

Community



Blaze Head/submitted

Blaze Head (left) during the program. (Right) Outland Youth Employment Program participants celebrate its completion.

Local youth complete summer employment program

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Editor

Blaze Head, 17, of Opaskwayak Cree Nation had an interesting summer. Instead of being stuck at home for COVID, he partook in a unique summer employment program hosted by Outland Youth Employment Program.

OYEP is a nation-wide initiative that provides indigenous youth pathways to education, training and work opportunities. The program offers regionally and

culturally relevant curriculum, and it immerses participating youth in a natural resource-based environment.

The students normally complete the six week program at Egg Lake, however due to COVID-19 this year things were a little different. In light of COVID-19 they had to adjust their operations to adhere to provincial, territorial, federal and industry best health and safety practices. They were excited for the program to be able to run, and worked hard to make the necessary

changes to keep the youth and community safe.

The students worked hard to complete the "in-class" portion of the program virtually prior to arriving on site. Although this year was different, they normally experience hands-on learning in the workplace, finishing work projects for external client's (tree planting & brush sawing). They complete in-class material and learn about workplace safety, employer and employee responsibilities, union legal/case studies, work logs, self-reflections, resume & CV prep, and a summative research assignment. The youth are paid for their work hours and obtain two high school credits upon successful completion of the six week program.

The program would not be able to operate if it weren't for community sponsors. OYEP Manitoba was so happy to be able to participate in three days of hands-on training with Nisokapawino Forestry Management Corporation. NFMC gave OYEP a tour of their logging operations and equipment, taught the youth how to survey forests, talked about small engines and even gave them training on how to use

brush saws! Last year Canadian Kraft Paper took the youth on a tour of the mill.

The program works hard to involve the local community and they bring in local leaders and elders to help run themed educational sessions for the youth. An example from this year was a medicine walk with Floyd, who explained the importance of the local flora. They also work with participants to teach them more about forestry and to offer other training opportunities (First Aid, Fire Fighter training, etc.) Overall it's a great experience for youth to connect, grow and learn in a safe and welcoming environment that is regionally and culturally appropriate.

Blaze Head stated he would highly recommend that other youth take part "For three weeks I learned a lot of great stuff and I got paid for it too". With the two high school credits he achieved he is ahead of other students for the new school year.

For any other information about the program or for anyone interested in applying, feel free to check out www.oyep.ca or "The Outland Youth Employment Program" Facebook page



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CPA Manitoba congratulates Dion Bird, FCPA, FCA
Fellow CPA (FCPA)



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