

A small School with a Huge Heart

Jenn Meeker- Mount Forest is a small rural town in northern Wellington County. We are the northern most school in the board. It's a very rural population. If you drive around any of the side roads right now or even in downtown Mount Forest you'll see a Mennonite, clearly a Mennonite population here, of horse and buggy and we have a couple students here who are of Mennonite background. So it's a very big mix of large farming, small in town. Our socio economic base is pretty low and students come to us with a lot of needs, not having left the community to do a lot of things because money is an object that gets in their way of doing lots of learning, getting involved in extracurriculars. Lots of our students have part time jobs that really are putting in more; you know, almost full time hours to help the family. We try to give our students here as many opportunities to do the learning deeper and be outside of the school a lot. We send lots of trips to Toronto. It costs us a lot of money to do that, but sometimes that's the student's only way to get there. It's a really close-knit community. We've had, well we ask for support from the community we get it. We have a program here called Warm Winter Wishes that happens just before Christmas. It's actually a non-profit that's run by the students in our BOH 4U class and the students are, act as a non-profit, raising money for families in our community. This year they raised 35,000 dollars. That came from students and the local community and all that money went straight back into 47 different families to give them a Christmas. And they've been doing that for multiple years now. It's a real feel good place to be. I've always described, since the moment I've arrived at this school and my first, after my first semester here. I could describe the school as a small school with an absolutely huge heart and that's what I tell the students every day when we're here.