

Dear Mr. Menicoche

November 5, 2004

First let me thank you for raising the issue of our lack of a recreation type facility here in Nahanni Butte. I have been a member of this community for nearly 4 years, and this issue has always been one of great concern. Unfortunately many people feel that because of the size of Nahanni, the pursuit of such a matter has become a waste of time. We have been told we may as well forget it. What, again? Well, upon returning to the community after being away for 4 years I had decided to try to raise the issue of our lack of a gym once again. Coincidentally it was raised before I had a chance to. What follows is a letter I will be sending to Mr. Michael McLeod.

Recently the question as to why we do not have a gym facility in Nahanni Butte has been raised once again. In the year 2000, we were under the impression it would be about 5 years before Nahanni Butte would be eligible for a gym type facility. It is obvious that either I misunderstood what was said or was misinformed. I am not sure which it was. I am sure at this point that all parties involved can come up with countless reasons as to why such a facility does not already exist in Nahanni Butte, the main one of course being lack of the necessary funding at the Territorial level. It is my position that such a facility will, over the long term save the Territorial Government money once we get over the hurdle of the "initial cash outlay".

My understanding is that Nahanni Butte is one of the few communities left in the NT without a gym facility of any kind. True, we have a tiny band hall with a small meeting room attached, but nothing approaching a gym type facility. Many of us in Nahanni have traveled around the North and are aware of the many gym facilities that have been constructed in small villages of 100 people or even less. A case in point would be Colville Lake, a village we resided in for a year. The facility we are

interested in would be far less costly than the one constructed in that remote community. Please do not infer that I am insinuating Colville has something it does not deserve. I simply feel that our people, especially the youth of our community deserve the same services and opportunities that we see available elsewhere in the North.

We do as much as we can from this end to promote healthy lifestyles for our children. We have built up a very good cross-country ski program and encourage extensive outdoor activities which include: snow shoeing, hiking, trapping and winter camping. However, there are many times especially in the winter, when the temperatures becomes far too cold to take the children outside for strenuous physical activity. Once temperatures dip below -25 degrees, damage to the lungs due to freezing temperatures becomes a concern, especially when people are engaged in rigorous exercise. The spring and fall also pose problems when the mosquitoes are often so bad as to deter people from going outside to participate in physical activity and play.

A gym would also provide our youth the opportunity to compete in athletic opportunities both here and outside of the community in such areas as floor hockey, archery, volleyball, indoor soccer, badminton, and basketball to name a few. A small fitness/weight room would give all members of the community the opportunity to become involved in physical activity. Our school population has increased from 20 to 30 students over the last 4 years, and shows no signs of declining. Presently our community has about 40 young people who would benefit greatly from activities made possible by a gym facility.

Perhaps even more important, is what a gym would mean to the youth in town during the nights, evenings and weekends when there is simply "nothing much to do". Often it seems that the kids in town wander to the band hall (when it is open) where they

just sit around and watch old movie reruns and play computer games. Smoking is often common. I fear that the other problems we are so aware of in the north, like alcohol and more recently a growing concern over the availability of drugs like cocaine and crystal meth, have a good chance to become an attractive alternative to just sitting around. Racing around on 4 wheelers and snowmobiles unsupervised after dark is not a safe or appropriate thing for 10-15 year olds to be doing because of a lack of alternatives. I know for a fact that more windows around town are being broken since we last lived here, no doubt by young people with nothing to do.

As an educator and member of our community, I realize the importance of a gym to our town. Here in the North we often find ourselves facing health concerns that end up costing the government millions of dollars. A gym would be a step in the right direction to help in the prevention of these health related concerns ie, obesity, diabetes, addictions etc. Maybe our youth have a hard time taking these things seriously when they don't seem to have the same opportunity to be physically active the whole year round similar to other small communities. Maybe they see the community of Nahanni (and perhaps themselves) as being less valued by the Territorial Government

Recently there has been talk about making residential connection to the internet a reality in our small town in the near future. I realize the positive things about such technology in remote communities, but I am concerned that it will give our students another reason to stay in the house on cold winter nights and slowly become more and more dependent upon the web as their choice of entertainment. This is especially relevant where recreational alternatives are so few. I need not go into the health concerns (both mental and physical) raised by children who sit in front of video screens hour after hour. It's an easy thing to say, "Well, that's simply a parental concern and responsibility", and while that may be so, I maintain that the community should be able to offer a healthy alternative that parents will

be able to promote support and participate in.

