

Living Heritage at Work

PROFILE

Jacqueline Helman, Teacher/Librarian and Educational Technologist

As a teacher/librarian Jacqueline Helman knows how to engage students in learning; skills she now applies as a consultant to help other teachers actualize the Saskatchewan school curriculum. Her method is based on inquiry and storytelling. If you ask a really good question, you are very likely to discover a very good story. Her curiosity and inquisitive nature lends itself well to her chosen profession.

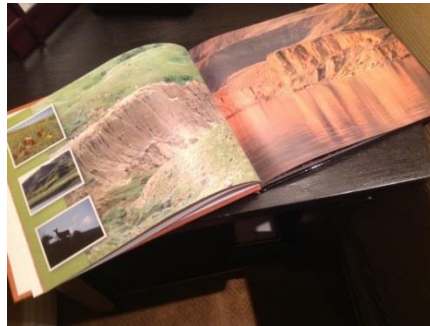
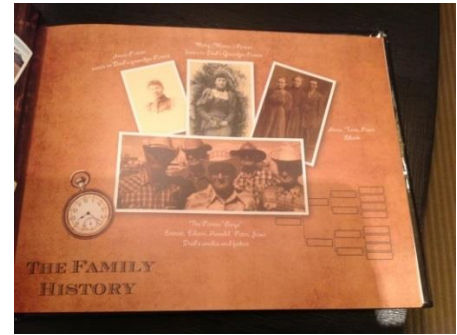
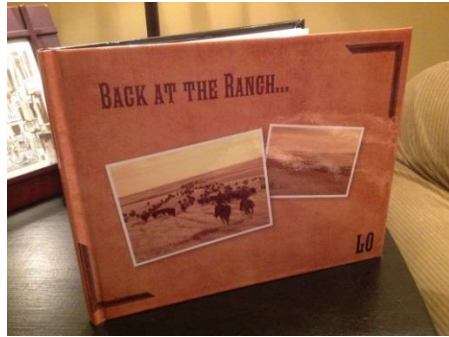
Raised on a farm in the hills near Beechy on Diefenbaker Lake, Jacqueline knew she wanted to be a teacher when she was in Grade 3. A note in her journal from that time reflects her vision of the future and an intuitive understanding of the importance of recording personal stories. She continues to nurture and honour her creativity by collecting various natural materials and making something new with them.

Jacqueline's interest in the past was nurtured at a very young age. She credits her love of the past and the land to her father's influence. He was a history buff and an avid reader who shared his interests and knowledge of grassland plants with his five daughters. Her mother on the other hand, instilled in her daughters, the value of family and community connections. These values are also translated into Jacqueline's work.

She acknowledges that her experiences on the family farm shaped her character and continue to influence her choices in life. It wasn't always easy and she worked hard but the lessons learned stay with her. She actually preferred to work indoors and eventually worked out an arrangement with her mother that she would see to the cooking and cleaning inside, leaving her mother free to work on the land; a deal that suited them both. As a result, she understands well the importance of helping her students to understand their own heritage, and how it influences the way they negotiate the present.

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Photos courtesy of Jacqueline Helman

And she is not afraid of using whatever technologies will best serve her purpose. Sometimes that means using the variety of web tools available on the internet, but not necessarily. It depends on the learner's needs, their interests and abilities. Jacqueline has been involved in several projects, all of which begin with a really interesting question; working with youth at risk, culturally diverse students, and seniors, creating intergenerational and intercultural projects that engage students in learning and sharing; connecting them to and building a strong sense of belonging and place.

Heritage Saskatchewan Alliance is the collective voice of all those who value heritage in Saskatchewan. Our vision is to see heritage as a valued and dynamic legacy that contributes to our sense of identity, creates an understanding of our past, is used to build communities in the present, and informs our choices for the future.