

Season's Greetings 2013

from the Black Family!



Dear friends and relatives:

2013 has been very kind to us. We have enjoyed a wonderful year.

In the summer, Em and I enjoyed three camping adventures: a paddle-in trip by kayak, on the Grand Lake, Algonquin Park, a paddle-in trip by canoe on Rain Lake, Algonquin, and a two week campground-camping stay on the north shore of Lake Superior. We had friends along on all three trips. We also spent a few days visiting with my nephews and at my aunt and uncle's cottage.

Emily is now a teenager in Grade 8, at Rama Central P.S. (the school where I teach). She has braces, is in her eighth year of dance (studying tap and jazz), played on the school basketball team this fall and has started babysitting.

I am teaching Grade 4/5 for the first time (which I LOVE) and, in September, was invited to join the Board of Directors at Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, after completing several months of long-distance and on-site volunteer work for them.



Emily with friends Marilyn and Louise (& dogs), on Rain Lake, Algonquin Park



Emily and her cousins on a hike at the Kortright Centre



Em, heading out for a paddle with friends Lorelei, Deb and Kerri, on Grand Lake, Algonquin Park



Dave Kennedy, me and Deb Halbot (colleagues at Rama Central P.S.), Lake Superior

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MY MANY "HATS" AT ASPEN VALLEY

Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, in Rosseau, is the oldest and largest wildlife rehabilitation facility in Ontario. Their mandate is to rescue, rehabilitate and release back into the wild orphaned, injured and ill native mammals. They also provide a permanent home to about two dozen non-releasable animals, and educate the public about how to avoid human-wildlife conflicts.

As mentioned above, I am now serving as a board member at Aspen Valley. The board and staff have given me a huge amount of freedom to create new forms of outreach for the sanctuary, including on-site and web-based educational resources for children and teachers, and a monthly newsletter that is distributed to supporters via e-mail. I am also involved in website maintenance, co-authoring articles about Aspen Valley for the local paper and creating posts for the sanctuary's Facebook page.

Working with Aspen Valley feels like a perfect fit, because it allows me to mesh my background in education and my computer skills with my love of animals, in fun and creative ways. I am so grateful to be part of this wonderful organization!

www.aspenvalley.ca

GR. 4/5 CURRICULUM-BASED COMMUNITY SERVICE

One of the greatest compliments I received last school year came from one of my Grade 5 girls. She said she loved the fact that our schoolwork was "for something." This year's class is also learning via outreach projects. Here are two examples:



Math, Science, Oral Language: Students ran a school-wide food drive for two wildlife rehabilitation centres. They collect over 200 lbs. of pine cones (shown), acorns and maple keys, and estimated by volume and weight how many items they collected, and how long they would feed orphaned baby animals.



Character Education, Visual Arts: Students made Christmas ornaments for a gravely ill student at a neighbouring school.

This fall, we also provided moral support to an animal welfare organization, created study guides for news articles about animals at Aspen Valley, and wrote friendly letters to children in developing nations.



Me, at our class' retirement party for the Toronto Zoo elephants

