

SUCCESS STORY

St. Anne Elementary School

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Fort McMurray Catholic School, St. Anne Elementary, has been working with Ever Active Schools since 2011 on comprehensive school health and one of the main priority areas of the school is healthy eating. St. Anne has also been an Alberta Project Promoting active Living and healthy Eating (APPLE) school for the past three years. The main goal of an APPLE school is to transform the surroundings into a healthy school community. The four main purposes of an APPLE school are to improve healthy living habits, to increase knowledge about healthy living for parents, students, teachers and the school community, to apply and sustain comprehensive school health in school communities and to sustain capacity for healthy environments in school communities. St. Anne has implemented a breakfast program that goes hand-in-hand with all the goals and expectations of an APPLE school.

Children are always taught that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and St. Anne has made a tremendous effort to ensure their students have access to 'grab and go' type foods each morning before they make their way to class for a full day of learning! The breakfast program was initiated by parents with Jodi Collins as the lead organizer and is still now 100% run by parent volunteers but completely supported by the school. It is so important to have both the parents and teachers, as well as other staff, to support the same ideas of healthy living and St. Anne has done so beautifully. Implementing healthy habits at a young age promotes healthy living throughout their life. Parental involvement makes it so much better for those children to succeed and truly learn about healthy living if it is implemented in their home.

The breakfast program started in March 2013 and is still continuing to this day. It was originally initiated because some parents found there were issues with getting their children to eat in the morning. They were either so rushed to get out of the house, or if students took the bus they had to eat a lot earlier and they ended up being hungry sooner during the morning. The program runs every morning with four parent volunteers who hand out fresh apples, "choose most often" granola bars, cheese strings and parents also take turns making 400 baby muffins for the students which are again from the "choose most often" recipes. The parents completely do it on their own, which is why the school has been looking for more funding. The money from the hot lunches at St. Anne is what pays for the cheese strings and granola bars and the rest is from parent council. The best thing about the healthy active school community is that there is a noticeable difference in the students. Not only are they healthier but happier as well!

If you would like more information on the Breakfast Program, please contact Diane Zielke at: dz1099@fmcsd.ab.ca



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