

# SUCCESS STORY

## Florence MacDougall Community School



Florence MacDougall Community School is a K - 3 school in High Level, Alberta. Over the past three years, it has been working hard to create a positive social environment through physical activity. Many initiatives have been brought to the forefront of the school community by a dedicated team of leaders, including Principal Kevin Crosby, Phys. Ed teacher Ben Geisbreight, Teaching Assistant Heather Jukes, Special Education Coordinator Michelle Gilbert and parents Trudy King and Tracey Schempp.

Florence MacDougall has been an Ever Active School for the past three years, and it has established a number of great programs. Among them is the fruit exchange program. Students are able to exchange any unhealthy food in their lunch for a healthier option. The school has also started a successful walking club that takes place

three days a week under the direction of Teaching Assistant Donalda Testawich. Each day is devoted to one grade from 1 - 3. The community is also very proud of the school's social conflict resolution group which is made up of 35 Grade 3 students who get the opportunity to work in teams of four to help on the kindergarten and Grade 1 playgrounds. It gives students a chance to take on a leadership role within the school and become more involved.

More recently, the school has introduced brand new initiatives such as yoga with parent leader Cassi Hutchinson twice a week for the Grade 1 and 2 students. Teacher volunteers spend extra time supervising after school open gym time twice a week, where the students play a variety of different sports or have free gym time. Activity breaks have been implemented with morning announcements and during assemblies. The school even has student-assisted breakfast drop off in the morning where a student group puts together a basket of fruit for each class and distributes baskets on Mondays for those students who don't have a healthy option to start their day.

These initiatives would not be possible without the support the school has received from staff willing to supervise and guide activities, parents who cook healthy lunches and contribute input and time. Thank you to community members who provide funding and support.

One of the biggest challenges that Florence MacDougall faced when building its healthy, active school community was finding a committed group willing to invest the time to get the initiative going. Once a dedicated committee was established, the process took off! Principal Kevin Crosby's best advice for other schools wanting to create a healthy active school community is to get students, staff and parents involved. He found it especially effective to run focus groups with the students to get feedback and input as well as have some concrete information to share with the community to show the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Florence MacDougall Community School hopes to build on what it has already created. The parental support has committed to provide healthy hot lunches twice a month and the school can't wait to see its recently-added programs grow.

This success story demonstrates that age has no limitation in the pursuit of building a healthy active school community. Great job, Florence MacDougall and congratulations for creating a healthy school community!

For more information, contact Kevin Crosby at [kevinc@fvsd.ab.ca](mailto:kevinc@fvsd.ab.ca).



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