along this year by the fact that one of the instructors, Daren Saumik, is from the Kivalliq region.

Each camp had three instructors, all of whom are either recent graduates or undergraduates. Malone's group included Aybuke Ozel, an engineering student from the University of Ottawa, and Saumik, a Kivalliq undergrad who just completed his first year at Nunavut Sivuniksavut in Ottawa.

Saumik is originally from Rankin Inlet and spent much of his youth in Whale Cove.

Although Saumik wasn't available for comment, Malone said having him along as an instructor provided an instant connection with many of the youth they have been working with.

"It's amazing. He connects with so many of the kids so quickly, because they all know him and they've known him for forever," she said.

"It's definitely super helpful when you're managing a camp to have someone who knows the whole family."

Of the 12 outreach instructors who are facilitating camps in Nunavut this summer, six of them are indigenous instructors, Spencer said.

"We really value the importance of role modeling and the impacts our instructors can have on the kids they're working with," she said.

"Our goal is to always help youth to see themselves in STEM, to see that that's an option for them."



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