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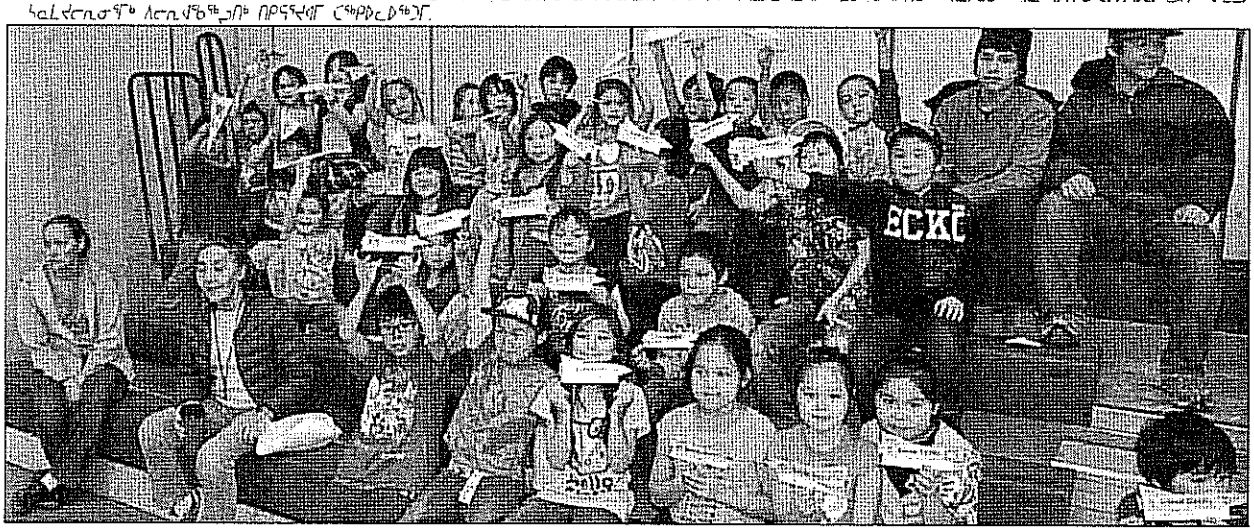

***Students at Inuglak School in Whale Cove had a great time competing** in the Kivalliq Science Olympics (Science and Engineering Technology) in Whale this past month.*

Sponsorship encourages kids to excel at Science Olympics

by Darrell Greer
Northern News Services
Kivalliq

The Kivalliq's Science Olympics saw a spike in popularity this past month, thanks to the Northern store agreeing to sponsor the event.

Also known as the Science and Engineering Technology (SET) Challenge, it was without a sponsor for the first time in 2012.

Regional coordinator Katharine O'Connell of Maani Uluiuk Hinniarvik in Rankin Inlet said reports from schools across the region indicated the Science Olympics weren't the same without a 2012 sponsor.

She said a phone call from teacher Jennifer Roop at Tusarvik School in Repulse Bay led to the Northern store sponsoring this year's event.

The sponsorship provides promotional items such as T-shirts and medals.

O'Connell said the younger students, especially, get excited over receiving an award during the event.

She said the T-shirts help create a team atmosphere during the Science Olympics.

"They're good items that help promote the event," said O'Connell.

"Many students are proud to wear them around the school to show they had one of the top projects."

O'Connell said the sponsored prizes encourage students to be more focused, which usually means better results with their projects. She said the kids love to compete against each other in a fun environment.

"It's a not a heavy-duty competition, but they enjoy creating different designs and trying to outdo each other.

"It gives them a chance to think outside of the box, while, at the same time, working as a team to produce the best project they can. The prizes add that extra component. The students see they're rewarded for bringing their best effort, which helps produce a positive environment around the Science Olympics."

The event is held in October due to the month being home to Science and Technology Week.

O'Connell said this year's theme was Outer Space.

She said a trivia contest was also held, with the Canadian Space Agency donating gift packs to each school.

"Facts were read during each morning's announcements, and the students were given questions to answer based on those facts.

"The top students won the agency packs with hats, T-shirts, stuff like that.

"There's also a chance for some teachers to get involved in a program through the Canadian Space Agency called Tomatosphere, which starts in February of 2014.

"It uses seeds manipulated in space, and you get to actually collect scientific data for the agency."

Attention now turns to the local science fairs, which are held across Kivalliq from November to January.

The top entries from the local fairs compete at the Kivalliq Regional Science Fair, which will be held in Arviat in February of 2014.

"The regional fair is our most anticipated event every year," said O'Connell.

"The top finishers at that move on to compete at the Canada-wide Science Fair (Windsor, Ont. from \May 10 to 17).

"It's still a pretty big deal of many of the students."

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