

## Marshall Cultural Fair a Huge Success

April 13, 2011

Marshall School held a 'Cultural Fair' last Thursday evening that was a huge success, attracting large numbers of people into the school. Displays covered the cultures of Australia (Kindergarten), Greece (Grade 1), Germany (Grade two), Korea (Grade three), First Nations Culture (Grades 4-5), Ukraine (Grade 6), Ireland (Grade 7), and Italy (Grade 8/9).

"It was fantastic," said principal Colin Covey. "Each classroom was set up with cultural displays. They had food, art work, posters, all kinds of presentations, and slideshows: the kindergarten class for instance, (Australia), did a play -the tell-tale of the kangaroo and the pouch – and it was very, very good. The evening was very well attended and every person that walked by me said it was one of the best things they'd been to."

"There were times you couldn't walk down the halls," said teacher Cindy McKerchar. "It was the best turnout that we've ever had."

The grade four/five class put on a superb display of First Nations culture with a teepee correctly erected in the class. "They had moccasins and snowshoes in there, and dried meat and bannock and berries. There was a video tape playing of the Onion Lake Dancers and story tellers who'd performed in our school earlier that day," said Covey. "They also had beading activities, and the community brought in all kinds of First Nations artifacts."

"The grade 8/9 class (Italy) served pizza, meatballs, Caesar salad, and an incredible dessert – deep fried bread covered with chocolate," said teacher Michael Horgan.

"The grade three class served Kimchi, sweet balls, and cinnamon punch," said Covey laughing, "but it wasn't all about the food. Each class spent about a month preparing and took a multi-disciplinary approach – so that the lens of each subject was brought to bear on the culture that the class was studying. In mathematics, for instance, students prepared bar graphs that looked at how food from other countries has been adopted by Canadians."

"Yes," continued Horgan. "The grade 6 class prepared a very powerful and moving display on the after effects of the Chernobyl disaster, made detailed and beautiful Pysankas, were able to explain the significance behind each symbol etched onto the eggs, created stained glass windows and put on an superb example of Ukrainian dancing."

"The grade three class did an amazing display of the small coloured lights and lanterns that are a part of Korean culture," said McKerchar. "They had sculptures hanging from the ceiling illuminated by small lights." "On the table they made a candle that had the Korean symbols for 'dream' and 'hope' –cut out of paper and lit up from the inside," said Covey. "It was beautiful!"

"I think that what was best about the Cultural Fair," said McKerchar, "was the sheer volume of information that you could learn about the different cultures by just walking from room to room

–for example, although only 5 % of the population of Marshall has an Italian background- virtually everyone eats an Italian meal once a week.”

Where else could you have gone in Marshall that night, or any other night for that matter, and had German pretzels while 7 year-olds shared their knowledge of German culture, consumed both Irish potato pancakes and the wit and wisdom of Oscar Wilde, and eaten Kimchi under authentic Korean tea lamps? Nowhere else, that’s where.

One dad, pushing back his Stetson and hooking his thumbs in his jeans pockets, commented on how much he had learned and how much he had eaten. “I think you missed one important culture, though.” He was right. Next time we’ll include Cowboy Culture, too.



Onion Lake Dancer Aislinn Whitstone flute player Winddancer Waskewitch  
Photos by Donna Ferguson