

Bison Bus to tour NWT

Vehicle full of books and games to spur interest in reading among kids

By **Tim Edwards**, NWT/News North

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The NWT Literacy Council's Bison Bus is planning to hit the road this summer, bringing books, games and other activities to kids in communities on the highway system.



Charlotte Upton, family and community literacy co-ordinator for NWT Literacy Council, sits in the organization's new Bison Bus. Photo courtesy of the NWT Literacy Council

"The Bison Bus is a literacy centre on wheels," says Charlotte Upton, family and community literacy co-ordinator for the council.

"For the past few years, we've been fundraising money for it," she says.

The council is holding a fundraiser for it right now, with people gathering pledges ahead of the [PGI Bowl-a-Thon for Literacy at Yellowknife's Kingpin Bowling Centre on April 27, from 2 to 5 p.m.](#)

Those who will be in Yellowknife then and wish to participate can register on the council's website.

Fundraising so far has allowed the council to buy the bus, get it wrapped in Hay River with its bison get-up, and then fill it with books to give away, as well as games and materials for activities.

"Now, this summer it's ready to go," says Upton.



The NWT Literacy Council's Bison Bus is ready to hit the road this summer, bringing books and games to communities along the road system. Photo courtesy of the NWT Literacy Council

It has one activity planned, tentatively scheduled for the end of May in Kakisa, working with Aboriginal Head Start programs in Fort Providence and K'atl'odeeche First Nation.

Then the bus will be visiting communities on the road system for the summer, parking itself at community festivals and jamborees until August or September.

The target audience is kids aged zero to six but they're prepared for some kids up to age 12 coming to check out the strange-looking bus.

"We are in NWT-wide organization but we're based in Yellowknife so it's a really great way for us to kind of get to go to some of the other

communities we haven't been to in a while and have a bit of a bit of face-time with some of the people that we work with," says Upton.

The council is also hoping to touch base with more people in the communities and let them know what services the council can offer.

"Literacy is really important for kids," says Upton. "It affects health later on in life, it affects employment rates, and this is a fun way to promote literacy and reading in the summer."