

CAPITAL NEWS

BUSINESS

▼ YMCA

Strong Kids advocates prep for Channel swim

Did you know that 15 per cent of B.C. kids are living at or below the poverty line?

Participation in childhood recreation programs is becoming a privilege that many families just cannot afford anymore.

It is this statistic that has inspired a group of local swimmers to choose the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign as their charity of inspiration when taking on the great English Channel next summer.

Team member Leora Dahl said: "I know the difference recreation has had in my life, I hope that as a result of our collective efforts more kids in the Okanagan will have access to programs that improve their wellbeing and give them a safe place to be-

long during hard times."

The team has already begun fundraising and training in preparation for their attempt to conquer the English Channel in July 2013.

Accompanied by boat captain Ann Clemence and navigator John Dafoe, the OMSC Lake Monsters swam across the Georgia Strait on Aug. 11.

The six-person relay team swam from Sechelt on the mainland to Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, which was a roughly 35 km swim.

They swam without wetsuits (according to English Channel rules) and battled strong currents, wind and waves.

Denise Cesselli, Leora Dahl, Paul Duffield, Phred Martin, Mike Stamhu-

is and Tracy Sutton completed the swim in 10 hours and 46 minutes.

The Georgia Strait swim (held once a year and known as the Salish Sea Swim) was good practise for next year's English Channel attempt as the distance is similar and the team swam it according to English Channel tradition, with each team member swimming for an hour at a time in rotation.

"It was a real learning experience for us to see how we could get through such a mentally and physically exhausting swim," Dahl said.

"We learned that we have some things that we need to work on before next year's English Channel attempt, but we all had



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THE OMSC LAKE MONSTERS swim team: (from left) Phred Martin, Paul Duffield, Mike Stamhuis, Leora Dahl, Denise Cesselli, Connor Hobbs (son of team coach Brent Hobbs) and Tracy Sutton.

fun and look forward to swimming the channel."

Some members of the team competed in last weekend's Apple Open Water Invitational, held before the Apple Triath-

lon, and the entire team will continue to swim in the lake until around November.

The English Channel is only about 15 C so the team needs to remain

acclimatized to cold water. If you want to follow their progress, two of the team members are keeping blogs of their journey to the Channel, which you can find at www.NothingGreatIsEasy.com and LeoraEnglishChannel.com.

You can make a donation to the OMSC Lake Monsters at YMCAs-trongkids.ca.