

Education
Executive Council
October 15, 2008

Students Eat Rice in Support of International Development Project

Rice will be on the lunch menu for many students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador as schools participate in Rice Day. The event is sponsored by Two Villages, a province-wide, not-for-profit organization, which works to bring changes to third-world communities and in turn enables the development of students as global citizens and strong community leaders. Today, students will eat rice for lunch and donate their lunch money for the creation of a seed bank in Ethiopia.

"I am pleased to see the number of schools that have come on board this year for this important event," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. "It is easy for most of us to go to the store and buy something to eat, but millions of people in the world don't live that way. It is good for our students to get a sense of how dependent many people are on rice as a staple of their diet, and how a threat to that staple can affect their lives."

The seed bank is being built in the Wollo province in Ethiopia, best known for the devastating famine that killed more than one million people in 1984-85. A seed bank stores seeds as a source for planting. Storing seeds guards against catastrophic events such as natural disasters, the outbreak of disease, or war.

"The Wollo Seed Bank project has brought together students from 41 schools across the province for a common goal," said Troy Mitchell, Two Villages co-founder. "This initiative has been very well received, thanks in part to Minister Burke's encouragement to schools to participate."

In time, the seed bank in Wollo province will also contain a community centre, library and a meeting place where local farmers can share knowledge. The seed bank is ultimately expected to support more than 1,000 households in the region.

"It is important for young people to give back to the community through volunteering their time and effort, whether it is helping people in this province or around the world," said the Honourable Tom Hedderson, Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Volunteer and Non-Profit Sector. "Communities are founded on people living and working together to build something better for now and in the future. Having students donate their lunch money to an organization like Two Villages, which will help Wollo in its development, shows the compassion of people in this province."

"I believe activities like this are a sign that the curriculum in Newfoundland and Labrador is raising awareness that events thousands of miles away have an impact in this province," said Minister Burke. "Access to a safe food supply is something we often take for granted here, but understanding the challenges faced by places such as Wollo, Ethiopia, helps students see how vulnerable food supplies can be to Mother Nature or global events. It is good that our students are learning this important lesson."

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BACKGROUNDER

The following schools are participating in Rice Day this year:

Anthony Padden Elementary, Musgravetown
Baccalieu Collegiate, Old Perlican
Balbo Elementary, Clarenville
Bayview Regional Collegiate, St. Lunaire
Belanger Memorial, Upper Ferry
Bishops College, St. John's
Botwood Collegiate, Botwood
Carbonear Collegiate, Carbonear
Christ the King School, Rushoon
Clarenville High School, Clarenville
Clarenville Middle School, Clarenville
Clarenville Primary, Clarenville
Corner Brook Regional High, Corner Brook
Discovery Collegiate, Bonavista
Elwood High School, Deer Lake
Fatima Academy, Sr. Bride's
Heritage Collegiate, Lethbridge
H.L. Strong Academy, Little Bay Islands

Holy Heart of Mary, St. John's
Holy Name of Mary Academy, Lawn
Indian River High, Springdale
J.M. Olds Collegiate, Twillingate
J.R. Smallwood Middle School, Wabush
James Cook Memorial, Cook's Harbour
Lester Pearson Memorial High School, Wesleyville
Macdonald Drive Junior High, St. John's
Marystown Central High, Marystown
Matthew Elementary, Bonavista
Mount Pearl Senior High, Mount Pearl
Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's
Random Island Academy, Random Island
Southwest Arm Academy, Little Heart's Ease
St. Bonaventure's College, St. John's
St. Francis School, Harbour Grace
St. Joseph's All Grade, Terrenceville
St. Matthew's Elementary, St. John's
Stephenville High, Stephenville
Swift Current Academy, Swift Current
Stella Maris Academy, Trepassey
Tricentia Academy, Arnold's Cove
Twillingate Island Elementary, Twillingate

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