

# MECCS

*A newsletter for Mother Earth's Children's Charter School to share its successful traditional and innovative programming.*

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**MECCS is on Facebook!**



**Find driving directions and more at [www.meccs.org](http://www.meccs.org)**

## Celebrating With Our Students at MECCS

Welcome to 2017, and welcome to another year of receiving our school's newsletter.

We send this publication out to our students' families and to all of our neighbours, even those who do not have children or grandchildren attending MECCS at this time.

We do this because we want you to see who we are, what we do and how we are making a difference in the lives of all our students.

This newsletter is just one of the many ways we celebrate the achievements of our students. We welcome you to celebrate along with us. You are all welcome to drop in to the school at any time.



*Christmas joy at MECCS: Staff members Mark Ehnes and Janet House celebrate the season with students Liam Bluebird, Adam Bull, Hans Artsen, Amira Bird and Teanna Paskemin.*

## Highlights of Attending MECCS

As parents, grandparents and guardians, you want the same things we do for your children and grandchildren when it comes to their time at school. We want them to learn and succeed in their academic subjects. We want them to graduate from high school, and then compete and succeed in the work world as adults. We want them to experience as many things as they can while they are growing up. We want school to be fun for them. We want them to get up each morning

excited about going to school. We want to see them able to read at a high level, and to do math and science at a similar level.

Students like being at Mother Earth's Children's Charter School for many reasons. They like the small classes, the personal attention they get from staff, the hot breakfast and lunch program, the Cultural and Sports Academy programs, and all the other extra programs. Students also like to succeed academically, and they know that the results we are getting at MECCS give them an excellent chance to succeed in the future.

### TransAlta Santa Visit and Christmas Celebration

Recently we had a chance to experience another of the reasons our students love coming to this school: the annual TransAlta Christmas celebration. This very special tradition started three years ago following a conversation between MECCS principal Erin Danforth and TransAlta CEO Dawn Farrell.

The celebration starts each year in early November, when each of our students writes a letter to Santa. These letters are then forwarded to Santa's post office at TransAlta headquarters in Calgary.

The names of every student are put up on a Christmas tree in the office, and TransAlta staff are invited to pick a name off the tree and match it with the student's letter. TransAlta staff are then encouraged to buy the student a gift worth up to \$25, including a toque and mitts or gloves.

The fact is the TransAlta staff are beyond generous, and gifts are often worth much more than that.

They then wrap and label the gifts. On the day of the big celebration, they load up a TransAlta truck and head up the highway to MECCS.



*Jaclyn Edwards, Communications Coordinator for TransAlta, helps Santa distribute gifts to students.*



*Santa's helpers: TransAlta employees Amanda Sanregret, Jaclyn Edwards and Erna Mazur, along with local business services manager Larry Cooper, bring plenty of Christmas cheer to the students at MECCS.*

This year the gifts were delivered by TransAlta employees Ryan Schmidt (Manager of Mergers and Acquisitions), Amanda Sanregret (Senior Aboriginal Advisor), Jaclyn Edwards (Communications Coordinator) and Erna Mazur (Project Analyst), who took on the roles of Santa and the elves. They were also joined by Larry Cooper, a business services manager from the local area.

As you can see from our newsletter photos, students of all ages were excited to see what was going to happen. Santa's elves kicked things off with a Christmas carol, inviting everyone to join in. That was the signal for Santa to arrive and hand out the presents.

The students made us very proud as they waited patiently for all the gifts to be given out before anyone started opening.

**Many of the younger children couldn't wait to hug Santa and the elves, and to thank them for their presents.**

Once they started, the room exploded with joyful noise and happy comments as students saw what they were getting. They loved the mitts and toques, and very excitedly showed each other and school staff what they got from Santa. Many of the younger children couldn't wait to hug Santa and the elves, and to thank them for the presents.

*Top photo, from left to right: Liam Bluebird, Amira Bird, Xavier Buffalo and Teanna Paskemin watch and wait patiently as Darius Alexis approaches Santa.*

*Middle photo: Haylin Rain is all smiles as he receives a Christmas gift from Santa.*

*Bottom photo: Liam Bluebird (front), Ayasha Bull (back) and other MECCS students gleefully tear open their presents from the team at TransAlta.*





*Christmastime is here: Pretty stockings sewn by MECCS Family Liaison Janet House for each student, ready for the school staff to fill.*

This year we also set up a livestream feed on Facebook so that we could share this special annual event with everyone who worked behind the scenes in Calgary.

We want to thank Dawn Farrell and the entire TransAlta staff for making it all possible, and especially Ryan, Jaclyn, Amanda and Erna for spending the day with us.



*Above: Tristen Lafleche poses for a photo after receiving his present from Santa and one of Santa's elves, TransAlta Communications Coordinator Jaclyn Edwards.*



*Right: Taylor Tompkins smiles as she stands beside Santa holding onto her gifts delivered to the students at Mother Earth's Children's Charter School by the staff at TransAlta.*

*ALL PHOTOS BY ED WITTCHEN*