

# 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](http://www.meccs.org)**

## Culture Camp Update: The Tipi Is Up

With the completion of our tipi pad and doing the first two activities out at the culture camp, we have finished phase one of our outdoor classroom project. Plans are already being developed and a budget has been established for phase two. Our second phase will take place over the rest of 2021 and into 2022.

Phase one started with clearing the space, including taking down the old tipi. One of the first things we did was install our all-weather, heated and lighted portable washroom so students, staff and guests wouldn't always have to go to the school for a washroom. We then developed the fire pit pad, including getting large tree stumps for seating and building the dry meat rack.

Next, we developed the lean-to shelter, including getting some tables and building some benches for instruction purposes. The third part was installing the new tipi.

To finish off this first phase, we got some straw bales from Troy Flad, one of our supporters, to use as extra seating for guests and as insulation around the bottom of the tipi. We also bought three additional portable



*Mark Hildebrandt putting the tipi canvas on the poles.*



fire pits for various locations around the culture camp. This way, when we have guests for events like Winter Feast or our official opening in December they can keep warm.

We needed to make sure that all students are dressed appropriately during our winter activities so the last thing we did was purchase a set of boots, ski pants, mitts and winter jackets for our students. Principal Erin Danforth's mother knitted toques for everyone. All of the clothing is numbered for individual students, and it will be kept at school, ready to use whenever the students are going out to the camp.

We had our first two learning experiences earlier this fall. Elder Edna Paul and Annie Thomas taught us dry meat techniques, which we documented in our last newsletter. Hart Wichern also taught us outdoor skills. We'll be sharing stories and photos from that in our next issue.

We also have a series of events planned for the culture camp in December. Parents and other guests can be invited to these outside events. COVID regulations mean guests are still not allowed inside of the school.

If weather permits, we will celebrate our official MECCS culture camp opening on December 15. We are hoping for good weather and temperatures above  $-20\text{ C}^{\circ}$  to make this event happen.



*Left, top: Picking up the tipi at Lethbridge Custom Canvas.*

*Left: Maxine and Mark Hildebrandt getting the tipi poles into position.*

*Left, bottom: Mark cutting the pegs for the tipi.*

*Below: Mark using wooden pegs to secure the tipi to the ground.*



Students are already practising for our first outdoor Christmas concert. This very special event will be held at the culture camp on December 17 in conjunction with our Winter Feast.

December 22 will see us having our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual TransAlta Christmas, with presents for every student from TransAlta staff. In addition, classes are using the site for daily instruction on a regular basis.

We purchased our new tipi from Lethbridge Custom Canvas. Just like with other parts of the project, it was Maxine and Mark Hildebrandt who did the bulk of the work. In this phase, they drove to Lethbridge to pick up the tipi, cut the pegs, put up tipi poles and finally put the final touches on the tipi as they put the canopy up.

The tipi has an artificial turf floor, similar to that used in Commonwealth Stadium. It has a special silicone sand mixed into it to keep it looking like real grass and not getting smashed down with repeated use. We are looking forward to it being used as part of our all-weather outdoor classroom.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us get to this phase of our MECCS culture camp.



*Right, top: Mark joining the canvas with wooden pegs.*

*Right: Receiving a load of straw bales from Troy Flad.*

*Right, bottom: Students keeping snow cleared from the lean-to site.*



*Below: A first look at the completed culture camp.*





## Ready for the holiday season at our new culture camp

*Finally, after weeks of preparation and hard work, it's time for an inside view of the tipi.*



*Students practising at the new lean-to shelter for our first outdoor Christmas concert.*



*The lean-to shelter looking festive after being decorated with holiday greenery.*