

CrossRoads Church
Local Initiatives
2017 / 2018

Heavenly Father,
We know that you love and care for
the children in our community.
Show us how to bless and love them
well so you can fully accomplish what
you desire in and through them.
Amen.



At CrossRoads we care deeply for vulnerable youth and the single parent, both within our church body and in our local community. We feel called to offer spiritual and practical support to those who parent alone and to mentor youth.



In this booklet you will discover some areas that CrossRoads Church is involved in our Central Alberta community in practical ways that reach out to vulnerable youth and the single parent. We are grateful for the relationships that have been formed and continue to develop with agencies and schools and are excited to see where they will lead us corporately as a church body but also on a personal level as individuals, like you, get involved.

You will notice “*participate*” areas throughout the booklet - this highlights the many ways you can get involved that will make a difference in someone’s life, and our city. Some ways may seem small – but we cannot under estimate small beginnings and interactions. God excels at taking our small offerings and turning them into something big! Some of the ways to participate may seem huge to you, but there again is God, who is wanting to do huge things in us and through us if we make ourselves available.

We cannot separate physical and spiritual (word and deed).

Jesus did both.

Giving can have a relational aspect that we may want to pass over or turn away from because it stretches us and makes us feel uncomfortable. But this aspect of giving that involves our time and our “selves” is what can truly make a difference in the lives of others and ours too.

Serving is an opportunity to practice compassion. Whatever your interests, age or skills or amount of spare time there is something that you can give

Just because we can't fix a problem doesn't mean we can't change it, impact it, shape it, breathe new life into it, and offer hope.

that will be of benefit to someone else. May we be known as a people who respond with generosity and compassion to people and needs in our community.

I encourage you to join life in our city where it’s happening, and invest long term in this place we call home.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylon to seek the welfare of the city (Jeremiah 29:7). He encouraged them to accomplish this through marriage, building homes, planting gardens and living their lives faithfully in that culture.

Find an area of need, which speaks to your passion, and invest yourself there for the gospel and our city, seeking its welfare for the glory of Christ and His mission.

For more details or to become involved in any of these amazing opportunities, please contact me at LaurieW@CrossRoadsChurch.ca.

Because of Grace,
Laurie Whitaker
Director of Local Initiatives



Breakfast Programs

Here's the scoop...

Brains need breakfast.

It is said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It fuels our body and brain so that we can participate to our best capacity in whatever the day holds. Unfortunately there are many young people in our city who for many reasons do not have access to a good breakfast at home. Schools have been running breakfast programs for students for years but in recent history the need and usage of breakfast programs has grown significantly.

CrossRoads has committed to providing financial support to three schools in our community to enhance their breakfast programs. This support allows for the purchase of fresh fruit and fresh dairy which is an important part of a healthy start to the day.

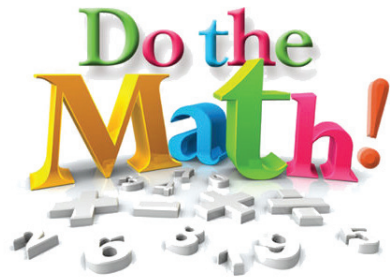


Kids who participate in a breakfast program miss less school and perform better after eating a good breakfast.

More days in school

+ increased ability to focus

= On track for successful grade completion



Reasons for kids using a breakfast program in Red Deer?

- No adult at home
- lack of food
- shift work
- change in family structure
- relocation
- seasonal changes (cold weather means higher living costs for parents)

“ *If I didn't have the breakfast program then I would eat my lunch at recess because I am hungry and then I would have no lunch.* **”** -Sarah

My mom has to go to work early so I come to have breakfast at school with my friends. -Liam

If I don't eat breakfast then I get a headache and I don't feel good. -Gina

We have really enjoyed serving at the Glendale school breakfast program. The kids are so friendly early in the morning and you get to be known pretty quick! There are things that we help with that just would not happen without extra hands. We are looking forward to helping out again this fall. -Keith and Dianne Buchholz



Backpack program

Here in Red Deer, there are occasions when school staff become aware of an urgent need of a student and/or family involving lack of food. In these situations a backpack of food is sent home with the student which includes easy to prepare food for a supper meal or enough to get them through a weekend.

Many teachers also keep snacks in their desks for students who disclose that they do not have a lunch that day or did not eat breakfast. This can happen for many reasons and teachers know that providing nutrition to a child makes a big difference in how the rest of that child's day will play out.



Participate

Bring non perishable food donations to ministry lane throughout the school year. Check out the “most needed” list each month.

Sign up as a donation delivery driver to a school.

Help prep, serve and clean up at a breakfast program. Giving of your time to a breakfast program on a frequency that works in your schedule offers a huge support to the staff of the school and gives you opportunity to meet and spend some time with a very grateful group of kids.

