

# Silver medal embodies spirit of games

*Indigenous event more than a competition*

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**Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson**

Fort Simpson's silver medal relay finish at the North American Indigenous Games in Denver, Colo., embodied the event's spirit and sportsmanship.

Tyrone Stipdonk and Gor-

don Thompson were the only swimmers able to make the trip to this year's games so, because four swimmers are needed to compete in the relay event, the pair teamed up with two swimmers from Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia had their own relay team, but had two extra swimmers.

Coach Deborah Stipdonk said working with the Nova Scotia team was a definite highlight for her.

Also, during the week, the team received a lot of support from some famous people.

Waneek Horn-Miller, an Olympic swimmer of aboriginal ancestry and Games

founder Willy Littlechild encouraged the NWT athletes and gave them tips.

"The helpfulness and the spirit of the games is what the North American Indigenous Games are all about," said Stipdonk.

"They are not just about the competition. They are

about the culture and the celebration."

Prior to going to Denver, Stipdonk said her athletes didn't get much opportunity to train.

Fort Simpson's new swimming pool opened the day the team left for the United States.

That meant their training consisted of dry-land activities and talking about proper stroke technique.

"We went down a few days early and they worked really hard in the pool," said Stipdonk.

"I was absolutely thrilled with how they did."