



Greetings from R.F. Staples Alumni of 1979,

The holiday season is upon us, and we'd like to wish each of you health and happiness and we hope you will be able to celebrate the season with family and friends. We are a group of five past R. F. Staples students, now living in various cities in Canada and the U.S.A who have gathered together to spearhead a project that will positively impact the youth of Westlock and District for years to come. It's an innovative, exciting, and NEEDED initiative called the **Student Wellness Project. (Moving Mental Health into the 21st Century).**

What is it?

The **Student Wellness Project**, is a redesign and refurbishment of the hub of mental health support at R. F. Staples school (Student Services). The current space has been so highly used, that the furniture and carpeting are well beyond their functional lifespan. The project will include replacement of flooring, paint, and the provision of commercial grade couches, chairs, and tables equipped with data ports for use with electronic devices. We're expecting a completion date of March 30, 2020 for the first of the two rooms. The second space is expected to be completed over the summer of 2020. Our plan is to incorporate outdoor elements such as trees and plants and bring them indoors to help improve the psychological state of students over those long snowy months and dreary days of fall, winter and early spring. The plan is to bring the calmness of nature- indoors. This room will be used for a shared workspace for students, a socialization space, a safe calming space to eat, work or study in.

Why help?

20-25% of our population will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime, with the onset of the majority of these illnesses occurring in childhood and adolescence. But, early and adequate intervention to address these issues can shift the trajectory. The need for mental health services within the school and community has grown exponentially, and the school must adapt and evolve to adequately serve those ever increasing numbers. Unfortunately, in tough economic times, there is simply not provincial funding in education for a project of this nature. We recognize this reality, which is why we are reaching out to you, our alumni, for support.



Who will be using it?

The R. F. Staples Counseling Staff will continue to be used to provide support to students and their families including vocational and post-secondary/trades guidance, financial assistance, but importantly more intensive mental health interventions. The school counsellors report they spend 65% of their time on an average of 20 students per day (~**100** per week-some repeats - up to **400** students a month). This does not include the students they informally touch base with during transitional periods throughout the day. Presently, the school has less than 700 students total in it.

This space will be available for all junior and senior high students of the school who need a quiet space to write exams or simply decompress, desensitize and self-regulate. A calming space to help to refocus. It also will continue to be used with staff from agencies such as Alberta Mental Health, Child and Family Services, Aboriginal Affairs, Family and Community Support Services, RCMP, and Addictions.

Who Else is Contributing?

Using donated material from various businesses in Westlock, and as a part of their curriculum, the R. F. Staples carpentry class will be building some of the furnishings: what an opportunity to gain practical experience and build community pride! Laval Malish- Means (class of 1979), a registered professional architect, has donated the architectural plans. As well, we are reaching out to the many businesses and service clubs in Westlock and surrounding areas who so generously support worthy initiatives in our community, to see if they can assist in making this important project a reality.

How can YOU help?

- Make a donation in your name, or as a Christmas gift for someone on your Christmas list.
- Challenge your co-workers/ staff to donate as a group
- Challenge another business to match your donation
- Make a donation in remembrance of another alumnus, or a family member or friend.

With your support we can make this project a reality within this school year!

Thank-you!

Kathy Keiser (nee Plain), Laval Means (nee Malish), Holly Ohri (nee Gambell),
Carol Schlacter (nee- Friede), Donnell Wingrove

WESTLOCK STUDENT SERVICES MODERNIZATION PROJECT



Thank you in advance for your support. **Your ONE TIME donation** is greatly appreciated and will make a big difference to the students of R. F. Staples School.

Cheques should be made payable to;

R.F. Staples Secondary School
10015 104 Street
Westlock, AB
T7P 1T8

Attention: Carol Schlachter

Please reference: **Student Wellness Project** on your cheque.

Pembina Hills will **accept e-transfers** if they are sent to our accountant's email address. The address is lorraine.allison@pembinahills.ca. Please include the phrase **student wellness project** when sending the e-transfer.

PLEASE NOTE: **Tax receipts** will be provided for all donations over \$25.00