A gym facility in our community would add immensely to creating healthy lifestyles for everyone here. It would also serve as a multi purpose facility when a large meeting place was required. A recent newspaper report stated that the earliest possible date for such a project in Nahanni Butte would be the year 2017. By this time all of the students presently in our school will have graduated without the benefits such a facility would offer! As many of my students have noticed, they will be in their mid-twenties by then. It has also been suggested that it may be possible to simply add on to, or refurbish existing structures in the town. This is simply not an option, as such existing buildings would not be suitable. They are either too old or too small for the facility we need.

In closing, I request that our government take the steps to have a new gym facility funded and built in Nahanni Butte as soon as possible . The people here have been very patient in this regard over the last five or ten years, and feel that now it's our turn to be put at the top of the governments list for a new gym/health facility. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely

Wayne Ingarfield
Principal/Parent
Charles Yohin School
Nahanni Butte NT

November 5th/2004, Friday

Dear Mr. Menicoche,

Words could not express the gratitude I would feel if you decided to build a gym here in Nahanni. Actually there are words that could express the gratitude I would feel, but not any I know, which says to me that I should widen my vocabulary...

But back to the issue, the building of a gym here in Nahanni. I shall write the reasons why I think we should have a gym here in point form.

~ We could have gym inside when it is too cold in the winter to go outside instead of missing it all together.

~ There are some sports that we can not do, due to the fact that we have no gym. i.e. Basketball, dodge ball, floor hockey, ect...

~ Sometimes it gets rather boring just going out for walks and playing soccer baseball in the middle of a field that is littered with buffalo droppings.

~ We are one of the unfortunate communities that do not have a gym here, despite the fact that we have more students here then some of the other communities that do have a gym.

~ The youth center would not be good place to build a gym because of the fact that there is furniture in there and it is far to small (not that we would not be grateful, just I think we deserve our own gym by the school).

~ It would make a lot of students happy.

~ We could hold competitions here.

~ If the idea that a gym should be built here in thirteen years actually happens, all the students here at the moment would

have gone without a gym until grade ten (that's only if they don't move).

I hope you take my letter and my reasons (not to mention my fellow students letters and reasons) serious enough to act upon our request that we would like a gym built here as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read, and possibly considering the idea that, yes, our generation needs a gym.

Letter Written By

Kayla Betsaka, Grade Nine

Dear Mr. Menicoche

November 5, 2004

I would like a gym because it gets really cold in the winter, in the summer the mosquitos get really really bad. The kids all stay inside on the weekends and play xbox. That's a video game. That is one reason why we should get a gym for Nahanni Butte. Also kids are writing on the walls of the school by the stairs outside and some kids are making prank phone call to the fire hall. Please give us a gym. So those kids have something to do besides hanging around and getting into trouble! So please can we get a gym even if its a cheap one.

From:

Jarvis Tsetso

Grade 9 student

Charles Yohin School

Nahanni Butte NT

Dear MEDICOCHE

NOVEMBER 5,2004

We would like a gym because it is warm often in the winter it is too cold to go outside. We would only have to walk to the gym. There are alot of bugs in the summer and in the winter its cold, so we hope we will have a gym in Nahanni Butte.

FROM:

LOGAN MATOU

Grade 5 student

Charles Yohin School

Nahanni Butte

XOE ONO

Dear Mr.Menicoche

Fri.Nov,5/04

We need a gym to keep us healthy and for the health of our community . What good are we sitting at home waiting for some movie to come to the band hall. And hanging around where we might get addicted to doing drugs and smoking ? What will that give to Nahanni Butte? Will it effect the future, and what about the kids in the future? Are they going to become Drug dealers? How will they fight cancer? So please don't say wait until 2017. We need the gym NOW!. So please give us a good answer .

