Bucket Brigade

**Objectives:**
This activity aims to educate and empower students to become active guardians of their water supply. It is designed to illustrate historic fire fighting methods.

The students will be able to:
- Describe firefighting methods used by early settlers
- Compare methods used by early settlers and present-day firefighters

**Introduction:**

**Earliest Fires**
First Nations and pioneers in this area were challenged many times by fire. Early settlers had no fire-fighting equipment and often there were no neighbours nearby to organize a bucket brigade. A fire out of control meant almost certain destruction of property. Care and prevention was the best protection from fire as it is today.

The first recorded fire in the Brampton area occurred in December, 1822, the McVean log home burned to the ground and only a few precious items were saved.

**Brampton Fire Pumper**
If hand pumpers, or engines as they were called, can be thought of as heralding the advent of modern-age firefighting, then the purchase of a pumper for Brampton village in 1853 was the humble beginning to Brampton's fire protection equipment. With the invention of the hand pumper, the process of fighting fires was greatly expedited, especially since one pump could do the work of 40 men using buckets. (City of Brampton Emergency Services www.city.brampton.on.ca/fire)

**Materials:**
- buckets (approximately 10)
- access to water
- playhouse representative of burning building

**Procedure:**
You will be helping the children simulate historic fire fighting methods. You will explain to the students that water is important not only for our health but also for safety since many fires are extinguished with water.

There should be enough buckets for each child to have one. Everyone will get into formation for a “bucket brigade” to put out the fire. This activity illustrates the manual labour involved in firefighting before municipal water, fire hydrants, and trucks came to be used in Canada.
Point out a spot to the students that you have chosen to represent the building on fire (e.g. playhouse). When someone yells “FIRE!!” have the students rush to form a line from the “lake” to the designated fire area. They will then start to hand the buckets along the line in order to move water from the “lake” to throw on the fire.

Debrief:
Recap by asking the students what they would do if they discovered a fire and ways to prevent fires.

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