

Minielly, Hugh

Students, staff from Moira say hooray and so long Super Hugh



Intelligencer photo by Bill Hunt

Here's to you, Hugh

Moir students gave a rousing send-off to Hugh Minielly, who returned the enthusiasm with an over-the-top farewell of his own.

Geoventure pioneer gets warm, wild send-off

By Bill Hunt

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It was a send-off fit for Superman and with that in mind, the staff of Moira Secondary School even provided the costume when they said adieu to retiring Geoventure teacher Hugh Minielly this past weekend.

Minielly is retiring from Moira after teaching the popular Geoventure program for 11 years. He's been teaching for 28 years, 14 of them at Moira.

As a send-off, teacher Julie Roberts invited every one of Minielly's former Geoventure students back to the school this past Saturday for a barbecue and party. Of approximately 250 students, about 150 were able to attend.

The Geoventure was designed by Minielly based on his personal and teaching experiences. It's an integrative curriculum based on experiential learning through which students earn four credits (one in English, environmental geography, outdoor leadership and co-op). Students must be in Grade 11 or 12 to take the program.

During the afternoon they shared, through songs sung to the tune of You Are My Sunshine, some of their fond recollections of trips to Algonquin Park, the Adirondack Mountains, the Niagara Peninsula, Haliburton, the Grand Canyon, British Columbia and six trips to Costa Rica.

For his part, Minielly told the audience, "you've shared many wonderful memories with me during this last half hour." He recalled standing in 85 m.p.h. winds in Algonquin Park, encountering "friendly Tarantulas" in Costa Rica and many other incidents. "It's been such a wonderful 11 years."

Minielly will miss the "excitement and enthusiasm" at the start of each new school year, leaving for balmy Costa Rica in November, sitting around camp fires, canoeing, cycling, and "the fresh emergence of youth," that allowed him to look at familiar locales through "different eyes" each time.

He thanked fellow teachers Gerhard Newman and John Girardi, who helped with the program in recent years.

Because Roberts dubbed him Super Hero, Minielly obliged the staff and students and donned a

Superman costume for part of the event, showing his versatility by performing wacky stunts on a trampoline, lifting dumbbells and riding a stationary bicycle. But the admiration was mutual. "You're my heroes. Thank you for sharing part of your life with me," he told his former students.

"Chase your dreams with passion, love what you're doing. I loved teaching Geoventure."

In lieu of a gift, Roberts accept-

ed money from the former students and made a \$1,000 donation to the Riverfront Trail in Minielly's name (he is on the proposed trail's fund-raising committee). "It sort of fit in perfectly with what I would have liked to happen...and it's sort of in keeping with the Geoventure philosophy," he said.

Upon official retirement later this month, he plans to cycle in Ireland with his wife, Mary, and spend some time in India.

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