

Tiny teacher shares life's lessons with River Valley students



Shaylyn Johnson (left, Grade 2 teacher at River Valley School in Sundre) and Joleen Fluet (right, Roots of Empathy instructor) with baby Charlie and her mom Shelby (centre).

“It is so great to have this research-based program in our classroom, to learn about empathy through observations of baby Charlie,” said Shaylyn. “This will help students understand cues and emotions about how others are feeling in our classroom and beyond. We have visited with baby Charlie a few times, and the students are very respectful and so calm that she fell asleep at one point! They are very excited to see her growth over the year, to see the changes as she develops.

“The program asks students how the baby is feeling. If she’s feeling mad, how do they know that? What could they do to make her happy? Why might she be mad, for example, for different emotions the baby has. This will translate to understanding their peers. It’s all very positive.”

[Roots of Empathy](#) has reached over one million children around the world since 2000, with their school-based programs. Their research shows the impact of the program: reduces aggression, increases sharing, caring and inclusion, and promotes resilience, wellbeing, and positive mental health. The program is delivered to elementary-aged children, who are coached to recognize and connect with the vulnerability and humanity of a baby and parent who visit their classroom throughout the year, along with a trained Roots of Empathy instructor using a specialized curriculum. Emotional literacy develops as children begin to identify and label the baby’s feelings, reflect on and understand their own feelings, then bridge to understand the feelings of others.

This week’s Staff Health & Wellness profile is: [Melanie Condratow](#), C.P. Blakely School