

Camp sends Canadian to many countries

By CHRIS FOX

fox.chris@dailygleaner.com

Cassandra Carr has never been to Rwanda, Ethiopia or Venezuela.

But thanks to a summer camp put on by the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, she's meeting plenty of people who have been to those countries.

Carr is one of 44 kids involved with Rainbow of Cultures, a five-week summer camp which brings together kids from 22 different countries.

"It is really fun because I get to learn about what other people do in other countries, and the games they play and the languages they speak," she said. "I can't even choose what the best thing I have learned is — there has just been so much."

The camp, in its 14th year, is designed to help recent immigrants adjust to life in Canada by introducing them to local kids. The camp is open to those ages 6-12.

"This camp really gives newcomers to the area an opportunity to connect with Canadian-born (children) and make friends," said lead councillor Jeremias Tecu.

"I think this is really a cool opportunity for everyone, because we have children who have experienced genocide and we have children who are refugees, and this is a great opportunity to start a new life, and to just come together and play and have fun."

The camp, which concluded with a talent show at Wilmot Church last week, drew heavily on the cultures of everyone involved for activities and brought in guest speakers from a variety of nations.

Tecu said giving the kids an opportunity to learn about each other's cultures was a big part of the camp.

"This is a huge opportunity to come together. We as adults focus too much on difference, but children don't. We come here every morning and we celebrate life by doing everything from salsa dance to music from around the world, and we bring in guest speakers from Africa, from Latin America and from every native community, and it is a real opportunity in terms of sharing and learning," he said.

Bienvenue Habiyanberu, 9, immigrated to Fredericton from Rwanda last September. He said attending the Rainbow of Cultures Camp was a great experience.

"I have met so many people and I have had a good time," he said. "We went swimming, we went to the park — it was a real mixture."