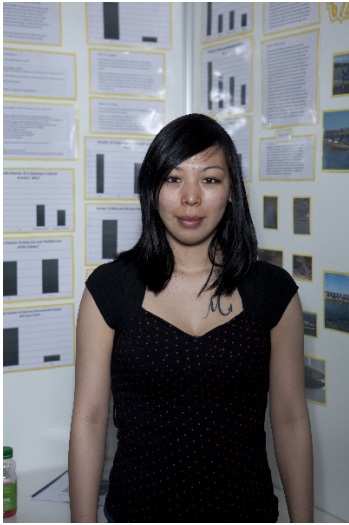


## CWSF 2013 - Lethbridge, Alberta



### Vanessa Mimialik

#### Qajaq Perceptions

**Challenge:** Discovery

**Category:** Senior

**Region:** Kivalliq

**City:** Chesterfield Inlet, NU

**School:** Victor Sammurtok

**Abstract:** I have participated in the Victor Sammurtok School Qajaq Program for the past 5 years. I have built and learned how to paddle my own handmade Qajaq. I am Inuk (of Inuit ancestry) and the Qajaq was curcial for our people to survive. I wanted to find out what perceptions students and parents had of our schools unique program.

#### Biography

Hello, My name is Vanessa Mimialik and I live in Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut on the west coast of Hudson Bay in the Arctic. Inuit invented the Qajaq, and I live in the oldest community in Nunavut where Qajaqs had not been used for a hundred years. Our school has been making Qajaqs since 2004 and students learn how to build and paddle their own Qajaqs every year. I think our school has the only program like this in Canada. I conducted my project on trying to identify perceptions about the program and the use of Qajaqs in school. A small but vocal percentage of the community didn't see the value that the program had for students and I wanted to find out what those reasons were. I interviewed several students who had participated in the program and several parents of students who had participated in the program. The results were overwhelmingly positive from students and parents and the program continues to grow and be successful. I can't wait for school to start so that I can go Qajaqing again! When I'm not doing homework, I work at a long-term care facility for patients who require 24 hour care.

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