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### Northern youth get taste of an Oxford County summer

Posted By Bruce Urquhart, STAFF WRITER

Updated 6 days ago



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**Re: New recycling story**  
Kudos to Nicole O'Reilly, environment reporter, for adding a good human element to a story that could have been a cold regurgitation of the facts.

**Accordion Maestro Entertains**  
Accordionist and Entertainer, Ian H Robinson, will present an afternoon of music nostalgia for the residents at Kingsway Lodge, St Mary's. Performance commences @

**its raining cats and dogs**  
I was going to write a letter to the editor but feel that this may open up the topic a lot easier. I believe

**Accordion Maestro Entertains**  
Accordion Maestro, Ian H Robinson, will debut at Oxford Manor, Ingersoll, 28 June 2008 @ 2 p.m. Entertainment programme will include Naval, Continental, Folk

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For the two young men from Canada's far north, the first few days in the Friendly City took some adjustment.

Compared to Logan Kaniak's hometown of Bay Chimo, a remote outpost of roughly two-dozen people in Nunavut's Kitikmeot Region, Woodstock seemed a sprawling metropolis. While Arthur Angootealuk's hometown of Coral Harbour boasted almost 1,000 residents in the most recent census, he too was initially overwhelmed by Woodstock's hustle and bustle.

Two weeks into their stay with Bella and Gibson Bernath, the two Nunavut youth are over that initial culture shock, although they're still having some problems adjusting to the southwestern Ontario summer. Despite the temperatures, both Kaniak and Angootealuk still consider Woodstock and their entire experience with the Northern Youth Abroad program to be "cool."

"It's been awesome," Angootealuk said,

During their time in Woodstock, Kaniak and Angootealuk have been volunteering at the Woodstock Museum, learning invaluable new skills by helping with its Summer Camp 2008 activities. For the first week of their placement, they helped with "Foodie Fun Week," which involved some cooking and a few gourmet recipes. Last week, the two young men participated in "Kicking It," the museum's historic sports and games week.

"We showed (the children) some traditional (Inuit) games," Angootealuk said. "They were pretty amazed" by the athleticism of the high kicks and kneel jumps.

In addition to their volunteer work at the museum, the two young men have enjoyed a chance to travel throughout southern Ontario, including a jaunt to Canada's largest city. "That place is just jam-packed," Kaniak said about Ontario's capital.

The two young men were treated to a full Toronto experience that included a visit to the CN Tower, a walk through Kensington Market and seats at a Toronto Blue Jays - New York Yankees game.

"They thought Woodstock was busy before they went to Toronto," Bella Bernath said.

While a "little bit overwhelmed" by their trip to Toronto, Kaniak and Angootealuk were pleased to see a little pie ce of

their own culture -- a display of Inuit art -- while exploring the Marketplace at the (CN) Tower. For that moment, their home seemed a little closer than the 2,300 kilometres on the map.

For the next three weeks, Kaniak and Angootealuk will join the Bernaths at a cottage in Rondeau Provincial Park, where the two young men will also be able to do some volunteer work for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. After their time on the shores of Lake Erie, the two return to Nunavut for a "re-orientation session" with Northern Youth h Abroad before heading home.

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Kaniak and Angootealuk became involved with Northern Youth Abroad through their high school in Cambridge Bay, which provides a secondary school education to most students in the territory's western regions. Urged to apply by teachers, the two Grade 12 students were, following extensive preparation and in-school assignments, eventually among the three dozen selected for the experience.

"When I heard ... I had to fundraise as fast as I could," said Kaniak, who, as a "first alternate," only learned of his selection a few days before he was scheduled to leave.

With the help of his soccer teammates, the resourceful Kaniak raised \$1,900 in two days through a pair of dances. Like his schoolmate, Angootealuk also organized some fundraisers, including a penny sale, while working for the local municipal government.

"I had to earn this by working hours," he said.

For the Bernaths, who, through the local Rotary Club, have been involved in exchange programs in the past, the hosting experience provided an opportunity to learn about Canada's north and the proud Inuit culture.

"We've learned how they live as well," Bella Bernath said. "It's been fun showing them around. Everything is new to them."

Northern Youth Abroad was originally designed by teachers in Nunavut "to promote success in education and help northern youth build self-confidence and coping skills" for dealing with culture shock while pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities. The program also has an international phase for interested students who complete the Canadian phase, providing an opportunity for placements in countries like Botswana.

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