

# Seniors pen pal project



**T**he Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism has been doing some great things in the Rural Saskatchewan Communities. In November they teamed up with the Bulyea Elementary school and started a Senior and Child pen pal program. School Principal Keith Hassman and Grade 4, 5 & 6 teacher Kaylene Bawden were excited to be on board. The job was now to find 24 seniors in our community.



Michel Sorensen

"I spent an evening calling Seniors in my community of Bulyea to see if they were interested in taking part in this program," said Michel Sorensen, Program Coordinator with the Sask. Seniors Mechanism. "There was lots of excitement from the seniors as I explained the process. Soon I had enough seniors and I began pairing them up with the kids."

Around the 20th of November the kids sent the first letter out to their pal, and then the seniors responded. Since then letters have been going back and forth repeatedly. They are enjoying the program and seem to be building a connection.

"Senior isolation is a huge problem in today's society, many of our seniors live alone and don't have a lot of support," Sorensen explained. "SSM was happy to be organizing this program and have heard so many positives comments."

"On March 10th we will be gathering at the Bulyea School to have an Inter-Generational Potluck. The Seniors and Students will finally get to meet face to face and enjoy a meal together. We are asking each student to send a casserole for a potluck. Some of the Seniors have offered to supply some baking," Sorensen added. "We will be having a short program talking about the program and getting some input. Also there will be some students performing some talents, and we plan to do some group singing of old traditional songs. Some many wonderful things have come out of this program. My daughter is a student and is so excited to get a letter in the mail. The students had to hand-write the letter, not type or email. The Seniors also have enjoyed this and they love to hear stories and share their own."

The project is also part of the Age Friendly Communities initiative, of which Strasbourg is a member.