

## Catholic School of Evangelization Missionary Family 2018-2019

### *Taking a Step in Faith*

November 2018



Two years ago, the CSE welcomed the arrival of a new expression of its charism: the Missionary Family. Chris and Danielle Kirpluk and their four children blessed the CSE community with their work and presence over two years.

Last August, we welcomed the Kautz family as the second chapter in the Missionary Family apostolate! James and Dawn, and their seven kids: Libby, Julie, Ella, Abby, Michael, Benny and Andrew (and number 8 on the way!) have rented out their Saint Boniface home, making the CSE their home for the next year. We sat down with Dawn and Libby, their eldest daughter, to discover how they have found their Missionary Family experience so far.

When this opportunity came to Dawn's attention, "it felt like God had a plan to bring our family together, and to give us rest and cohesiveness." As the eldest of the family, Libby (18), had been at the CSE at least once per month in the year

prior, and actually found herself dreaming about what it would be like for this to become her family's home: "When I first heard the idea, my first thought was 'that's crazy!', and my second thought was 'that would be awesome!'. The more I thought about it," she continued, "the more I thought about how much the CSE already felt like home." Dawn concurred, adding, "There is a sense of coming home when we come to the CSE."

"I've found God working in my life just in our short time here," shared Libby. "He's helping me grow. Already, I've opened up to my mom about things that I've kept hidden for years. I didn't expect to open up about those things for a long time, and I was so happy that I could. When we arrived," continued Libby, "I had already been growing in my personal prayer: I was writing in my journal - I call my journal entries my love letters to Jesus. Now, through my time here, it's grown even more. Now my prayer isn't just writing in a journal and going to bed. I take time to listen to God's word and to experience other prayers."

We were chatting in the CSE's dining room, surrounded by the lingering memories of countless friendships created around the camp dinner table. Looking around, Libby reflected on the importance of the CSE's mission: "So many people pass through here. You look around this room and you have no idea all the things that have happened here. Countless lives have been touched. The CSE plants so many seeds in peoples' hearts. It changes them. It helps them grow and opens their mind. It's crazy to think of all that this place can do for people, through its mission and through everyone's prayer."

In reflecting on their discernment process in applying to become the CSE's next Missionary Family, Dawn recalls "a really big shift when we started to actively seek God's will both as a family and as a couple. We'd done that before we got married, and then again when we chose the school the kids would go to. But then we kind of took over. We pulled all that control back from God and became the drivers in every decision, and I think that is what caused a lot of the stress we were experiencing. And then when it came to this idea, we knew it required conscious discernment. So, we discerned as a couple, and it was amazing to see

how fast the pieces fell into place. When God wants you to do something that is maybe a little crazy, things tend to fall into place. Now, as we move forward, and things come up, we don't always know the answer, but we seek to find God in every situation. This experience has opened me up to God's will in our lives."

As for Andrew (3), their youngest, "He loves being here!" chuckled Dawn. "He loves all the places to run and hide and enjoys seeing all the people who come here. He knows everyone's names and has conversations with everyone!"

Reflecting on what they have received so far, Dawn shared that "this experience is teaching me how to do little things with great love. There is a lot of opportunity for that here. Even just tending to my family or picking up after them, I can offer all that up for the people coming here. During our family prayer time, we can also pray for the groups and for the people who have been through here, and especially for those who have strayed from their faith".

Dawn understands their role as "being a model of a family to those who come through here. It's to be an example. This is not, however, to be the model of a perfect family. We have lots of issues going on. It's to be an example of how to live in this world as a family, and how to roll with the punches that are sent your way."

For Libby, "the fact that this place is able to do so much for so many people, and that it's also done so much in my life, really makes it important for me that it keeps going. The more people it reaches out to and transforms, the more they, too, go out and spread God's love. This place goes well beyond just the building. We've had kids come from far away to attend camp here, and they go home and tell people about it, and how God touched them."