

# Elementary school integrates leadership

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Joseph Welsh Elementary is opening its doors to show others how to successfully inspire students to become strong leaders.

The Red Deer Public school has integrated the leadership values highlighted in the bestselling book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* into its operation and curriculums over the past few years.

Why educators and parents should do something similar at their schools will be the focus at the school's Leadership Day on Friday.

"They want to empower people to be good problem solvers and basically to make a difference in their own life and the lives of others," principal Mike Fritz said.

"Whatever we do at our school, we can relate it to these timeless principles on how to treat each other with respect."

The 165 people from across Alberta who registered for the event will have the opportunity to tour the school to see what students have learned by gaining skills such as listening to others, teamwork and volunteering.

For example, Grade 5 student Tayler Wells said her favourite habit is First Things First because it reminds

her to work hard first and foremost.

Keynote speaker Muriel Summers, principal of A.B. Combs Elementary in Raleigh, N.C., will talk about how she transformed her school by implementing a leadership focus.

Leadership Day is just one of three events the school scheduled in the span of eight days. It held its first ever Student Leadership Summit on Jan. 20.

"When they leave Grade 5, we'd like to think they will go to middle school, they will get involved and they will already believe that they can make a difference and their voice counts," Fritz said.

Students had the opportunity to do everything from playing music and sports to helping sort food at the Red Deer Food Bank.

The school will also mark its 50th anniversary on Thursday with a celebration open to the public.

Joseph Welsh's grandsons, Terry and David Welsh, will be in attendance. One of Welsh's former Grade 8 students, a woman now approaching 90, will also be at the event.

The school choir will perform and a time capsule that was sealed in 1986 will be opened.

The celebration runs from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. but Fritz asks guests show up by 10 a.m.

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