

MECCS

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

Mother Earth's Children's Charter School
Box 42, Site 2, RR 1
Warburg, AB T0C 2T0

780-702-7531 school office
780-232-4481 family liaison

Principal Erin Danforth - edanforth@meccs.org
Family Liaison Janet House - jhouse@meccs.org

MECCS is on Facebook! 
Find driving directions and more at www.meccs.org

The 2018 TransAlta Christmas at MECCS

Our students and staff recently enjoyed the 4th Annual TransAlta Christmas. The first of these wonderful holiday celebrations came about in 2014 following a conversation between MECCS principal Erin Danforth and TransAlta CEO Dawn Farrell.



Rihanna James-Hill shares a sweet smile as she receives her gifts from Santa Claus.

How it works is each student writes a letter to Santa in early November. Those letters then get forwarded on to Santa's post office at TransAlta headquarters in Calgary. TransAlta staff who want to take part are invited to pick a student's name and match it up with their letter.

The original idea was for staff to buy a student a gift worth up to \$25, including a toque and a pair of mittens or gloves. The fact is, however, that TransAlta staff usually go beyond that level of generosity. This year they raised the bar even more.

Once gifts are purchased, TransAlta staff wrap and label them. On the big celebration day in mid-December, they load up a TransAlta truck early in the morning and make the nearly four-hour drive up the highway to MECCS.

This year, Ryan Schmidt (Manager, Strategy Mergers and Acquisitions), Erna Mazur (Project Analyst), Heather Retzlaff (Business and Investment Analyst) and Jorge Aviles (Senior Advisor, Stakeholder Engagement and Indigenous Relations) delivered the gifts and took



Above, from left to right: Santa delivers beautifully wrapped Christmas presents to Leland Letendre, Francis Bird and Amira Bird. Below, from left to right: Time for Roberta Whitford, Azarie Rain and McKenna Roan-House to have their visits and presents from Santa.



on the roles of Santa and the elves. The smiles on their faces make it obvious that this was truly a labour of love for them.

MECCS students of all ages were excited to see what was going to happen. Santa's elves kicked things off by inviting everyone to sing "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." That was the signal for Santa's arrival and for the presents to be handed out. Santa took the



Clockwise from top left: Darius Alexis, Adrianna Bull, Rinzin Rain and Milo Bird visit with Santa.



Above, from left to right: Santa makes a few more special deliveries to Elijah House-Alexis, Lazurus Roan and Tristan Brertron. Below, from left to right: Murray Bull, Brisa Lewis and Jolissa Potts step up to visit with the jolly old elf himself.



time to address each of the students by name and to ask them what they wished for Christmas. The students made school staff very proud as they waited patiently for all gifts to be given out before anyone started opening.

This year, TransAlta took their generosity one step further and surprised the MECCS staff by including them in the gift-giving festivities.

Clockwise from top left: Jayden Lewis, Nakoda Paul, Jacob Bull and Dominic Potts visit with Santa.



The TransAlta elves join MECCS staff and students as they patiently wait for the arrival of Santa Claus.

When everyone had their gifts, the room exploded with joyful comments as students saw what they had received. They loved the mitts and toques, and very excitedly showed each other and staff what they got from Santa. Many of the younger children couldn't wait to hug and thank Santa and the elves.

Speaking of thank you, we can't thank Dawn Farrell and the entire TransAlta staff enough for making this event possible for our students. A very special thank you goes to Ryan, Erna, Heather and Jorge in particular for spending their day with us to help run this event. As well, we want to recognize and thank Constable B. Young from the Thorsby RCMP detachment for helping Santa's elves to unpack the sleigh.



Time for presents at last! The school cafeteria quickly transformed into a lively celebration as students unwrapped their gifts.

This year we once again hosted a Facebook Live event to connect with parents, grandparents and the TransAlta staff back in Calgary so they could watch this magical event as it happened.

The TransAlta Christmas is one of the best days of the year for MECCS students and staff. In addition to the ongoing efforts of all the wonderful supporters at TransAlta, we also want to recognize Janet House for leading her decorating crew of Janadine House, Janelle Thomas and Raquel House to make the cafeteria fit the theme of this festive day. Thank you, too, to our school principal Erin Danforth, who created the beautiful mural depicting the *Frozen* theme. Finally, we want to wish our entire MECCS community a safe and happy 2018!



Very happy TransAlta elves Heather Retzlaff, Erna Mazer and Ryan Schmidt with Constable B. Young from the Thorsby RCMP detachment.



This is what it's all about: Tenzin Bird shares a moment of pure joy with Santa.