Literacy



lit·er·a·cy

noun - the ability to read and write.

Literacy has traditionally been thought of as reading and writing. Although these are essential components of literacy, today our understanding of literacy encompasses much more. Alberta Education defines literacy as the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living.

*Children need to **learn to read** in their younger years so they can **read to learn** from then on.*

From the moment a child is born, his or her literacy journey begins. Children's literacy abilities are nurtured through their families and communities. As children enter school there is a strong focus on the development of reading and writing skills. No longer just through books and blackboard they now use digital forms of learning. Children need to learn to read in younger years so that they can read to learn from then on.



As we become adults we read maps, advertisements, newspapers, recipes, manuals and websites. We write poems, songs, reports, blogs and emails. Literacy opens the door to the world!

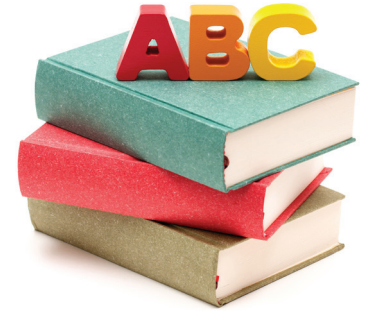
Strong literacy skills are closely linked to the probability of having a good job, decent earnings, and access to training opportunities and lower dependence on social assistance whereas weak literacy skills are linked to unemployment or if employed, jobs that pay less or that offer poor hours or working conditions.

Studies link higher literacy rates with increased levels of physical and mental health status. (Government of Alberta, 2009).

Third grade reading levels are one of the best predictors of high school graduation.

There are numerous schools in **Red Deer** that are looking for Reading Buddies to spend time with kids who need someone to coach them in reading. These students are vulnerable readers. WHY?

- **English is not the primary language in the home**
- **Parent or other adult is not available to read with a child**
- **No books in the home**
- **Teacher cannot spend one on one time with each student who needs extra support.**



Participate

Become a reading buddy. Do you enjoy reading? Spending time with a vulnerable reader, listening to them read, reading to them or reading together can make a huge difference. You can pass on your love of books to a young person and open up a world of possibilities to them.

Donate gently used books for children and youth in Ministry Lane. Schools will loan out book bags with age appropriate books for the summer or seasonal holidays so students can keep up on their reading skills.

Clothing



Central Alberta can get very chilly in the winter months and for children traveling back and forth to school and heading out for recess it is important to dress warmly. What fit a child last winter may be too small this year and this clothing expense can be out of reach for some families.



If you have gently used winter wear that no longer fits your child why not drop it off at the church and let another child be toasty warm when the cold weather arrives.

We are accepting clean, gently used winter gear, including coats and snow pants, boots, hats and mittens.

Other day-to-day clothing is being accepted as well and will be distributed at our "Winter warm up" events where students will be able to pick out items that they are in need of.



Are ice skates and helmets taking up space in your storage room? If your kids have outgrown their skates and helmets, they can be used at schools for their school skating program so that kids who do not own skates can participate. Just drop them into the clothing donation bin in Ministry Lane.

Winter Warm Up Event

For the schools that have told us that cold weather wear is needed for some of their students, we will be hosting an event where kids can pick out what they need to stay warm this winter. It will be an awesome day that will warm hearts as well as fingers and toes!



Participate

Donate your clean gently used clothing and winter wear for students to Ministry Lane.

Sign up to help with the Winter warm up event. Sorting, sizing and displaying will take many hands.

Mentoring



Big Brothers Big Sisters



Caring adults act as mentors when they interact in a positive, supportive and enriching capacity with children and youth. Mentoring gives children a positive role model who provides support, advice and friendship during the important developmental stages of childhood and adolescence.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters is looking for men, women and couples to make this important investment into the life of a child or youth in Central Alberta. Mentoring can take place in school or in the community. One hour a week is all it takes.

As of September 2017, there were **48 boys** and **12 girls** waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister.

The majority of schools in Red Deer are looking for in-school mentors. Each of these young people are waiting for a friend or role model.

Mentoring helps kids realize their potential and that benefits our whole community.

What if every child had the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, both as individuals and citizens?

By changing the course of young lives we can in turn be changing the course of our community's future.

Witnessing the transformation of a child into a confident, concerned and motivated young person is a remarkable thing. Ushering them into adulthood, seeing them grow into a successful, responsible member of their community and society at large is even more satisfying. Proudly, it's something the staff, volunteers and mentors of Big Brothers big Sisters bring about every day.

If a teen has one supportive mentor they can go to when they are in trouble, who is not a paid service provider, they are far more likely to avoid making harmful choices.

