

Ottawa, Arctic Anglicans forge new bonds

By Art Babych

The largest group of Ottawa Anglicans to visit Iqaluit since renowned concert pianist Angela Hewitt performed at St. Jude's Anglican Cathedral hopes their journey was just the tip of the iceberg for more such Arctic adventures.

CANADA

The 33 Anglicans—nine teenagers from four parishes along with 24 adults—left Ottawa August 13 for a weeklong visit to the capital of Nunavut, as part of the general effort of the diocese of Ottawa to support the diocese of the Arctic. In November 2005, an arson fire destroyed much of St. Jude's Cathedral, prompting the northern diocese to launch a national fundraising campaign. Hewitt played a benefit concert at the celebration of the cathedral's reopening in June 2013.

The idea of taking teenagers to Iqaluit to learn about the Arctic and encourage friendships between Northern and Southern Anglican youth, with a plan to encourage future exchanges, originated with Frances Macdonnell, an accomplished organist and former choir director at Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa. It grew to include adults interested in going North and was expanded to become a church-to-church visit, with the aim of forming lasting relationships between St. Jude's Cathedral and St. Stephen's, Ottawa, where the visiting group was centred.

St. Stephen's had fundraised enough money to contribute \$1,000 for each teen to offset the \$2,000 cost of their airfare. The youth themselves raised \$545 through a group car wash, money that was matched through the diocesan youth ministry.

The travellers took with them much-needed supplies, including fresh vegetables and fruit for the soup kitchen, long-term food for the two food banks, newborn baby clothes for the hospital, school supplies for the schools, clothes and general toiletries to give away.

First Air, the airline that flies daily between Ottawa and Iqaluit, "provided a very generous baggage allowance of 180 lbs. [81.6 kg] per traveller, so between them, all the travellers carried several tons of supplies for Iqaluit," Macdonnell said in a written report, a copy of which was sent to the *Anglican Journal*.

Dean Jonas Allooloo and others welcomed the Ottawa group to St. Jude's Cathedral on the visitors' first Sunday in Iqaluit, and Macdonnell played the hymns on the organ at the two morning services (English and Inuktitut).

During their stay, the teenagers were billeted with four Iqaluit families, while the adults stayed at Iqaluit's Frobisher Inn. The teens helped local youth organize and co-ordinate workshops at the Iqaluit music day camp, which gives children a chance to engage in musical activities. The day camp was started by music teacher Darlene Nuqingaq in 1996, and she has operated it ever since. "She is the most amazing person," said Macdonnell.

At the end of their day camp experience, "all the teenagers involved had made lasting friendships and exchanged email addresses, with the idea of staying in touch over the winter," Macdonnell said. "It is foreseen that some of the Iqaluit teenagers will be brought to Ottawa for a return visit in the summer of 2017."

As the teens were assisting with the day camp, adults worked at the local soup



▲ (Top, left): Mary Attwell of St. Thomas Anglican Church, Stittsville, with Dean Jonas Allooloo of St. Jude's Cathedral. (Top, right): Admiring the work of local Inuit artists in Pangnirtung. (Bottom, left and right): Youth from Ottawa and Iqaluit promise to stay in touch; delegation at the airport.

PHOTOS: EILEEN MORTIMER, SHARON FLEMING



kitchen and food bank, and helped prepare lunches at the day camp. They also toured the area and took a daylong excursion to the Inuit hamlet of Pangnirtung.

Local activities were planned for each evening of the visit and included a barbecue, square dancing and a final concert in Nakasuk School, where the day camp is located.

The 153 children who participated in the day camp workshops performed the music each of their groups had prepared. "The town audience included a great many

Inuit elders who were gladdened to see the children of Nunavut learning to maintain their own culture," said Macdonnell.

Macdonnell observed that while there was no shortage of musical instruments, most children didn't have cases to store them. "They would like to be able to take their guitars home from school to practise, and so the next step will be for St. Stephen's to try to find empty guitar cases to ship North," she said. (If you have any available guitar cases to donate, contact Frances Macdonnell at fbmacdonnell@sympatico.ca)

Other highlights from the trip included worshipping several times at the newly rebuilt St. Jude's Cathedral; touring Nunavut's legislature, which featured a narwhal-tusk mace, local carving and embroidery; taking part in throat-singing; visiting Iqaluit's hospital; and waking up at 4 a.m. to watch the sunrise with a full moon still in the sky. ■

Art Babych is a freelance journalist in Ottawa.

Addendum to the Anglican Journal article from Mary Attwell:

Mary Attwell donated clergy items (cassocks, stoles, crosses, clergy shirts) and a travel communion kit that belonged to her late father, Reverend Edward Attwell. St. Jude's Cathedral currently did not have a travel communion kit, so Dean Jonas Allooloo was very happy to receive this one. The clothing will be given to students that are attending the Arthur Turner School for ministry, located at St. Jude's Cathedral.