



Creating Futures

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News Release

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South Slave “Million Project” obliterates previous Guinness World Record **6.4386 kilometre-long bead chain was year-long project for SSDEC schools and communities**

Fort Smith, NT – It’s official: the Guinness Record for the world’s longest bead chain belongs to the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC).

In total, the 1,000,000-bead chain measured 6,438.6 metres and weighed more than 270 kilograms. It took nearly ten months of sorting, counting, stringing and tying by students, teachers, parents and staff members from all corners of the South Slave to create the end product. Once it was officially measured, the string travelled to schools in Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution and Lutsel K’e so that students and the community could witness for themselves how large 1,000,000 truly is.

Cathy Canavan-McGrath, SSDEC numeracy coordinator – and the drive behind the project, says she received word on November 6 that the Guinness organization had accepted the SSDEC’s challenge to the record. “The chain was measured and adjudicated in May in Hay River, where it circled the track more than 16 times. We then submitted our data and supporting documentation in early June and have been awaiting a response.”

She adds that the goal of the project was to help students learn about our number and place value system in fun, creative and concrete ways. Such questions as - how many is a million? what does it look like? how many times more than a thousand or a hundred is a million? - are often difficult to answer because they are abstract and complex to visualize.

Canavan-McGrath says the project provided solid answers to those types of questions. “Rarely do we have the chance to see large numbers in concrete terms. Our teachers were quite creative in how they integrated this project into their classroom. Younger students focused upon counting and sorting, while older students were challenged to discover ratios, percentages and other types of mathematical relationships through participation in the project. I was amazed at the variety of ways in which the classroom teachers incorporated the Million Project.”

The string of beads has become a permanent feature of the SSDEC’s math program. It has been broken down so that each South Slave school has lengths of one hundred thousand, ten thousand and one thousand beads. Teachers can continue to use the Million Project to provide visual, concrete examples of large numbers and their relationships.

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