

INTRODUCTION

The Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Summer Reading Camps began in 2005 as an initiative of the 27th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, The Hon. James Bartleman. In his travels around the province as its first Lieutenant Governor of Aboriginal descent, The Hon. James Bartleman witnessed first hand the debilitating challenges faced by First Nations peoples living in reserves in Ontario's northern wilderness: challenges such as high suicide rates, low literacy levels, poverty and crumbling public infrastructure. Recognizing the important relationships between literacy and mental wellness, Mr. Bartleman established the Aboriginal Summer Reading Camps as a means of empowering First Nations children and youth to overcome the challenges that they face. This amazing legacy continues to this day under the patronage of the current Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, The Hon. David Onley.

ABOUT THE CAMPS

The camps aim to promote a love of reading and learning while strengthening the English literacy skills of children and youth (between the ages of 6 and 15) living in isolated Aboriginal Communities. Camp counsellors hired by Frontier College will work in small, independent field teams which include First Nations camp counsellors hired from the participating community. The teams plan and deliver a diverse array of indoor and outdoor literacy-based camp activities in a safe, supportive and fun-filled environment. There are two sets of 3 week long camps, one in July and one in August. Some teams will travel to two communities while some will be in one community for both. Teams will remain in the community for the duration of employment including holidays and weekends. Counsellors must also be prepared to share modest accommodations (up to 4 people), be comfortable living in an isolated community with minimal access to telephone and internet, be able to think on their feet, problem solve, and work with little to no direct supervision.

Camps range in size from 20-100 kids/youth and camp counsellors are required to plan and organize camp activities. Frontier College provides training, on-going support, supplies and a small programming budget to each team. Teams are expected to integrate into the community and involve parents, Elders and other community members in the camp. As this is a total immersion position, camp counsellors must be prepared for a potentially stressful and emotionally challenging experience as many communities are struggling with social challenges such as alcohol and substance abuse, domestic abuse, etc. While counsellors are not expected to deal with these challenges directly, these issues may have an impact on the children and youth they work with.

HIRING

Applications for the camp counsellor positions open in January. Information and application packages are posted on the Frontier College website at www.frontiercollege.ca. Employment runs from mid June through August. There is no cost involved except for food as all travel will be paid for by Frontier College and accommodations are provided by the host community. Enquiries about the position can be sent to Jessica Bokhout at jbokhout@frontiercollege.ca. All applicants MUST reside (have permanent residence) in Ontario to be eligible for position.

The First Nations served by the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Summer Reading Camps are located in the remote wilderness of northwestern Ontario, in an area bounded by the northern shores of Lake Superior to the south, Hudson's Bay to the north, the western shores of James Bay to the east and the Ontario-Manitoba border to the west.

In 2011, 40 camps were organized in 31 First Nations.

