

Paulatuk-Toronto Student Exchange

Julie Clark, Principal, Angik School (Beaufort-Delta region)

From September 24 through October 2, thirteen students and two chaperones (**Julie Clark** and **Kyle Sagert**) from Angik School in Paulatuk, explored Ontario as a part of an Experiences Canada student exchange. The trip was a big deal for our community because there has not been a student exchange in 40 years!! Most of our students have not spent much time outside of Northwest Territories so this was a very exciting opportunity for our youths. They encountered some first-time experiences such as escalators, pigeons and traffic!

On Monday, we tested our limits at a tree-top trekking adventure where students navigated obstacle courses high up in the trees! Tuesday was action packed; we toured the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, shopped at the Eaton Centre, went to the Hockey Hall of Fame, the CN Tower, and a Blue Jay's game! On Wednesday, we went to Niagara Falls and took a boat ride right up to the tremendous waterfall. In the afternoon, the students ran around Clifton Hill where they tried out roller coasters, laser tag, a haunted house, a Ferris wheel and more! On Thursday, we went to a host family's farm. We learned about farming pigs and corn, we enjoyed a wonderful farm-fresh lunch, we listened and sang along with a French Canadian singer. The students got to enjoy swinging in a barn, feeding chickens and donkeys, and playing baseball. On Friday, we went to Blue Mountain Resort where the students got to wall climb, zip

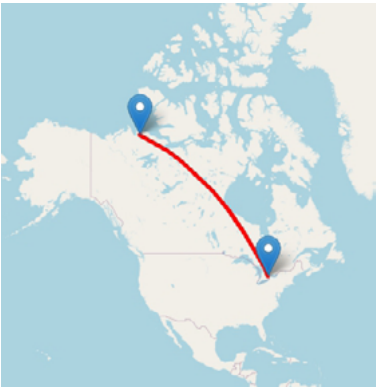
line, go on roller coasters and water bikes, play mini golf, and enjoy shopping!

The students stayed with their gracious host

families in various parts of Ontario in the area surrounding Toronto! The host families took them to enjoy more activities such as a NHL game, shopping, a movie theatre, a car show, to Wasaga Beach and more!

We can't wait to host the students from Ontario in Paulatuk! We plan to take them on two-ice fishing trips, go sledding, skating and teach the students about Inuvialuit culture by participating in drum dancing, beading, jigging, storytelling, and sharing traditional food!

I would like to thank **Aubrey Hawton** and **Jodie Hollett** who are organizers and chaperones in Ontario. Thank you to **Herb Nakimayak** and **Ray Ruben**, who donated money to buy the students some meals along the way! Thank you to a fellow Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council teacher **Chris MacLea**, who dedicated time helping before the trip, and his mom **Kim McNair** who generously gave all the students from Ontario and Paulatuk a thoughtful gift during the trip. Lastly, thank you to Experiences Canada for providing this wonderful opportunity for students across Canada to connect and learn from each other! Please check out www.experiencescanada.ca if you would like to plan a student exchange at your school.



Toronto-Paulatuk Student Exchange

R. Aubrey Hawton, Group Organizer, Simcoe County Exchanges

From September 25 to October 1, 2022, we had the privilege of hosting students and teachers from Angik School in Paulatuk, here in central Ontario. We had an exciting time showing them some of the many attractions in our area, but the REAL excitement for our students was the opportunity to travel to Paulatuk in April 2023.

Our adventure began with a flight from Toronto to Edmonton, where we overnighted. The next day, our travels continued with a flight from Edmonton to Yellowknife, and on to Inuvik, where we boarded our charter flight to Paulatuk.

We were greeted at the airport by the smiling faces of many of the exchange participants and were transported into the community. The -25°C temperatures were a bit of a wake-up for us!

Angik School and the community of Paulatuk, where the last student exchange was over 40 years ago, welcomed us with great friendship, great food, and great activities.

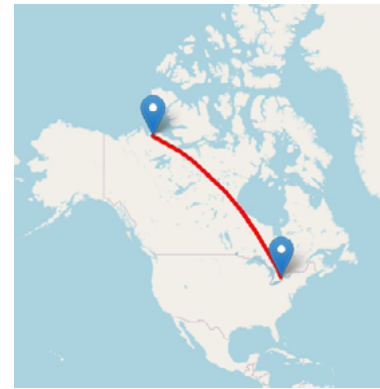
We spent two days on ice fishing trips to local lakes. Although the number of fish caught wasn't phenomenal, the experience of ice fishing through 6-foot deep ice certainly was. Community members, including the local RCMP officer, were most helpful in transporting us and all the required provisions with their snowmobiles and qamutik. Some of our students

were even outfitted with more appropriate winter wear for the trips when our "Ontario winter-appropriate" clothing wasn't quite appropriate for Paulatuk conditions! It really does "take a village" to host an exchange.

Our students benefited from learning several traditional Inuvialuit crafts from Elders in the Paulatuk community. Everyone had the opportunity to make a tapestry, and several of the students also tried their hand at beading. The finished products were beautiful!

Experiencing traditional food items was another highlight for our central Ontario students. We feasted on caribou, Arctic char, and trout, and were able to sample beluga muktuk. On days when non-traditional foods weren't on the menu, we were certainly well fed with other more familiar foods. In addition to the traditional foods, we participated in several traditional games, both inside and outside the school. We also listened to, and participated in, a presentation by the world-renowned Paulatuk Moonlight Singers and Dancers, who shared their traditional dances and drumming skills with us.

Students had the opportunity to ski or snowshoe to the wreck of the ship *The Roger* in the bay just outside Paulatuk. This ship was one that was used to transport children from Paulatuk to residential



schools in Aklavik and Inuvik, and its visible presence is a reminder of the need for healing and reconciliation between settlers and Inuit peoples.

Two of the Paulatuk Elders, both of whom were taken to residential schools at the age of five, shared their stories with us. One of the Elders told us that he didn't return home (even for holidays) until he was 10 years old. By then, he had almost forgotten who his parents and family were. The most touching moment of the entire exchange (for me) was when this man said that he and several other residential school survivors had contacted the nun who had been their supervisor in the school residence. They talked and shared their stories, and at the end, they told the nun that they forgave her. To me, that showed great courage and great generosity of character. I'm not sure that I would have been able to do the same thing.

Tuktut Nogait National Park is located several kilometers from Paulatuk, but the Park Office is in the hamlet. Students had a chance to learn about the park, and about its importance in the preservation of the Blue Nose Caribou herd.

Our last evening in the community, Angik School hosted a student dance - the first dance at the school in recent memory. Following the dance, we headed to the hills outside of town for a bonfire and some time together. Before we knew it, it was midnight, and the sun still hadn't set! Not something we're used to in central Ontario.

A very special thanks goes to Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council teachers **Chris MacLea**, who helped with the process of planning the exchange last school year, before he moved to Tsiigehtchic; and to **Kyle Sagert** and **Julie Clark**, who completed the planning and oversaw the great experience for all our students.

If anyone is interested in participating in a once-in-a-lifetime exchange like we experienced, I would encourage you to visit www.experiencescanada.ca and find out more about how to take part. This exchange to Paulatuk was my 15th exchange, and every time I'm on an exchange, I see students' lives changed for the better. I would highly recommend a similar experience for every Canadian student!

