



SPRING 2021 Rossbrook House Circle



"No child who does not want to be alone, should ever have to be" -Sister Geraldine MacNamara

Rossbrook House is 45!

They say *time flies when you're having fun*. Rossbrook House has seen its share of fun for sure. Since 1976, the doors have remained open for children and youth. What started as a safe place for teens has evolved over the years to include programming for children, young moms, and students.

"I think in some ways, right from the beginning, Rossbrook House was trying to expand kids' horizons. Part of that was just to get kids outside of the regular environment that they'd been in," Executive Director Phil Chiappetta said.

Today, Rossbrook House employs community youth, giving many their first jobs. There are three alternative school programs, camp outings, and scholarship opportunities.

Many former participants recently shared their memories:

"Rossbrook House has been in my life since 1980 and will always be in my heart. I attended two of their schools and I know I had the best teachers ever! I have met so many people and am still friends with them." ~Shirley

"My memories are driving in the van almost every day and either going to McDonald's or 7-11. Then beating the other kids in pool." ~Georgina

"I remember about 40 years ago we loaded up the big red van and went for drives and ice cream. In summer we would go often go to Grand Beach for the day... I have many fond memories!" ~Marvin

"Rossbrook is important to me. I definitely had a lot of great friendships. Friendships that were more like family." ~Rachel



KEEPING DOORS OPEN 24 HOURS

Since the COVID-19 Pandemic in March of 2020, Rossbrook House has been a port in the storm- a place to be fed, safe and warm. We're providing two meals a day as well as take-away meals for those who are hungry.

"During this time Rossbrook House has also become a refuge for homeless youth and adults as they struggle with the consequences of the pandemic and the bitter cold of Winnipeg weather," Phil Chiappetta said.

During one bitterly cold February weekend, emergency shelter was needed more than ever. Various shelters and emergency warming sites, including Rossbrook House, coordinated together to ensure that everyone had a place to stay warm.

Keeping our doors open 365 days of the year has been **what we do** – since 1976. Keeping the doors open 24 hours, every single day is not the regular routine but it's what has been happening for several months.

We have computer stations set up for children and youth to watch movies, play games and do their school work and distance learning. The

Learning Always program is running twice a week giving participants help with their schoolwork. We have crafts and other activities after-school and on weekends. The kitchen is busy providing delicious meals, 7 days a week; brunch and an early supper.

We're grateful to our supporters, like you, who have helped us to remain open every day.

You can read more memories here: rossbrookhouse.ca/moreinfo/



"I dance because it's part of my culture. I love to dance. It gives me a chance to express myself," Drayton, 11 years old, said. "Dancing represents me and my family," he said. "I like getting ready for the Pow Wow with my friends at Rossbrook."

The Rossbrook House Pow Wow will not be happening this spring. This tradition has been a huge part of Rossbrook House for **almost 40 years**. Many participants and former students have fond memories of the Rossbrook House Pow Wow. We hope to make more memories again soon!

Have a special occasion coming up? Consider asking people to donate to Rossbrook House Foundation in lieu of a gift.

There are many ways to do this, including:

- Having people indicate their gift to Rossbrook House Foundation is in your honour.
- The easiest way to do this is to visit rossbrookhouse.ca, click Donate and under "Dedicate Your Donation" select "In honour of" and type in your name.
- Setting up your own fundraiser, both CanadaHelps and Facebook are set up to help you do this.

Need to get a gift for someone?

Consider making a donation, in their honour, to Rossbrook House Foundation.

The easiest way to do this is to visit rossbrookhouse.ca, click Donate and under "Dedicate Your Donation" select "In honour of".

Want a shared experience with friends but public health restrictions are holding you back?

Organize a virtual event. Have fun and raise funds at the same time. Some organizations, like Yaymaker, have pivoted to provide a safe way to hold a party.

What do all of these have in common? They provide financial support for Rossbrook House Foundation and help build awareness in the community about Rossbrook House and our mission.

Need someone to bounce ideas off of? Have questions?

Contact Stephanie at 204.949.4092 or slambert@rossbrookhouse.ca.



What Rossbrook House Means to Val



Eagles' Circle school changed my perspective on Indigenous Peoples. At one time, I was ashamed of who I was because of the bullying I went through. Eagles' Circle teachers helped me realize that I can be proud of my heritage through cultural events, Indigenous oriented plays, Pow Wow, writing and learning how to bead.

I became proud of being Indigenous.

I was amazed the first time I walked through the doors, at 12 years old. It was late at night and I was welcomed into a safe environment. I saw teenagers having fun playing pool, playing cards, listening to music and hanging out.

Rossbrook House is important to the community because it teaches youth that they can make positive choices that will help them grow into responsible adults. Everyone is welcome.

Rossbrook House gives a person a sense of belonging and that's important to me. I didn't feel that I fit in at other places. Here, I was included, and my voice mattered.

Valerie Henderson,
Senior Staff/Supervisor

You can read more stories like Val's on our website:
rossbrookhouse.ca/#rbh-stories



THANK YOU

A generous group, who wish to remain anonymous, have been **providing hampers** to families at Rossbrook House. Working together with Rossbrook staff member Sheila Chippastance, each family has been receiving food, cleaning and laundry items specific to their needs. Sheila reaches out to the families connected to Rossbrook House. The hampers are then tailored to the needs of each family unit to include certain items like diapers. The recipients are very grateful and so are we!

Rossbrook House has received a **generous donation** from the Millican family, long-time Rossbrook House supporters, of several Onetab tablets. Each tablet is pre-loaded with applications that help students improve their math and literacy skills and doesn't require internet access. The Onetab tablets will be used by the Learning Always and Energy Plus participants.

The Onetab device is part of a program developed by Onebillion, a non-profit organization based in the United Kingdom. Its mission is to use the inexpensive devices to improve education for children around the world.