“ I have been a *big brother* now for three years and at the end of the first year my *little brother* asked if I would come back the next year. I said for sure! Each of the last two years he has asked if I would be his *brother* forever. There have been times his teacher has commented that she is so happy to see me on days when my *little brother* is not having a good day and has been waiting for me. We have shared many great times together. It's been GREAT!
-Jake P



Participate

Become a **big brother** or a **big sister** in school or in the community. Contact Janessa at janessam@youthhq.ca or 403.342.6500 - ext 115.

Hope Mission

**KIDS!
IN ACTION!** KIA



Hope Mission operates a fun and free Kids In Action afterschool program in four elementary schools and Youth In Action in four middle schools in Red Deer, Monday through Friday.

Kids who attend spend some time every session in physical activity, setting goals for themselves and training for a 5K run which is held in June. Each week the students who attend learn a bible story that tells of who God is and His love for them. They also have an opportunity to connect with peers and positive caring adults and enjoy a healthy snack.

Each school year four family dinners are served for the kids who attend KIA and YIA and their family members. One at Thanksgiving, two at Christmas and one at Easter.

As well, family members are invited to the 5K run and BBQ celebration that happens in June.

Participate

Be a running buddy and coach.

There is a need for older youth and adults to coach and encourage students in the training throughout the school year for their 5K run in June. At the run in June, all runners are matched with a coach who will run alongside the students, encourage and celebrate with them.

Become a Good Shepherd and help out at one of the KIA or YIA groups.

Serve dinner and visit with kids and parents at a family dinner.

Contact Brittany at reddeer@hopemission.com for more information on these opportunities.



hope MISSION

Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre

Providing compassionate support and education for individuals and families impacted by unexpected pregnancy and related issues. Now with offices in Red Deer, Olds, Sundre and Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.

By providing confidential, accurate information on the options of parenting, adoption and education on the risk and procedures of abortion in a non-judgmental environment at no cost, women can make a well-informed decision.

Other services offered by the Pregnancy Care Centre include:

- Grief support
- Post-abortion support (PARE)
- Pre-natal education and childbirth support
- Referrals for medical care and community resources
- Information on sexual health
- Male mentorship
- Keys to Young Parenting program
- 24/7 Dad program

The CAPCC Maternity Home is for pregnant and parenting teens and young women in Central Alberta.

The GOAL of the home is to provide a safe and stable environment, life and parenting skills, and healthy relationships. The EXPECTED IMPACT is transformation to a life of stability, independence, and improved health in all areas.



www.pregnancycare.ca

“ *It's wonderful to have someone to talk to without judgment. CAPCC has been a great help to me. My life is different today because now I realize how much help and support is out there for me. Before I came in I felt alone. -client*

The 24/7 Dad program has helped me become a better father and taught me helpful skills. -male client ”

Participate

Become a client advocate or male mentor, serve in the clothing boutique, help with mail-outs, set up for special events or serve at the Maternity Home. Contact Linda, Client Services Director at 403-343-1611 or client-services@pregnancycare.ca.

Love in the Laces

It's so much more than a pair of shoes!



Every year just before school starts we collect new back to school shoes for children and youth in our community. Back to school season can be expensive and for the women and children affected by Domestic Violence who Women's Outreach serves, we are pleased to offer new shoes in partnership with the Tools for School event. Other families access this program as well and come from all over Central Alberta. They may find themselves in a tough spot financially, facing unemployment, parenting alone, or be newly arrived from another country.



You can find out more about the Tools for School program and the other valuable services that Women's Outreach provides at their website: www.womensoutreach.ca

How does Love in the Laces work?

The experience starts with you asking God to place on your heart a child or children that you are to purchase shoes for. Is it a young boy? A junior high girl?

Go to the store and look for a pair of shoes for that young person. Purchase the shoes and write a note to the youth that will select these shoes. This is your opportunity to share a word of encouragement as the new school year starts up. Don't underestimate the impact that your words can have. Pray for that child throughout the school year as they come to mind.

Women's Outreach has opened their doors to us to run the "shoe room" and interact with the students when they come in to get their school supplies and shoes. Sign up for a shift and meet some of the children and make sure they get the shoes that they like and that fit properly.



“

Thank you so much for the shoes. To be honest I never thought that I would have a new shoes this summer. Thank you. -Nathaniel



A new pair of shoes can help a child feel confident as they walk through the school doors for a new school year. The child that feels ready and prepared comes into the classroom with a smile and the attitude of "ready, set, GO." -Elementary Teacher

Help a child put their best foot forward.



Participate

Purchase a pair of back to school shoes and bring them to the Love in the Laces display in August.

Write a personal note to the student who will be receiving the shoes you picked out for them. Let them know you are praying for them and help them get off to a great start in school.

Sign up to take a shift at Women's Outreach shoe room and share the experience of kids picking out their very own pair of shoes. No Parents Allowed! - Just some very excited kids!



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