

Sister Dorothy heads to Norway House

Elmwood musician brings music to kids

BY TRISH HOGUE

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Kids in Norway House are getting the gift of music for Christmas.

Elmwood musician Sister Dorothy is heading to Norway House for three weeks to help organize a Christmas pageant at the Jack River School.

"I get to waltz in and be the artist," said Sister Dorothy. "I'll fire the kids up about music."

Sister Dorothy is going as part of the artists in the classroom program, sponsored by the Manitoba Arts Council. She arrived there Dec. 3.

The program is geared for schools who don't have a music program.

"If a school doesn't have a music teacher, then students don't get to learn music," she said.

Although Sister Dorothy has worked with other schools in the past, this is the longest placement she has done. She feels the extra time will allow her to

make a stronger connection with the students.

"It's good because you actually get to know the kids and really accomplish something with them," she said.

Sister Dorothy, who plays a wide range of musical styles from blues to traditional German folk music, plans on bringing her guitar and flute to help inspire the Norway House students.

"I really want to help them with rhythm," she said adding that she was told the kids have a recorder, but only know two notes. "It should be interesting."

Daisy Monias, principal at Jack River School in Norway House, said the school has a permanent music teacher this year for the first time in years.

Monias applied to the Manitoba Arts Council to get Sister Dorothy before she knew the school would be able to hire a music teacher.

Despite having a music teacher, students are still excited to have a new teacher for three weeks.

"The kids will like having her because it exposes them to people they normally wouldn't see," she said, adding that Sister Dorothy will supplement the music program.

Monias said it's hard to find art teachers up north.

"The arts are something that is really difficult to access in Norway House" she said. "It's difficult to bring anyone out here because it's so expensive."

Jack River School has 376 kids and goes from nursery to Grade 6.

While Sister Dorothy is thrilled to bring music into kids lives, she is also curious about working in such a remote location.

"I've never been out there before," she said.

Monias hopes Sister Dorothy is prepared for the weather.

"She's in cold Norway House now," Monias said. "Winter has arrived."

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Photo by Trish Hogue

Elmwood musician Sister Dorothy.