

MECCS

A newsletter for Mother Earth's Children's Charter School to share its successful traditional and innovative programming.

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MECCS is on Facebook!



Find driving directions and more at www.meccs.org

Teachers and Students: Partners in Success

In this issue of our school's newsletter, we are featuring some of our amazing, caring teaching staff and a couple of our successful graduates (we have many). These are their stories, in their words, presented to show you why MECCS makes a difference for our students.

Watch for our next issue when we feature some of the fantastic support staff at MECCS.

Maxine Hildebrandt

I am a woman of Cree/Métis descent, and am an enrolled member of the Pelican Lake First Nation. I grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and moved to Alberta in 1990.



Maxine Hildebrandt working with her students.

I attended the University of Alberta and obtained my Bachelor of Arts degree in Native Studies. Years later, I returned to the university to obtain my Bachelor of Education degree. I currently live in Devon, Alberta, with my husband. Our

son Keith and daughter-in-law Shaiana reside in Edmonton where they are raising two beautiful daughters, Jessica and Carmen.

I have an avid interest in acknowledging the history, culture and traditional knowledge of First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) people in Canada. I have always had a passion for teaching. I am an avid learner myself, and I worked as a tutor for students from kindergarten to grade 12.

I am currently in my fifth year of teaching at Mother Earth's Children's Charter School. Over the past four years, I have diligently incorporated the traditional knowledge of FNMI perspectives into my teaching of the Alberta Programs of Study. My students have gained a deeper appreciation of their culture, and have recognized their strengths, gifts and potential. Many have learned how to set meaningful goals for themselves and to work toward them.

With each passing year, my students have experienced tremendous growth in their physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional well-being. I look forward to seeing them grow, develop, and reach their dreams and aspirations.

I would recommend MECCS as a warm and inviting place where students are free to be themselves and to flourish in their studies. It's a place where they can take pride in their culture and see themselves as part of a friendly community. At MECCS, we are like a family, and we care about the health, happiness and success of all of our students.

Connor Reinhardt

I am the grade 5/6 teacher at MECCS. I have lived my entire life in Edmonton. I graduated from the University of Alberta in December 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology Elementary Education.

I am 24 years old and this is my first teaching job. I wanted to be a teacher because while I was in school my teachers were positive influences in my life and I wanted to be a positive influence for my future students. One thing I really enjoy about teaching at MECCS is the amount of culture and new experiences I get to experience every day.

Some of my favourite memories so far have been coaching the various sports, and when my students were learning about parachutes and we spent the afternoon building and testing out our own.

I would recommend this school for parents and future students because it gives the students the chance to experience their culture in a positive and respectful environment. As well, because of our relatively small size, we develop a sense of family among our school population.

Erin Danforth

I grew up in Courtenay on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. My extended family was in Edmonton so in 1990 I began a degree in Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. Over the next 10 years I spent time attending university and taking time off to work to support my studies. I graduated with my Bachelor of Education after-degree in April 2005 after spending two years at Concordia University in Edmonton. Prior to that, I received my Bachelor of Arts in Music in 2002.

I am proud to have been a part of MECCS since 2005, first as a teacher and now as principal.



Connor Reinhardt



Erin Danforth

I live in Edmonton with my family and I'm the proud mom to two boys: Noah, who is 16, and Simon, who is 13. They are both hockey players but they also enjoy playing other sports, especially lacrosse.

I am at MECCS for so many reasons: I love the kids, I love the sense of community and I love the people I get to work with every day.

Having been here for so long, I have many fond memories. I can't choose just one! I love taking the kids on exchanges and seeing them experience things for the first time—watching them on the airplane is fun! I remember things like winter fun day, dunking Mr. Ehnes in the big tank, Christmas concerts, pow wows and more, but probably the best memory isn't one thing in particular but an overall feeling.



Mark Ehnes



Janelle Thomas

I didn't always want to be a teacher. I always thought I would be a lawyer. When I was in high school, I had a phenomenal music teacher named Mr. Webster who encouraged me to pursue a career as a teacher. When I really started to think about it, I realized that I had had a great number of excellent teachers and they had each had an impact on me...that's why I wanted to be an educator.

I am at MECCS for so many reasons: I love the kids, I love the sense of community and I love the people I get to work with every day. I feel like I am part of a large, extended family here at MECCS.

I think that MECCS has a lot to offer children and their families...especially for a school of its size. Our staff is one hundred per cent dedicated to doing the best for kids, and they have a wealth of knowledge and experiences to share.

Mark Ehnes

I was born in Winnipeg and grew up in southern Manitoba before moving to Alberta with my family in 1992. I completed high school in Calmar, Alberta, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta in 1998. I reside in Spruce Grove, Alberta, with my two teenage daughters.

I chose to become a teacher because I consider myself a lifelong learner, and I enjoy learning alongside my students. After teaching for three years at an on-reserve school, I was recruited to take over the grade 3 position at MECCS. I've been teaching here ever since, mainly grades 1 and 2.

I believe MECCS should be the school of choice for parents who would like the quality of a public school education with an emphasis on FNMI culture and traditions. We've had many invaluable experiences here at MECCS. Soapstone carving, traditional games, visits from FNMI authors and student exchanges have all been enriching and rewarding experiences we have had at MECCS.

Janelle Thomas

I am a former MECCS student who now volunteers with Janet and Yvonne in the kitchen. I attended MECCS from 2008 to 2012. One of my favourite memories was the volleyball team.

My time at MECCS helped me with my high school experiences because



The teachers and administration at MECCS work hard first and foremost for the success of their students.

ALL PHOTOS BY ED WITTCHEN EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED

I learned that I could count on teachers to help me and that I had good skills. My career plan now that I graduated from high school in 2015 is to keep volunteering and gaining experience working in the MECCS kitchen. I would eventually like to study and keep working in the food service industry in some capacity because I like cooking.

Serene Adams-Roasting

I attended MECCS for my grade 9 year. I am currently a student at the University of Alberta in the Transition Year Program, open studies. Next year I'll be on the business route. I graduated from high school in June 2016 with the Governor General's Academic Medal.

My time at MECCS was amazing. MECCS helped with my high school experiences because that was the year I began playing sports again. I picked up a new hobby: volleyball. It is a sport that I had never played before. Our girls' team made it through almost the entire season undefeated. We lost one game that entire season. By the time I graduated high school, I was the senior girls' captain.

I have to say one of my favourite memories was when we did the SEVEC exchange program and went to Quebec! It was a one in a million experience. Starting with my first time on a plane, getting to experience all of that with my best friends was just amazing. Hard work pays off.



Serene Adams-Roasting, former MECCS student and high school volleyball team captain, and a 2016 Governor General's Academic Medal winner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SERENE ADAMS-ROASTING

My career plans are to get my master's degree in business and hopefully open up a restaurant of my own because cooking is my passion. MECCS makes a difference for students.