

SERVING CCS WITH HEART AND HAND

CCS COMMUNITY!

by Karen Dees, Alumni Liaison

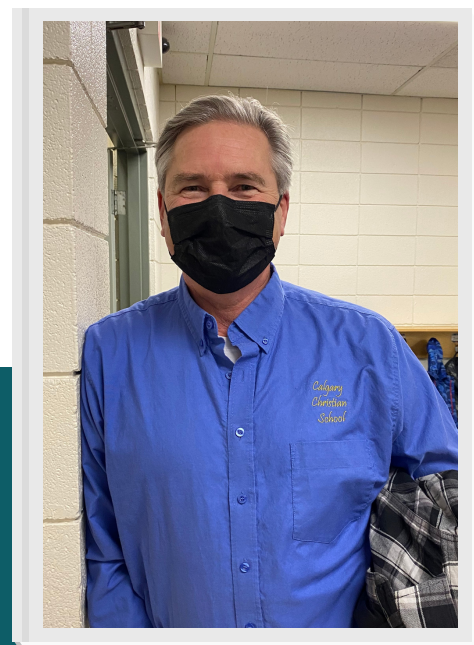
"It's a rewarding place to work - so much more than a job. It's a mission; I get to participate in Kingdom work. To me, it's the fulfillment of Jesus' words, 'let the little children come to me.'" You might be certain these words came from the mouth of one of our teachers, an EA, or maybe a principal. Are you surprised to find out they are straight from the heart of Master Electrician and maintenance team member, Ron Dees? Ron works part-time, and mostly behind the scenes - performing electrical repairs, participating in general construction projects and helping to update the older systems and areas of the two campus buildings. Yet, the contribution Ron brings to the table goes beyond the tools and the rewards he reaps are far more meaningful than merely completing a project on-time and on-budget.



Ron served as a member of the Calgary Fire Department for 27 years before hanging up his Captain's helmet in 2013 and officially retiring. With more time on his hands, and needing a new place to serve and help, he became a sub-contractor at CCS. It was a natural transition - having already spent many hours at the school over the years lending his time and expertise to various projects, and expanding on an already rich relationship with Calgary Christian School - his wife Linda was one of CCS's original students, graduating Grade 9 in 1973 and their 4 children also attended and graduated from CCS in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002.

Ron says, "it was a big change from the fire department, but this role [at CCS] is a very meaningful part of my life. It gives me purpose and a rewarding place to put my hands. I was a helper in one job; I'm a helper here too." Ron did not attend a Christian school as a child, but having a rich history with CCS to draw on, he sees the value of Christian education. "The relationships built here go beyond schooling and academics. Students find lifelong friends and sometimes, even their spouses here." Fixing and updating the physical school building is a part of the larger mission and that mission is Ron's motivation. "It is a privilege and joy to see another generation flourish in their relationships - with teachers, with friends and most importantly, with God."

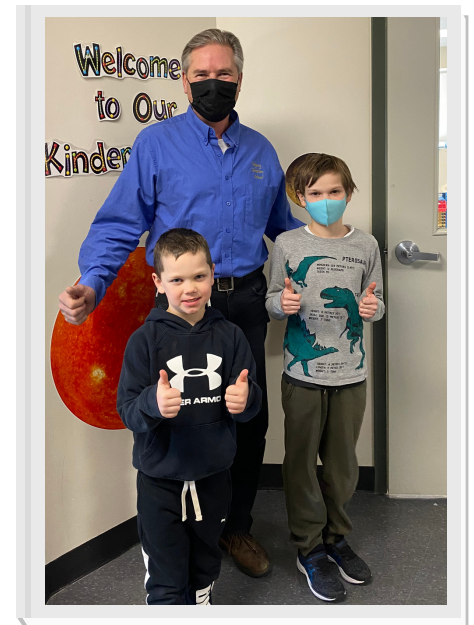
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Ron is thankful for the relationships he enjoys in this role as well. “I feel valued and encouraged,” Ron says. “Everyone does their best to support each other - teachers, administrators, maintenance staff and society staff all work together and I’m thankful to be a part of the team.” The challenge of having two old buildings, combined with the additional challenges the pandemic has created has meant an extra level of teamwork. “We’ve had to adapt and prioritize things,” Ron says. “There is LOTS of background work being done by so many people in so many areas.” In fact, to keep staff and students safe when they returned to school in the fall, extra partitions had to be erected and doors removed to ensure the high touch areas were eliminated, better ventilation measures put in place, temporary hand sanitizing stations installed and a more rigorous cleaning regimen added in. Ron gives kudos to everyone for their extra effort during this time and is thankful for the support from school leadership.

Aside from the relationships Ron enjoys with other staff, he is especially encouraged by the students. If he walks past the music room and hears students singing or playing worship songs, he often gets choked up. He loves to see kids enjoying the areas he’s worked on - lately, the gymnasium and the basketball courts at the Elementary Campus. His favorite interactions are those he shares with his two grandsons, R. and C., who also now attend CCS. Ron tells us that before Covid, if he was crossing the field between schools and students were outside for recess, or if he had a moment in the hallway, and R. or C. saw him, they’d make a beeline towards him for a hug and a hello. “I would kneel down, catch a hug and often, a gaggle of their friends would follow and give me an impromptu hug too!” Physical distancing has put an end to the hallway hugs, for now, but relational contact is still encouraged and so important. These days, it comes in the form of waves, hellos and smiles. “Bappa looks super excited when he sees me and he waves. I am really happy when I see Bappa. I wave too,” 6 year old, C. said recently. “At the end of the day if I’m waiting outside, Bappa comes and we talk.” Nine year old R. added, “It is great to have Bappa at the school. When I see him, we talk about the things I’ve done recently. He tells me about what he did recently. I feel excited when I see him.” These special moments with students are the biggest highlights in a day of work for Ron.

Ron is quiet and humble, serving the school community without the need for recognition or promotion. He is always ready to lend a hand or a thoughtful piece of advice when consulting on a maintenance project. Rarely will you see him without a smile on his face. CCS is lucky to have an employee of his character and caliber, summed up in this: Ron feels most fulfilled using his skills to make the school building safe, up to date, and user-friendly, so that together with the team of staff he belongs to, it serves, most importantly, as a place where students can learn, grow, and flourish.



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