

Innisfail students join in “heart”-warming project



John Wilson Elementary School with the help of a few Innisfail Middle School students have contributed to a “heart”-warming community project in Innisfail.

Students crocheted and knitted hearts to be hung with others from the community in a display near a seniors living facility and the hospital (see links to media stories about the project [here](#) and [here](#)). Students learned to crochet and knit over several months so that they could contribute. Students then joined with other crafters in Innisfail recently to create the art display, with the hearts attached to a fence nearby the hospital and a seniors living facility. The intent of the display is to cheer and encourage seniors who can see it.

“When we were asked if our school wanted to participate in this project we jumped at the chance,” said Angela Warke, Principal, John Wilson Elementary School. “We love opportunities for students to connect with the community and provide service. Children develop empathy when they have meaningful, real life experiences helping others. We’re glad to have been a part of this project.”

John Wilson student, Ava Specht said, “Me and my Grandma saw a girl, [Karen Scarlet, the artist that initiated the project], and she told us about the hearts and we thought it would be good if we did something nice like this for the seniors. They would smile.”

“It made my heart fill with more joy to do this,” continued Ava Specht. “I helped put the hearts up and we made a



Upper left: JWES students begin learning to crochet and knit.
Upper right: Completed hearts from JWES on display with others near the Innisfail hospital.

Lower right: Some IMS students contributed to the project also.

train and put them around the fence. It was fun to hang them up. It was hard to learn [to knit or crochet] and you might need some more time to keep trying but don't give up!”

John Wilson student Elle Evans said, “My sisters both did it and it inspired me to do it too. I wanted to help make people happy when they see the hearts. It made me feel calm to crochet and it was a little hard but I kept trying because I wanted to make a heart.”

John Wilson student, Peyton Rehaume said, “I didn't know how to knit or crochet and I wanted to learn how to do it because I thought it would be cool to make some hearts and hang them up. I wanted to make the people at the hospital happy when they could look out and see the hearts.”



Aspiring leaders ready for leadership opportunities



Another group of Aspiring Leaders has crossed the finish line in Chinook's Edge School Division. Eleven Chinook's Edge teachers have completed the two year program. It involved 16 days worth of learning, including four days on a leadership practicum. This program has been in place in Chinook's Edge for 10 years, although there were other forms of leadership development prior to that time. The program helps develop formal and informal school and division leaders.

Learning for all of the sessions is focused on the Alberta Education [Leadership Quality Standard](#) (LQS).

Some of the topics the group discussed:

- Fostering effective relationships
- Instructional leadership
- Leading a learning community
- Supervision, evaluation and professional growth
- Managing resources
- Leading without a name tag
- Visionary leadership
- Indigenous Education

"Aspiring Leaders has been an amazing opportunity to learn and develop," said Justin Bronson, a teacher at Jessie Duncan School. "Even if you have no plan to go into formal leadership and are a leader within your school, Aspiring Leaders is for everyone. You get to see school and education from a new perspective, which can help make things more clear. This is some of the best professional development I could have ever taken."

Left to right (back) Joe Amundrud (Spruce View), Brandon Good (Delburne), Corbyn Shields (Bowden), Chance Seely (Olds Elem.), Tricia Simpson (Delburne), Sean McWade (Fox Run), Ray Hoppins (Associate Superintendent)

Left to right (front): Kari Wayne (Carstairs Elem.), Justin Bronson (Jessie Duncan), Jana Kemmere (Olds High), Lisa Fletcher (Jessie Duncan), Jeannie Russell (Penhold Crossing), Jody Dennis (Division Principal).

Jana Kemmere, a teacher at École Olds High School, said, "Over the past two years our cohort of 11 teachers formed a cohesive community that will continue to collaborate and support one another through our various roles across the division. We were immersed in the nine competencies outlined in the LQS, gaining new perspectives on effective leadership. Engaging with a variety of speakers and literature also broadened our knowledge base. The opportunity to shadow administrators across the division provided invaluable insights, equipping us for current and future leadership roles. It was a privilege to be part of this program, and we are grateful to the division, our leaders, various administrators and each other for this transformative experience."

"We are incredibly proud of our Aspiring Leaders," said Jody Dennis, Division Principal, Chinook's Edge. "Their commitment to learning, growth and leadership is incredible. Our division is stronger because they have invested in this opportunity."

A new Aspiring Leaders session will begin in the fall of 2023, with 14 participants.