

Desert trekker inspires students

Youth ambassador returns to Yellowknife to share stories about Sahara run

by Adrian Lysenko
Northern News Services

Jill Gilday met with students from J.H. Sissons School last week to share her experience with youth after completing a 10-day run across the Sahara desert. She met with the students only two days after her return to Yellowknife.

Gilday was one of four youth ambassadors who joined adventurer Ray Zahab, founder of the non-profit group impossible2Possible, in running across Tunisia in April.

Called the Twenty10 H2O Initiative, the group aims to raise awareness about clean water and inspire young people to make a difference in the world.

"We were running about 30 to 40 km a day," said Gilday, who is also a speedskater.

Every other day Gilday and other participants would have a video conference with students from across North America, answering their questions.

"When we didn't want to get up each morning and run another 40 km we would talk to the kids and get excited about it again," she said.

Gilday, who attended J.H. Sissons in her youth, met with the students to talk about the lack of availability of water she witnessed on her trip.

School principal Paul Bennett

said Gilday's visit fit in well with the school's mission statement of encouraging students to be active participants in the global community.

"There are problems out there and yes we can do something about it even though we're on the other side of the planet," said Bennett.

Because Gilday is a former student and speedskater, he added, school youth should be interested in what she has to say.

Gilday told students they have the ability to move mountains.

"I can believe in it all I want to, but it's

when the students see it and believe in it – that's when things really start to happen," said Gilday.

"Hopefully from this I can get one or two other schools on board and we can do the same type of thing."

Gilday is also involved in fundraising for a project in conjunction with Ryan's Well, an organization based in Ontario, the objective being to raise \$50,000 for a well in Uganda.

"We're calling it 'dollar day' – the goal is to raise a dollar for every student at the school," said Gilday.

"Whether it's sacrificing their can of Coke one day, it's something that can everyone get in on."

"We were running about 30 to 40 km a day."



Jill Gilday, left, shows videos of her trek through the Sahara Desert to J.H. Sissons' Grade 4 students, from left, Grace Storrie, Aisha Deliah Hashii, Mary Watier, and Robyn Walsh at the school on May 5.

Bartlesko Court rezoning passes first hurdle

City insists on opening proposal to public feedback

by Tim Edwards
and Alyssa Smith
Northern News Services

A bylaw which would permit the rezoning of the Bartlesko Court area to allow more apartments to be developed passed first reading by city council on Monday.



Bob Brooks

Councillors Paul Falvo, Mark Heyck, Amanda Malon and Cory Vanthuyne voted in favour, while Bob Brooks and David Wind were opposed. Councillors Shelagh Montgomery and Lydia Bardak were absent.

The developer, TC Enterprises, is required to hold an open house prior to submitting a development permit to build the property, and for the developer to provide recreation space for the area.

The requirements were sparked by a history of controversy on developing apartment complexes in the area, starting in 1997, when the neighbourhood was first changed from one-family residential to medium density housing, and a 36-family apartment complex was permitted.

Request denied

In 2004 city council denied a rezoning request identical to the new one, which would have removed a density limit on the area and allow for more

units to be constructed.

The request was denied due to uproar from the residents in the area who claimed the neighbourhood was already

on the cusp of being overcrowded, and that there was not enough parking for the current apartment complex, and the lot for proposed development was a popular green space.

"It has been ... such a contentious issue in the past,"



Cory Vanthuyne

Brooks said at a council meeting held May 3.

He said he would like to see TC Enterprises hold its open house before the rezoning request went through readings, and Coun. Wind agreed.

"I'm not in favour of this at all considering that the objections from the residents have been as a result of the impact that this development has had in the past on a green space in that neighbourhood," said Wind.

Also at the May 3 meeting Vanthuyne said he was satisfied there would be enough

opportunity for public input if the rezoning went through readings, as there would be a public hearing for the bylaw amendment, and the public would participate in the developer's open house.

"I'm (in favour of) providing housing options and housing choices to our

citizens," said Vanthuyne.

Montgomery, another supporter of the bylaw, said she didn't see the point in TC Enterprises putting the money into developing a concept for the apartments and holding an open house if there were no guarantees the area would even be rezoned

to allow the development.

Montgomery said the public will have enough opportunity to share their thoughts, and cited the School Draw Avenue extension project, to be built by Tin Can Hill, as a project that drew opposition at first but eventually won over the residents of the surrounding area through open houses with the developer.

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