

NEWS LOCAL

Navy League Cadets return to High River



By [Kevin Rushworth](#), High River Times

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NLCC CDR WH Evelyn #205. The Foothills branch of the Navy League Cadets take part in their annual scuba diving course. The group is returning to High River and will be stationed out of the High River Legion #71.

Officers and parents with the Foothills branch of the Navy League Cadets are excited about operating at the High River Legion starting this September after formerly parading at the Aldersyde fieldhouse.

Now into its seventh year, High River will offer the branch, otherwise known as Navy League Cadets of Canada Commander W.H. Evelyn #205, new opportunities for growth, according to cadet officers.

Lieutenant Karen Murfin, who is the commanding officer for the organization, said the High River Legion #71 has been a great supporter since the group's early days in operation.

"Having that home base as the Legion gives us even more support, (and) we can help them out as well," she said, adding the young cadets will provide community service back to the legion members.

Foothills Navy League Cadets is for boys and girls ages nine to 12. Other cadet groups are supported by the Department of National Defence, but Navy Cadets is typically supported by legions and parents.

Having transferred from the Okotoks and Aldersyde area to High River, Murfin, as well as the other officers, are hoping cadets move with them and that newcomers join as well.

"I would suggest that they come and check us out," she said about potential new cadets. "It's hard to describe every possibility that they'll see in our program, because there are so many."

Navy cadets have been engaged in community service, naval history, camping, among many other activities. The group will now parade at the High River Legion Thursdays from 6:15 to 9 p.m.

If young kids feel they are interested, Murfin said they are welcome to attend with their parents to learn. Youth are welcome to try the program for three weeks before paying the \$100 membership fee.

"It's not for everyone, but I think once they get into it and see all the different facets we offer, it's more than just drilling and it's more than just uniforms," Murfin said.

Kenneth Perkins, parent liaison for the Foothills Navy League Cadets group, said the Aldersyde fieldhouse was a great facility, but that it did not offer space ideal for parading.

"We've come back to High River to be stationed at the Legion, which is ideal in keeping with what that core is about," he said, adding that he felt that High River would help to boost cadet recruitment.

The program is certainly geared towards navy themes and culture, but Perkins said the cadet group empowers the young kids to learn leadership. There are also other opportunities after the program.

"If the kids go through the program, which is intended to promote them once or twice a year, they're perfectly positioned to take over into sea cadets or air cadets and continue their trajectory," he said.

Just as kids start the program at age nine, parents can also put them into the Navy League Cadets later and have them fast tracked, Perkins said. Kids leave the program before they're 13.

The program is hoping to have their numbers increased to 25 cadets, he explained. Perkins said there is plenty of room for newcomers to join the program and that they're also looking for parent officers.

He said parent officers can be parents of new cadets or someone from the community. Parent officers are not required to have spent time in the military, but that experience is welcome as well, Perkins said.

Just as the young cadets have opportunities to learn, he added that parent officers also have the ability to take part in an excellent training program that helps with leadership and speaking.

Charmaine Dautremont, Navy League of Canada Foothills branch president, said her children have went through the Navy League Cadets program and that her 10-year-old will be joining this year.

"The self-esteem and leadership I've seen my kids take on in their own lives was absolutely amazing," she said. "It was something they didn't have before they went into the program."

The group is excellent at taking cadets, those who are unsure about certain parts of the program, under their wing and helping to teach them about their uniforms and parading, Dautremont said.

"Everybody goes in the same direction, everyone gets the same opportunities to be promoted," she added. "Everyone gets the same opportunities to win awards, show stewardship and citizenship."

Dautremont said the program has struggled in its search for new cadet members and that she's looking forward to seeing the changes with the move to High River.

Potential new cadets and their parents are asked to attend the High River Legion at 6:30 p.m. on September 3, as that is the first night for new entries registration.

The first parade night for the Navy League Cadets of Canada Commander W.H. Evelyn #205 branch will then take place at the legion on Sept. 10.

For more information, parents are welcome to email Lieutenant Karen Murfin at lemurfin@telusplanet.net or call her at 403-251-7250.

Community members can also contact Claire Jardine, membership and screening parent, at clairejardine@ymail.com or at 403-554-7407 to learn more about the program.