

# CCRR hosts another literacy event

West Fraser Timber Park was the site of "Going on a Nature Hunt", a literacy event hosted by the Child Care Resource & Referral program for children from childcare facilities in our community. Children learn best by playing, and 104 children under the age of 5 did just that for two hours. Literacy and nature were the themes for this event.

The Nature Education & Resource Centre partnered with the CCRR, organizing and running two of the eight activities offered during the two-hour event. Going on a Nature Hunt was funded by Rotary Club of Quesnel. Katimavik volunteers played alongside CCRR staff to ensure the children had fun learning about nature.

"This is our third such event," says Pat Colbourne, executive director of New Focus Society, the sponsoring organization for the CCRR. "Our budget does not allow for extras like this, so we are very thankful that Rotary Club of Quesnel funded the event. This allows us to provide learning opportunities for children in daily care that they otherwise may not have, and to support quality childcare in our community."

All toys and equipment used came from our lending library, which is open to the public for a nominal yearly fee. "The CCRR staff and our Katimavik volunteer worked for months to prepare for this event. They did an amazing job, pouring their hearts into it," says Colbourne. "It's a great team. I look after the logistics and the staff show great creativity in planning the activities. For them it's all about the learning experience for the children, and modeling how effective educational play can be."

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## COMMUNITY



More than 100 preschool children took in outdoor activities at West Fraser Timber Park, May 26.

Contributed photo

# Preschoolers take in all things nature

The Quesnel Child Care Resource & Referral program, in partnership with the Nature Education & Resource Centre and with financial assistance from Rotary Club of Quesnel, hosted 104 preschool children from childcare centres in Quesnel at West Fraser Timber Park, May 26.

Most children were bused to the venue from their childcare centres, where they enjoyed two hours of literacy-based activities surrounding nature.

The emphasis at these events is learning through meaningful play, as that is how children learn best.

"We are big into early literacy at the CCRR," sponsoring organization New Focus Society executive director Pat

Colbourne said. "Events like this support not only the children in care, but also the care providers that we support. We do all the planning and we get them safely to and from the venue.

"They get to offer the children in their care with learning opportunities they would not otherwise have."

To reinforce literacy, each child leaves the venue with a relevant book to take home and enjoy.

Rotary Club of Quesnel graciously funded the event.

The Nature Education & Resource Centre was happy to partner in this event.

"There is a lot of passion from staff/volunteers at the nature centre," Colbourne said.

The centre organized and led

two activities - a short hike in the woods, as well as an opportunity to experience pond life and tour the centre.

Also partnering in this event were the Katimavik volunteers on their third rotation in Quesnel.

They were on-hand to run the various activity stations alongside the CCRR staff.

"They are an enthusiastic bunch and we were very grateful to have them out there helping us," Colbourne said.

The children decorated "binoculars", which were then used in the story/circle time activity.

Children enjoyed an obstacle course

which related their movements to animals' movements.

They crossed a balance beam like squirrels on a branch, hopped like rabbits on large hop balls, crawled through tunnels like gophers, crossed river rocks like frogs on lily pads and rocked like penguins on balance boards.

Participants put their hands inside "feely boxes" and matched what they felt to one of three pictures on the box.

They dug through sawdust to hunt for animals found in the Canadian wilderness and they enjoyed a healthy snack.

All toys and equipment used in the event came from our

toy and equipment lending library.

It is very difficult for childcare providers, particularly the larger group centres, to take the children on educational outings.

There are so many safety and liability issues surrounding outings and transportation is usually problematic.

When planning these events the CCRR considers safety above all and so venues are carefully chosen.

While one event was out on a farm, the other two the CCRR has hosted have been in contained areas.

The city generously allowed the use of one of the fenced in baseball diamonds as the main venue.