

## An International Experience in Canada's Backyard

Prior to choosing out PThER 520 placement sites, I really hadn't paid attention to communities in the Northwest Territories. Inuvik is located above the Arctic Circle and despite one may think, it's a vibrant community. The Midnight Sun Complex houses many things from a 24 hour gym, swimming pool and water slide to an ice rink with free skating times. Step outside the residence and you are 2 minutes from the Boot Lake hiking trail, 3km long, it's a fantastic hike. As well there always seems to be some type of gathering or community events taking place, if you want to get involved in the community the locals are more than welcoming. If you're up for sewing there is an opportunity to learn from a highly respected elder, traditional sewing and beading. I had plenty of time to sew my own rabbit skin mitts, but there is a variety of fur for you to choose from.



Dog Sledding at Arctic Chalet



Boot Lake Hiking Trail

In regards to placement, you will be exposed to a multitude of conditions and experiences. Currently the only physical therapy clinic is located in the Inuvik Regional Hospital. But the clinic is unique, there are two full time physio's and between them they service twelve communities in the north, on top of treating patients in acute care, long term care and in the outpatient clinic. In the clinic patients are booked in 30 minute time slots, and as you build your case load you are responsible for your schedule and how you wish to book your clients and manage your time. Being that this is the only physio clinic in the region, there is also opportunity to deal with WCB claims.

The work week is fairly straight forward, your day starts at 8:30am and you end at 5:00pm. Lunch is from 12:00pm until 1:00pm, and a large part of the town also runs on these hours. As a student your day is typically spent in the outpatient clinic and seeing patients in acute care and long term care as required. You do attend the multidisciplinary rounds twice a week, usually Monday and Thursday morning at 8:30am. As well there is opportunity to travel with a supervisor on a community visit, which lasts one to three days. I had the opportunity to travel to Fort McPherson, which is full of Canadian history. The hamlet is the resting place of the Lost Patrol and site of the Mad Trapper's cabin.



Fort McPherson Health Center



Tsiighetchic Health Center

Accommodation as available is provided in the hospital residence, which is a great place to connect with other hospital staff. Very few medical professionals reside in Inuvik, with many Locum's (rotational positions), along with medical residents from all over Canada. The residence is not a dorm, you are given an apartment, that has everything you could need. Including cable tv, dvd player, and telephone. The one and two bedroom suites have a full kitchen in them, though there are a few bachelor suites which are like a hotel room (no kitchen). As well the residence has free laundry facilities on each floor. Depending where your unit is in the building, can determine how great your wireless internet works. Though you quickly learn there is no such thing as fast or dependable internet in the residence, even if you are in the common room where the modem is. The common room is a great place to meet others working in the hospital. Often the place for potlucks and movie nights, everyone is welcome. There is also a shared kitchen Cell phones do work up in Inuvik, but be prepared to pay up to a 1.00\$/min for roaming fees. I forgot to mention your commute to work is very short, a leisurely walk will take you just over a minute door to door and if you run 30 seconds should be ample.



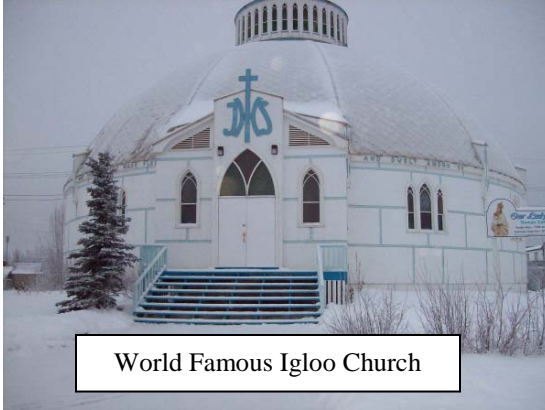
Inuvik Hospital



Hospital Residence

If you are given a meal card, you will eat in the hospital cafeteria. Don't dread this; you get three meals a day that are wonderful and not your typical hospital cafeteria food. Breakfast rotates between eggs, toast, bacon, waffles with berries and whipping cream and fresh fruit. Lunch and Supper range between a large variety of menu items and can include home made taco salad, ribs, fish, soup and salad and various sandwiches. Having a meal card provides you with endless meal choices and you will never go hungry. Fast food is not as predominate in the north as we see here. If you do decide to try one a few

restaurants, be prepared to pay for it. My first experience eating away from the hospital was an eye opener. Fries and chicken fingers with a can of pop were 18.00\$. Groceries are also a shocker, and you appreciate your meal card every time you see the cost of food. 4L of milk can run up to 20\$, Bananas were 7.69\$/kg, tomatoes 10.29/kg, cauliflower (one head) was 7.89\$, 4 potatoes 11.00\$. But all in all it's part of the northern experience.



World Famous Igloo Church



A Look Downtown

Don't let cold weather scare you away! If you bundle up you can be out for hours and not get cold. And if you are brave and fortunate you may have the opportunity to take part in a wilderness survival course. Northern lights are spectacular when you catch them, and all you have to do is walk a few feet from the residence to have the perfect viewing area. If you are there in the fall, don't get fooled into thinking there is 24 hour darkness. While you may not see the sun, you will get at least an hour of twilight.



Pingo National Park, Tuktoyuktuk

