

# High Level Youth Activity Centre brings back meal program

*Oil company donates funds to help re-start program*

**Michael Stamou**

With the help of Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd., a company based out of Calgary, High Level Youth Activity Centre was able to re-start their meal program to start the new year.

According to Graham Carson, Youth and Community Programs Coordinator for High Level Native Friendship Centre Society, he had been actively looking for a sponsor to fund the meal program when Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. found him.

"Our meal program was originally funded through our core funding but when that got cut back we had to get rid of the meal program so we lost a lot of kids. Many of the kids depended on that meal program so Strategic Oil and Gas actually found me," said Carson. "They are a relatively new company and they were looking to give back to the northern community so they were looking at different organizations in town where they could possibly have a partnership."

Carson went on to explain that someone from Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. came up to High Level to visit with him and that is where he pitched his meal program proposal.

Christa Dubé, Executive Assistant to the President for Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd., admitted that they made their donation largely in part to Carson's attitude.

"The community relations department staff were so moved and impressed with the program and it was amazing how passionate Graham was about helping people. He definitely seemed to understand the culture of High Level and what goes in that community and that was what we were looking for

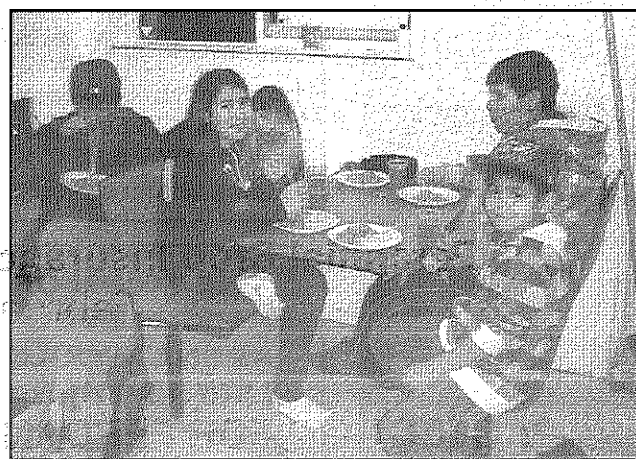
with getting involved (with organizations in the north)," said Dubé. "We really felt a great connection with him so we wanted to do more with him."

Carson remembers when he found out about the donation from Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. and recalls how excited he was to get the news.

"They came back to me just after Christmas to say they selected us to support, which was great news. They told me, at that point, they would be providing \$5,000 per year in monthly instalments, which is what I asked for, with the possibility, after seeing how things go, to re-negotiate for a higher amount," added Carson.

According to Carson, the meal program was stopped early in 2011 due to the lack of funding, but after this donation the meal program was started up again on January 14, 2013.

"We basically brought the meal program back after a two-year hiatus. We were still running programs but we weren't feeding the kids every day," said Carson.



*Children at the High Level Youth Activity Centre enjoy dinner on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 after Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. made a \$5,000 donation to bring back the meal program after a two-year hiatus. Photo courtesy Graham Carson.*

"Now, for the first time in two years, we are feeding kids again during programming held at the Youth Activity Centre."

Dubé and the staff at Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. are very excited to be in this partnership with Carson, especially because the company has staff that are working in and around High Level.

"We are totally stoked. It is awesome because, working in the office in Calgary, people do not understand what it is like living in the north. I think this is going to help shed some light to the actual community and culture that we can show people in Calgary what it is like living in the north where our people are working," added Dubé.

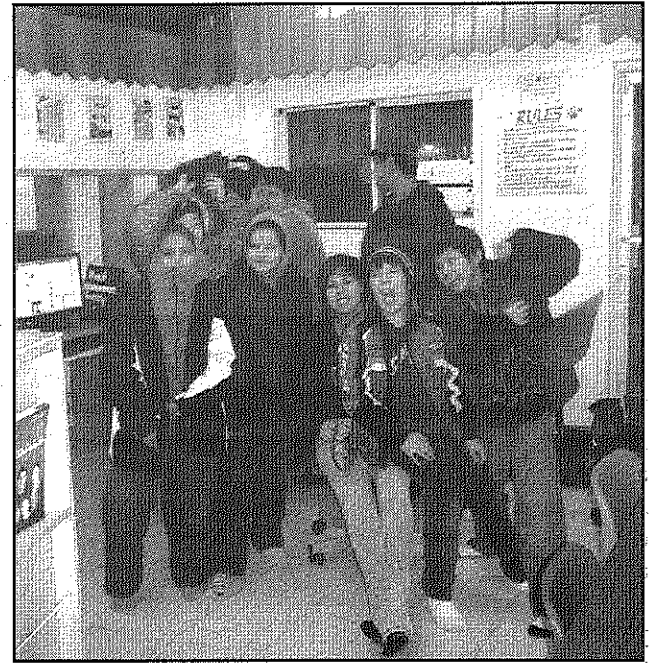
Dubé went on to explain that Carson provided her with a number of different options the money could be used for, which helped with their decision to donate the money to the Youth Activity Centre.

"We made this donation because Graham was so excited and he gave us options

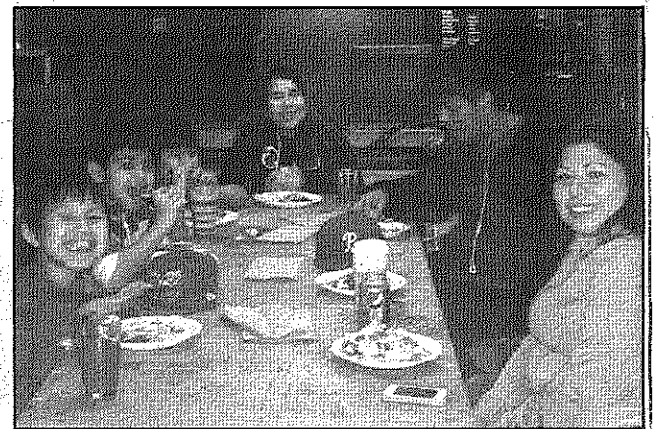
about what the money could be used for. He wanted to do something that was in our budget that could work for both of us. It was cool to see that it wasn't how much money we were going to give him and that was really, really great to see," added Dubé.

Carson is also very happy to be in this partnership with Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. because everyone he has spoken to has been very nice, really excited, and very supportive.

"We just couldn't be happier with what they were able to do for us. It makes me proud that they picked us," said Carson. "It is nice to know that we are doing a good enough job that we are able to get the attention of an oil and gas company as far away as Calgary to want to support us."



*Children at the High Level Youth Activity Centre clown around as they pose for a picture after enjoying dinner on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 thanks to a \$5,000 donation by Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. Photo courtesy Graham Carson.*



*Children at High Level Youth Activity Centre enjoy dinner on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 after Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. made a \$5,000 donation to bring back the meal program after a two-year hiatus. Photo courtesy Graham Carson.*

## Traditions flower shop



This Valentine's Day give a gift to delight the senses. Surprise your true love with a beautiful bouquet of fragrant flowers from Traditions!

Valentine Floral Arrangements  
Teddy Bears Bath & Chocolate Baskets  
Chocolates Balloons & Cards  
Made to Order Specialty Baskets

MAIN STREET, HIGH LEVEL Ph. 780-926-3100