

Rural Indigenous Charter School Celebrates New Facility

On May 6th, 2009 with children, families, Elders, guests and staff totaling over 100 in attendance, Mother Earth's Children's Charter School (MECCS) hosted their Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Open House out at Saint John's School of Alberta (SJSA), in what will soon become their new home.



The front entrance at Saint John's School of Alberta.

Located merely *30 minutes southwest* of Stony Plain; SJSA operated for 40 years on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River near Genesee. Beyond academics, Saint John's focus was on outdoor education, creating independence, life skills and leadership. Sharing similar educational values and desire for kids to succeed, the partnership between SJSA and MECCS has a natural synergy whereby benefitting both schools.

OUR PAST...

For the past six years MECCS has operated in a strip mall and two portables surrounding a cement tarmac. The limitations of MECCS current infrastructure has in many ways restricted the school from carrying out its vision of educating students 'on the land'. However, despite the external environment devoid of typical amenities one would find in a school facility, the **spirit** of MECCS has always remained strong. MECCS has greatly appreciated its six years in Wabamun and will dearly miss the close relationships that have evolved within the community. MECCS would like to sincerely extend thanks out to the local businesses and community members who have graciously supported MECCS during its time in the village.

OUR PRESENT...

MECCS' students, families and staff have longed to be in a school built infrastructure since its inception merely six years ago. When the opportunity presented itself for MECCS to consider SJSA as its new home, it was with endless energy and enthusiasm that the Principal, TJ Skalski and new Superintendent, Ed Wittchen with the support of MECCS Board of Directors, staff, students and families, that numerous avenues were sought to make this dream become a reality.

The successful AGM was followed by MECCS staff serving dinner to all in attendance, door prize draws, and tours of the facility. The energy from MECCS students, families, and guests rejuvenated life into the walls of SJSA and the laughter and playfulness from the gymnasium could be heard down the halls. Children and families alike were simply in awe with the facility and its surroundings in Mother Nature. The land is inhabited by a variety of wildlife and forestry, has many trails for exploration, and there is plenty of room to carry out the land based teachings.

OUR FUTURE...

Offering programming from **Kindergarten to Grade 9**, the key to MECCS success will be sustaining and growing student enrollment. Once students and families learn about MECCS and their philosophy and visit the new location, MECCS believes it will draw students from near and far. To learn more about MECCS please visit their website at www.meccs.org.

MECCS would like to thank our hard working staff, fun loving students and their families and the local community for their continued commitment to MECCS. They look forward to growing in their new location!