



# Grand-Friends

*Creating connections between young and old*

There is some magic happening in Grindrod as kindergarten students are developing “grand-friends” with residents from Parkview Place in Enderby.

Teacher Lisa Scott, who along with Jessica Howard, the recreational therapy worker for Parkview Place in Enderby, put this intergenerational program together, which is enjoyed by both young and old. The children and grand-friends get together at the community hall in Grindrod to play games, talk and have refreshments!

“Last year the kindergarten/grade one class at Grindrod exchanged mail and visited the residents at Parkview Place. This year, we are excited to connect with some of the residents on a more regular basis.”

Scott explains the class walks to meet their “grand-friends” once a month at the community hall in the Grindrod Recreation Park. The program is play-based and ties in many aspects of the kindergarten curriculum including an outdoor learning program before and after our time with the grand-friends.



The program has only been running for a few months, however, Scott said the students are definitely enjoying the experience. After a recent session Scott said she asked students what they noticed about their grand-friends and the responses, as kids will be, were straight from the heart: “I liked playing with my grand-friends. They were nice and sweet” to “they looked pretty” to “they played with me and they were old” to “I liked playing with them.”.

On the bus back from Grindrod to Parkview Place, Howard asked the residents how they thought the visit went, and was told they enjoyed watching the children play, especially seeing their smiling faces and hearing their joyful laughter. When asked if they’d like to come and spend time with the children again it was “Yes” all around the bus, one resident added “well we better” and another chimed in with “absolutely”.

“We are so very thankful to Grindrod Elementary and Lisa Scott and her students for taking an interest in Parkview and intergenerational programming. Intergeneration program are very beneficial in a facility setting. The program creates a connection between our seniors and the children in the community in a safe play based environment. Not only does it provide social interaction for our seniors but it also improves quality of life for the resident living at Parkview,” adds Howard.

Why are they doing this? Scott explains research shows that intergenerational connections can help both older and younger people feel cared for and valued. It also shows that intergenerational programs increase self-esteem and feelings of well-being for older and younger participants. Friendships between older and younger people help make communities stronger.

Scott expresses thanks to the Grindrod Recreation Association for providing, at a very reasonable fee, a fantastic space in which to meet. “We are also grateful that Parkview Place is able to use their recreation budget to pay for this space.