

CMPL and Metis Nation of Ontario to host second annual March Break Winterfest



By **Mike Riley**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Families in Carlow Mayo Township can look forward to March Break Winterfest, being organized and hosted by the Carlow Mayo Public Library and Metis Nation of Ontario on March 13 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Carlow Community Centre in Fort Stewart. Carrie McKenzie, the CEO and head librarian of the CMPL comments on this exciting family event coming up this March Break.

McKenzie tells Bancroft This Week that they are kicking off March break with the return of Winterfest, on March 13 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Carlow Community Centre at 1702 Fort Stewart Road in Fort Stewart. If anyone has any questions or wants to register, please message McKenzie on Facebook, mark 'going' on the CMPL Facebook page or call the library at 613-332-2544.

'After the amazing turnout and excitement of last year's Winterfest, Stacie Snider [who runs the Community Action Program for Children at Metis Nation of Ontario] and I knew right after that we would be hosting one again this year. Weather permitting, we will be bring back family snowshoeing, ice volcanoes and some of the other activities we enjoyed. Adding to the outdoor fun will be snow golf and a scavenger hunt. Having the inside of the community centre is a bonus. We will be running indoor ice fishing, indoor skating (no skates required), crafts and decorating a special treat. The list goes on, but there has to be some fun surprises!?' she says.

Prior to COVID-19, these types of programs were not running, and it was the pandemic, which took a lot out of families, that spurred their creation by Metis Nation of Ontario and the CMPL. They both saw a chance to provide local families with healthy, interactive and engaging programs to help them rediscover the fun and enjoyment of family play.

McKenzie says that she and Snider have been planning this year's Winterfest since the original Winterfest last year.

'After our big day last year, we discussed what was successful and what needed more attention. Everyone sent text messages throughout the year with an idea for an activity or a 'remember last year when?'. Stacie and I both have a love of supporting our community families and I am grateful that our fantastic coworkers and places of employment share the same values,?' she says.

McKenzie says that Metis Nation of Ontario's Snider, who runs the Community Action Program for Children, has come up with so many great ideas for the returning Winterfest, and Metis Nation of Ontario has also put a generous amount of funding forward to

help make March 13 happen.

Supplies for the Winterfest will be procured from sale items at No Frills, from the Dollar Stores in Bancroft and some will be reused from last year, according to McKenzie.

?We have also reached out for community volunteers. Something tells me that there is a special someone who has a lot of baking in her near future. Many of these activities will use supplies that can be reused in other programming,? she says.

McKenzie says that families have been sending messages to register already and that flyers will be going out in Hermon Public School soon. She says they are hoping that families from outside of Carlow Mayo also come by as Winterfest is not just for residents of the township.

?Last year if I remember correctly, we had 67 attendees. I am hoping for another great turnout. Even if our numbers are lower, it is going to be so much fun for those who can make it!? she says. ?We are anxious for Winterfest>Returns to come and we hope everyone enjoys the day as much as we will!?