

NEIGHBOURS OF

Fairmont & Coulee Creek

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An exclusive community magazine serving the residents of Fairmont, Coulee Creek, Prairie Arbor and Sandstone



Walking beside
the youth
of our future!

 Best Version Media 

Cover photo by Marcus Etches - Oxford Photography



Quality education and mentoring is a joint effort by the caring and dedicated team of leaders at OLA

Walking beside *the youth* of our future!

BY KELLY BARRETT | PHOTOS BY MARCUS ETCHES – OXFORD PHOTOGRAPHY

Meghan Calder is an educator who genuinely loves her profession. As the principal of Our Lady of the Assumption School, it is a role she cherishes with the many rewards and challenges that come along with the significant responsibility of working with and shaping our youth effectively. She is quick to mention that she is only one part of an amazing team and feels fortunate to work alongside associate principal Mathew

New, whom she describes as being an amazing colleague and partner as well as the other dedicated leaders who teach at the school. "It is definitely a combined effort," she expressed thoughtfully.

A teacher since 2002, Meghan herself attended school here when it was the Lethbridge Catholic school Division. "This is my first year as a school Principal and my first year working at Our Lady of the Assumption School. I have



The students enjoy the diverse and interesting curriculum that makes learning fun!

taught every grade from K-12 in several schools and communities across Southern Alberta. I have taught and also taken on administration roles in various schools within the Holy Spirit School Division since 2005."

It is a passion she comes by quite naturally and growing up surrounded by so many educators in the family – it is not surprising that Meghan also chose this noble path!

"My mom is a retired teacher, my dad had an education degree, my sister is a teacher, my grandparents (on my dad's side) were a principal and teacher and I have

numerous aunts, uncles and cousins who are teachers as well," explains Meghan. "This dedication to learning was a huge part of my upbringing. My mom encouraged us to be the best we could be at whatever we tried. She encouraged us to take part in many activities and achieve the absolute best we could. Later I chose to give back through coaching, choreography, church ministries, really anything I could help out with."

Many of you have children who attend the school, which serves students from Pre-Kindergarten (ages 3



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“When the relationships we form help our students become their best selves, this is true success.”



The students enjoy a variety of physical activities and love to give back to the community with events such as their 'Jump Rope for Heart' event. Over 35 years, the school has raised over \$285 000 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

and 4) through grade 6 and you can rest assured they are in good hands with the dedicated faculty of this small, community school tucked into a lovely residential area, yet still situated close to many amenities in the city and only a block from the local parish. Meghan is proud of the school. “Our families are dedicated and diverse, showing great support for our school and our staff is committed to student learning and success while fostering an open, welcoming, inclusive environment.”

Indeed, the school offers a diverse curriculum with an interesting and unique variety of programs and classes. Meghan shares some of the initiatives at the school.

“We are an academically successful school with strong literacy and numeracy at our core. Currently, we are embarking on a STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and math) focus this year, partnering with Destination Exploration at the U of L to provide monthly STEM days. Additionally, we provide all the regular activities of other elementary schools (during non-COVID times) like volleyball, basketball, running club.

The school follows a faith-based philosophy and the education at Our Lady of the Assumption School goes above and beyond the usual core subjects to include teaching ethical values and honourable attitudes among its young students.

“Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the patron saint of our school,” explained Meghan. “We follow her example in our daily activities. Each month we challenge our students to act Like Mary. We feature their kindness and empathy at our monthly assemblies, recognizing the good work of all our students regularly.”

Built in 1956, the school is home to roughly 220 students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 6 with approximately thirty staff members. The children’s daily needs are a high priority and are carefully planned to offer a seamless and structured day for the pupils. Bus transportation is provided and many of the children stay for lunch which provides a relaxing and enjoyable time to rejuvenate for the afternoon with choir and intramural activities available. Our Lady of the Assumption learning community is dedicated to providing a strong academic and cocurricular program in a Christ-centred learning environment. The school’s mission statement sends a clear message of the importance of combining a strong curriculum perfectly infused with faith-based values. “Our mission is to educate each student spiritually, academically, socially, and physically while respecting the needs and uniqueness of each individual. We do this in partnership with the home, parish and community. Most important for our staff is to provide a safe and caring

environment for all the children enrolled.” Special activities make this school unique. “Our school has some long-standing traditions,” Meghan commented. “We are one of the only schools in Alberta that have continually participated in ‘Jump Rope for Heart’ for over 35 years, having raised over \$285 000 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Our staff does an amazing job stepping up to lead community-oriented activities for the benefit of our students, families, and the greater community.”

Rising to new challenges is also encouraged. “Students at OLA have had excellent participation in our school-wide science fair, with several students moving onto the regional science fair where they have had success with their entries.”

Principal Meghan Calder and the faculty are not the only ones who speak of their school with pride – the children are just as enthusiastic to be a part of such an amazing learning opportunity. Grade 5 student, Winnifred Walter-Enudi explains, “OLA has a ‘creative flow’ — it is very friendly. You can’t walk past someone in the hall without saying ‘hi’ to someone!”



Creativity and imagination are encouraged through arts & crafts programs

work with students, but also with staff and community to set a vision and strive to achieve that vision. When the relationships we form help our students become their best selves, this is true success.” I couldn’t agree more...

Taj Grover is a grade 4 student and agrees. “The teachers are nice and do fun stuff. The school does fun stuff too!”

What better affirmation than those from the students themselves, together with Meghan, who sums it up perfectly.

“I LOVE my job and I LOVE Holy Spirit Schools. The best thing about my job is making connections with students, staff, families and community organizations. I love helping others strive for their full potential.

As a principal, I get to

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