***Canyon-Lister Elementary: Off the Grid Challenge!***

***April 2019***

On April 8th, a group of 19 grades 5-7 *Be the Change* students attended an *Off the Grid Day* at Canyon-Lister Elementary School.

Off the Grid is an awareness day challenging students to go without power for 12 hours to simulate what it may feel like after a disaster. It is a challenge activity taken on by Canadian schools and clubs to raise funds to ensure no family goes without shelter. Money raised by completing this challenge will make a difference to families in crisis. Tents, Shelter Kits, cooking equipment, solar lights, hammers, ropes and water purification units are just some of the items provided to families in need. <https://www.shelterboxcanada.org/offthegrid/>

When disasters strike and power lines go down, families are left vulnerable, wretched away from comfort, light and electricity. Off the Grid challenges students to go without power for 12 hours to ‘experience’ some of the challenges facing real disaster survivors.

Canyon-Lister Elementary School’s *Be the Change* students spent their time building birdhouses, bat houses, painting a fish mural, painting positive rock messages to gift to those that might need a bit of a lift, creating an art piece about plastic pollution awareness for the upcoming Focus on Youth event, picking up litter around the school, roasting hot dogs (kept in a cooler) and we all had a wonderful, meaningful day.

We talked about how our day created a sense of community, talking, building and playing together. We identified our many ‘cheats’ including running water, a heated building with groceries at the ready but even still, we experienced the need for natural light without electricity, the need for fire to cook something warm to eat and a sense of teamwork. It was an educational day.

It was also a day of incredible generosity: volunteers that facilitated the day, community members, family and friends that donated funds to a worthy cause and students willing to take on the challenge! A community member, hearing of our venture, brought us yummy bakery treats. We are so very fortunate to live in such a supportive, generous community. Our Off the Grid challenge raised $1431. All proceeds will be sent to the Off the Grid, Shelter Box program and will purchase one entire Shelter Box costing $1200. Thank you from all of the Canyon Lister Elementary Staff and Be the Change students! Thank you!

*By Laurel Ewashen, Canyon-Lister Elementary Aboriginal Youth and Family Worker and Be the Change group facilitator.*

*Note- 3 photos below*

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