Thank-you

Megan Bertrand
grade 7 student of
Charles Yohn school
Nahanni Butte NT xoe ono

Dear Mr. Menicoche,

I'm writing this letter to comment about the situation regarding a gym being built here at Nahanni Butte. There are a variety of reasons that a gym should be built here at Nahanni. I believe that a gym would do a lot of good for the students attending C.Y.S. Below I have listed a few of the reasons that we need a gym here.

1. On cold winter days, or rainy days instead of being cooped up inside for recess and P.E. a gym could most likely get rid of pent up energy that would otherwise cause distractions in the classroom.
2. A gym would allow students to play sports that they would otherwise not be able to play outdoors in the snow or mud. In the winter, we ski for P.E. 99.9 percent of the time because it's the only sport to play here in the winter. I'm not saying that the students of Charles Yohin School don't like

skiing, I'm just saying that we here at C.Y.S. should have more of a choice.

3. We are one of the only schools in the N.T. that doesn't have a gym.

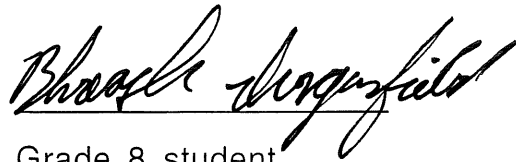
Schools more remote than us have gyms and yet we still do not. I have heard that there has been some confusion to the number of students currently presiding here at C.Y.S. There are currently 28 students going to school at C.Y.S. and there's only have funding for 23. So as you could imagine it's hard enough to raise money for school trips, not to mention a gym.

4. A gym would be a place for students from other towns to stay at when they come to Nahanni for competitions. A gym would also be a place to hold fundraising events that we currently have to either stuff into our two room schoolhouse or hold outside in severely cold temperatures.

5. A gym would be a place to play games at night instead of the vandalizing that often occurs then students are running around town with nothing to do.

These are the five reasons that I have come up with that make me believe we need a gym here in Nahanni. Thank-You for taking the time to read my letter,

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bhreagh Ingarfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Grade 8 student

Charles Yohin School

Nahanni Butte, N.T. X0E 0N0

Bhreagh_Ingarfield@yahoo.com

Dear Mr. Menicoche

I'm writing this letter because I believe a gym should be built here in Nahanni Butte. Some reasons are

- 1) It would be good for the students, we could do more activities that we normally couldn't participate in.
- 2) We are one of the few communities that do not have a gym.
- 3) In the winter we can't do P.E because of the normally cold weather and in the summer it gets hot out and there are a lot of mosquitoes.
- 4) The youth center or hall wouldn't be a good place to have P.E due to the fact that is furniture in them and are too small.
- 5) 13 years is too long another generation will have grown up without a gym.
- 6) We could host competitions and practice for competitions in different towns.
- 7) When students from other towns stay here they could stay in the gym instead of the school.

From kyra Tanche
Grade 8 Student
Charles Yohin School
Nahanni Butte NT
XOE ONO

Dear Mr.Menicoche

November 5 2004

We would like a gym for Nahanni Butte cause most of the other small community in the N.T. have a gym. That is not fair for the kids in our community cause the kids ain't got nothing to do but to hang around the band office. The kids need to do something to keep them going if the kids are doing nothig we have promblems like vandalizing the buildings, break and enter, breaking widows and stealing other people's ski-doods. if they don't do something this is just going to keep on going.

sincerely

by: Jonathan

grade 10 student

Charles yohin school
Nahanni Butte NT
xoe-ono

Dear Mr Menicoche

Deh Cho region I am a student from Nahanni Butte school. I am writing to
tell you that we really need a gym. Can you help us get one in Nahanni
Butte? We can play basketball, dodge ball, volleyball and other sports in the
gym. We don't have a gym like other communities .

So it is very hard for us students to interact with students from other places .

For example, we can't compete against students who have a gym-so -
please give us a gym. Thank you.

sincerely, Marcell Marcellais

November 5 2004

Grade7 Charles Yohin School.

