

## **MacLeod Elementary School Creating Community Connections & Inspiring Kindness**

It all began with Mrs. McMullen, our Kindergarten teacher, wanting to teach her students about kindness. She asked if she could create a mitten tree in our Library similar to the one in the book "The Mitten Tree" that she was going to use to begin her "Warming Up The Winter With Kindness Campaign". She sent a letter out to her Kindergarten families and we posted it out on our school communication website encouraging our school community to donate new mittens and toques for children.

The mittens and toques would be hung by the Kindergarten students and would be given to Caring Communities, Angels Anonymous and for students in our own school. Caring Communities is a local organization that helps families in need by providing a variety of items throughout the year. They partner with us when students need items like backpacks, school supplies, winter clothing, and putting books into Kindergarten families' households. Angels Anonymous is a local organization that works together just before Christmas to purchase, wrap and deliver Christmas gifts to children and youth in our community. Our school has an ottoman that stores mittens, toques and some gently used jackets and ski pants for students when they come to school without them.

This Kindness Movement caught on quickly and students from every grade began bringing mittens and toques to school. What started as one tree became three trees in the library!

When all of the items were collected, even more learning began and the Kindergarten students counted the items, created patterns using the mitten pairs, and sorted them. Every aspect of what was happening was community minded, educational and truly brought kindness and connection to our school community with our local community.

Just after the "Warming Up Winter With Kindness" campaign came to a close we began a school-wide initiative to support our local foodbank. We worked with our School Community Council (SCC) to create the SCC Food Bank Classroom Challenge, and wow, the idea of a competition between classrooms really lit a fire of giving! We paired grade alike classrooms against each other and, even when one class moved to online learning, the group still worked

hard to participate and compete with the other classroom. When the challenge was over we had approximately 1000 food items to donate to our local foodbank. Incredible!

We then partnered with Celebration Ford to move all of the food from our school to the Moosomin Thriftstore & Foodbank. This was no easy feat! We had some amazing Grade 5 volunteers that rose to the occasion and helped to load the Celebration Ford van twice.

The SCC then provided popcorn to the winning classrooms, or so the students thought! In the end the whole school got popcorn because we wanted everyone to learn that “We all win when we give!”

In January, in conjunction with our One School, One Book Family Engagement event, our students participated in the spirit of being involved in our Saskatchewan Community by raising funds through a lemonade sale for Telemiracle to connect with the book The Lemonade War. The students were so proud that they raised \$780 towards Telemiracle!