



SCHOOL PROGRAM

ATHLETE STORIES

Clara Hughes —
Healthy Choices // Grade 2-3

About Clara

BORN September 27, 1972

BIRTHPLACE Winnipeg, MB

SPORT Cycling – Road and Speed
Skating - Long Track

OLYMPIC GAMES London 2012,
Vancouver 2010, Turin 2006, Salt
Lake City 2002, Sydney 2000,
Atlanta 1996

FAVOURITE HOBBY Bird watching



Clara Hughes — Healthy Choices



Clara Hughes takes a deep breath. She has just won the 5000-metre speed skating race at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. The 5000-meter race is a long race and Clara is tired. This is not Clara's first Olympic medal. Clara has won medals at the Winter and Summer Olympic Games. She skates her victory lap around the Richmond Olympic Oval. The Canadian crowd goes crazy. This is her last Olympic race. She smiles and remembers all the decisions that have led her to this place.

"When I was young I made some bad decisions. I smoked. I drank. I ran away from home a few times. I didn't try hard in school. It's amazing that I made it as an athlete."

One day, her life changed. She was watching speed skating legend Gaetan Boucher on television.

"I was 16. This sport looked so cool. He glided around the ice. He was really fast. I knew right away that I wanted to do that. My mother called the local club in Winnipeg. In just a few days I was skating."

Clara started working out instead of hanging out. She paid attention in school. She got good grades. She gave up the bad habits. It was not easy but Clara stuck with it. Clara kept skating. She also started cycling.

"I met a great coach, Mirek Mazur. He saw that I was a good cyclist. He pushed me to try hard. I decided to listen to him. He was tough but he was right. I started to get better and better."

Clara went to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta as a cyclist. She won two bronze medals in road racing. She was happy, but she still wanted to try speed skating. After the 2000 Olympic Games, she decided to go to the Olympic Winter Games too.

"That had been my dream since I first watched speed skating on TV. I had told my mother years before I was going to be an Olympic speed skater. I was determined to make it."

Clara did more than just make it. She won a bronze medal in the 5000 metres. She had only been training for a few months. Four years later, in Turin, she won a gold medal.

The victory made her remember her own tough childhood. After the gold medal, Clara decided to do something really nice.

"The morning of my race I watched a documentary on the group 'Right to Play'. It was about their work in Uganda."

Right to Play is a group that uses sport to help children in developing countries around the world. Right to Play sends athletes to help kids learn about sport and about making healthy choices. It also gives them sporting equipment.

"The children lived with war, poverty and violence. When they played sports they were so happy. I thought if these kids can do this, so can I during my Olympic race that same evening."

Clara became tired halfway through that race. Her legs ached, but she remembered those smiling kids in the video.

"I had written 'joy' on my hand with a pen. The word reminded me of those shining eyes from Uganda that I saw on my TV. I didn't give up."

Clara won. She wanted to thank those children. Millions watched her gold medal press conference. Clara announced that she was donating 10,000 dollars to Right to Play.

"I wanted to give back. I wanted to help more children know the joy of sport. I wanted them to know how happy I was to be an athlete."

Clara feels that joy as an athlete and a person. Clara is now a Member of the Order of Canada. That's one of Canada's highest honours. She carried the Canadian flag for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. She still raises money for charity and does her best to help children. Clara skates a final lap around the oval.

"Success has given me a voice. I tell people all the time that you just never know where your decisions may lead. Each and every one of us has a part in making the lives of those around us better just by our own actions."



Clara Hughes — Healthy Choices



1. In Clara's story, Clara said she made bad choices when she was young. As she grew up, she made positive choices that helped her succeed. As a class, talk about how positive choices are important.

- a. Here are some positive choices to talk about:
 - i. Healthy eating
 - ii. Physical activity
 - iii. Respecting others
 - iv. Anti-bullying
 - v. Saying no to drugs

Brainstorm Box:



Clara Hughes — Healthy Choices



2. With a friend, create a poster that will be used as a Public Service Announcement. It will be put in your school hallways to show the benefits of making positive choices. Use words and pictures that encourage healthy and positive choices. Then, present your poster to the class to explain how positive, healthy choices can change their lives.

Title: _____

