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Young builders tackle replica of floating bridge at OUC's Spaghetti Bridge Contest

Okanagan Lake's floating bridge could serve as inspiration for the Elementary School Demonstration category at OUC's 22 annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest Friday, March 4 at the North Kelowna Campus.

"With construction of a new five-lane bridge almost underway, we thought it was only fitting to pay tribute to the floating bridge that has spanned Okanagan Lake for the last five decades," says Dianne Powles, one of the contest organizers. "Although students are challenged to use their imagination to build a floating bridge, the local span serves as a model, where they can learn about all of the elements involved in building such a structure, as well as study the history behind this particular passage and the role it has played in the region's development."

One school taking part is Anne McClymont Elementary in Kelowna. "The contest is a good opportunity for the students to be totally creative," says Kimberley Brodie, the enrichment teacher who is supervising the group of 10 Grade 4 and 5 students who are currently working on three different bridges.

"They are quite motivated and can't wait to work on them," Brodie says. She has encouraged her students to do research on Okanagan Lake Bridge and incorporate their findings in their structures. "There are lots of opportunities to branch off into different subject areas."

"Once the bridges are complete, the entire student body will have the opportunity to vote on which one should be entered in the demonstration category at OUC," says Brodie.

Besides being able to apply some of their math and scientific skills in a fun way, the demonstration event also gives elementary students an opportunity to work together on a project that requires co-operation, co-ordination, meeting deadlines and working to task as a team, says Dr. Andrew Hay, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Technologies. "Hopefully, it will inspire them to enter the Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest in the future and, perhaps, even pursue a career in one of the engineering fields."

Any elementary school students interested in participating in the demonstration category of the contest can find more information at <http://technologies.ouc.bc.ca/bridge/> or by calling 250-862-5473. Participating schools will demonstrate their structures between 10 and 11 a.m. on the day of the competition.

The day will also include events for older students such as a timed, team-building competition on the day of the contest, the secondary school and post-secondary school competitions where individual students build bridges at home or school and bring them in to be judged, and the ever-popular HMA Architects Inc. Heavyweight Competition, which is drawing competitors from around the world.

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