

Wellness priorities support the work of teachers -a celebration of World Teachers Day-

For Immediate Release, October 5, 2021: The Chinook's Edge priority for Staff Health & Wellness is bringing a direct benefit to Jasmine Gerski's teaching priorities.

Jasmine is teaching Grade 3 students at Ross Ford Elementary in Didsbury, where the entire school staff team has embraced the culture of wellness. She began her teaching career six years ago at C.P. Blakely Elementary School in Sylvan Lake, and has been part of the division's Staff Health & Wellness committee for the past three years. As a Wellness Champion, she collaborates with representatives from each school to share ideas for activities, resources and suggestions for future goals. Although all staff roles are represented on the committee, as a teacher Jasmine sees that the division's culture of wellness trickles directly to her students.

"There are very tangible priorities that support student wellness, including the division's Social Emotional Framework, and that direct guidance is so helpful," said Jasmine. "But there are many times throughout the day that I incorporate wellness into our classroom work and into our conversations. You can bring this into so many different lessons – if you're reading a story in LA you can ask 'how do you think that made the person feel?'"

"We hold specific conversations each Monday, called Weekend Sharing, when my students and I and our EA each talk a bit about what we did on the weekend. It helps show a person's interests and how they are taking care of themselves by being involved in different activities – and many times they discover things going on in the community that they might want to get involved in. It helps us connect on a different level and sets a tone of being included, respected and welcome in the classroom. All of it leads to strong relationships, which is the priority in my teaching and in Chinook's Edge."

Staff Health & Wellness Champions throughout the division play a key role in supporting wellbeing at their school. They promote and model health and wellness, engage staff, and support the implementation of strategies. They bring many things back to their schools that they hear about at Wellness Champion Meetings – from fun nutrition challenges to specific information on wellness and health spending accounts.

"I see a clear link between this work and my role in the classroom," said Jasmine. "For me, the best thing is what I've discovered about reflection and self-awareness – to know when I'm becoming overtired and not feeling one hundred percent, and to know there are people I can rely on to help. It's particularly important to be aware of these things during the challenges the pandemic has created. The saying that 'You can't pour from an empty bucket' is so true. By taking care of our own health and wellness, we can continue being the best teachers we can be for our students – including being positive role models."

World Teachers Day is held each October 5 to draw attention to the vital contribution teachers make each day.

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*What
Students
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MEDIA: For more information, please contact

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