

## Revelstoke Girl Guides District Commissioner

Since Roma Threatful was a young girl, being involved in the Girl Guides of Canada organization has been a focal point in her life. After participating as a child, she volunteered for 3 years as a young adult and then for the past 13 years as a guide leader. For Threatful, it is helping the girls learn, grow, and evolve into “incredibly strong, independent young women who will go out into the world and make a difference” that makes guiding a meaningful experience. But also, Threatful feels that she got so much from the program as a young girl that she wants to give something back.

“My mother was involved as a Brown Owl from my earliest memories. In fact, she was still actively involved in the program from the hospital where she was being treated for cancer, so Guiding holds very fond memories for me. After my mother’s death in 1975 (I was 10) I continued in the program and I experienced things that I would have never been exposed to without the ladies that put Guiding on in Revelstoke. I can attribute my love of camping and the outdoors to Marie Martinuik, who was my Guider as a girl and who I had an opportunity to work with as a leader before she lost her own battle with cancer about 8 years ago. Being raised by my grandmother I would never have had these opportunities. I have always felt that the more people you have in your life to care about the richer you are. That goes for adults caring about kids and what you get back from the girls. Being raised without a mother 35 years ago was very different. Today kids live in all sorts of different family arrangements and sometimes they just need that extra person to remind them of how special they are, sometimes they need a place to just let go and be a kid. That is what keeps me coming back.”



**ROMA THREATFUL**

Threatful also see Girl Guides as a way for the kids and leaders to connect with other people – not only people in Revelstoke but from the rest of Canada and all over the world. It is primarily a service organization whose aims and objectives focus on growing, developing and learning. Each leader brings new talent, ideas and exposure to different activities. Connections with other groups in the community are forged through the volunteerism of the girls and their leaders. The older girls learn to help the younger ones and bonds are formed between girls of different age groups. Activities are local, district-wide, regional, national, and even international. In 2006, Threatful and a few other volunteer leaders took 10 guiders to Mexico for 16 days to one of a few international properties or camps owned by the organization. There were participants from all over the world and the girls’ activities focused on issues affecting girls and women world wide.

Of course, there are many other women who have been essential to building the guiding program over the years. Threatful remembers that her mother was a leader alongside Carol Fitchett’s mother. Carol Fitchett is now a District Guider along with Kellie Christy, Zophie Humphreys and Sue Maaskant. Current group leaders are Becca Allen, Nancy Jensen, Michelle Cole, Tammie Johnson, Chris Meade and Threatful herself. Long-standing contributors who are no longer involved include Lorraine Holdener, Doris Ferguson, Penny Priessel and Audrey Taillefer.

Currently, there are about 70 participants in Revelstoke’s guiding program, including Sparks (kindergarten/grade 1), Brownies (grades 2/3), Guides (grades 4/5/6), Pathfinders (grades 7/8/9), and Rangers (grades 10/11/12). It is an inexpensive program – only \$75.00 a year. Leaders are always needed for all groups and can step in to lead any age group. Leaders take a brief orientation and can access courses offered by the national organization. As well, Threatful emphasizes that the groups are always open to anyone who would like to offer a one-time talk, workshop or class on anything that might be appropriate and interesting for the girls, like art, drama or self-exploration. Or, if you were involved as a young girl and would like to share your experience and see how it is the same or different, they welcome a visit. Threatful’s smile is wide, “It’s not just about the cookies!”

For further information about volunteering for Girl Guides, contact Threatful at 250-837-3615. For information about volunteering in Revelstoke go to [www.revelstokecf.com/volunteers](http://www.revelstokecf.com/volunteers) or contact the Community Centre at 250-837-9351.

*Submitted by Jill Zacharias, Photo courtesy of Cathy Burke, CFDC Volunteer Committee members*