

The Stavely Elementary School principal, teachers and staff pride themselves on helping the students under their care to become well rounded, caring and supportive members of the Stavely and area communities. How have they done this?

By creating programs that not only enriches the students, but also enriches their communities.

Such programs initiated are 'The Town Clean Up', where the students help to clean up the town debris and garbage, giving them a sense of pride in their community by creating a more appealing place to live. The students are also involved in several 'drives' during the year. Food drives, toiletry drive, cereal box drive, all of which are donated to the Food Bank. To help with these drives, a flyer is sent out ahead of time for the residents with suggestions of what items would be appreciated. The students collect the items and learn to 'give' to those in need in and around their communities.

Other programs include making both cards and decorations for Christmas and given to the seniors in both the Stavely and Claresholm communities, along with Carol singing for those residents in lodges in the local areas. Valentines Day is also a chance for the students to create, make and deliver Valentine Days cards for seniors (and they are beautiful and appreciated).

The students also brighten the winter season with carol singing throughout the Town of Stavely. This teaches each student that not everything they do for their community needs to cost money. The smiles and the joy they bring to residents, young and old is, as the commercial says, 'PRICELESS'.

Students also put on a Christmas concert where they learn new skills, whether it be acting, learning a new instrument, staging etc., to create an environment of joy, laughter, memories for a Community Hall filled with residents and families.

The Remembrance Day program of which all students are involved through song, poetry never fails to leave an immensely personal impression upon the residents who attend this ceremony. And while the students learn "We will not forget them", they remind each and everyone attending of the sacrifices made for our freedom and the freedom for others around the world. And that freedom comes with responsibility and a cost.

One of the many programs the Stavely Elementary School also provides is "Passion Projects". This program encourages students to learn new skills, such as computer programming, baking, sewing, painting, woodworking and many other skills. I have been honoured to teach a group of students for the past several years. Each student builds an item for themselves, however, this has lately included an item for the school or the town. The commitment made by the students is amazing. They have been more than willing and excited to give up a lunch time to sand, paint and finish a project for the school or community.

The students also grow plants!! They start from seed to a plant they sell in the Spring. (At a very reasonable price). The funds from this program is used to fund the next years plants and the rest is donated to the community.

Through the many programs the school provides each student learns to be an active, supportive, caring part of their school, their town, the residents, young and old, and not only of their community where they live, but of surrounding communities, the country they live in, but also the world that they are the future of.

I could go on and on about all of the incredible programs that the Stavely Elementary School provides to the students to teach, to share, to encourage them to reach out and be part of and contribute to their communities, but there is one skill the school teaches that stands out in my mind above all. **The Stavely Elementary School has given each student the tools, the encouragement, the passion to learn more. About themselves, their community, their world.**

Thank you for the opportunity to express my pride in the Stavely Elementary School

Janice Binmore