



Big Little Dog,
Margriet Ruurs
Penumbra Press
ISBN 0-921254-46-6
Illustrated by Marc Houde

Level: intermediate
Genre: fiction

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

“It’s what’s inside that counts!” That’s what Jimmy learns about himself and his sled dog, Denali, when he enters the One-Dog-Pull event during the Rendezvous Festival. And what he learns is not without a well-deserved reward. Jimmy’s story takes us to the far North and warms our hearts as he sets his own challenge to overcome his personal adversity.

COMMENT:

This uplifting story is perfect for integrating Healthy Living concepts into the curriculum. Jimmy’s small size is a problem to him and could be compared to other children’s problems that adults may consider relatively minor, but which influence how children feel about themselves. The story ends with a realistic conclusion to Jimmy’s short term goal, and leaves us believing that his self-esteem is greatly improved.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION:

Language Arts - listening, reading, discussing, creative writing

Science - caring for animals, dogs

Social Studies - regions of Canada, life in the North

Art/Music - painting, songs from the North

Healthy Living - family relationships, personal problems, self esteem, differences between people

ACTIVITY IDEAS:

Research

Ask your students to choose different breeds of dogs to research. Brainstorm a list of questions to guide the research. Compile the pages into a book about dogs for the school or classroom library. Option: write a book about caring for different kinds of pets.

Book Making

Discuss standard pages found in books (title page, table of contents, dedication, acknowledgements, illustrations, text, glossary, etc.). Decide which pages will appear in the class book about dogs and who will prepare them.

Computer Skills

Have the students type their pages for the class book on the computer. Teach the skills necessary to open the software program, edit, save, print etc. If the illustrations are drawings that photocopy well, consider making copies of the book and plan distribution methods with your

students.

Life in the North

Locate other books that depict life in the North. Do a comparative study of the traditional and modern lifestyles of First Nations' people.

Discussion

Discuss self esteem and how your feelings about yourself affect your life.