



THE WOODS HOLE RESEARCH CENTER

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Young Artists for Global Awareness: The Children of Zhigansk, Russia

March 2 - April 8, 2007

Background

In Zhigansk, Siberia, a small community along the banks of the Lena River, grade school students have become key partners in a scientific research initiative exploring the impacts of climate change on the Arctic. Now known as the Student Partners Project, the program was begun in 2002, when a 13-year-old girl named Anya, the daughter of a boat captain, just happened to be along for a research expedition along the Lena that included Max Holmes, an earth system scientist with the Woods Hole Research Center. Dr. Holmes noticed her interest in the scientific sampling work, and communicating through a little English, a little Russian, and a lot of hand signals, she quickly mastered the basic sampling protocols.

Anya's participation quickly grew to include fellow students and teachers at her school in Zhigansk, and in other communities throughout the Arctic. This initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation, is not only advancing scientific understanding of a part of the world already experiencing climate change, but is also creating the next generation of scientists and scientifically-literate citizens.

Exhibition

In collaboration with Max Holmes of the Woods Hole Research Center, the South Shore Art Center will showcase original paintings done by Zhigansk fifth through tenth graders. The artwork depicts the children's environment and their perceptions of the environmental changes going on around them. Given to Dr. Holmes as a gift, the collection, which demonstrates a remarkable skill level and an awareness of their world, gives us a glimpse of a remote world many of us know very little about.

Complementing the student drawings will be photographs of the artists and the Siberian region, maps, video excerpts from research expeditions, and native textiles, many of which are intricately beaded and embellished.

The exhibition opens to the public on Sunday, March 4, with a reception from 3-5 PM. Dr. Holmes will also give a presentation discussing this arctic research initiative and the Student Partners Project.



Original paintings done by Zhigansk student to appear in art exhibition.