

I SMELL SPRING

“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” ~ Audrey Hepburn

Who is loving the warm sunshine and watching the snow melt? I sure am! A person does not realize how heavy the long, dark, cold days of winter are until we take a walk outside in the spring sunshine. Ok, Ok, maybe the mud, manure, garbage, and dog poo under all that snow is not very pleasant, but when we relish in the warm sun beams, the song of birds, it feels as though a weight has been lifted from our weary shoulders.

In particular, for those who suffer with depression and/or Seasonal Affective Disorder, spring can be a natural anti-depressant. The sound of kids playing outside, families walking down the street, bicycles out, seeing the spring colors and dog walkers emerging from their homes can bring such joy.

With winter activities coming to an end, a new semester in school has begun, now is a great time to connect with your kids to enjoy the season. Here are a few natural, affordable, winter busting, spring loving ideas for families:

1. *Start some vegetable seeds at home: in egg shells, plastic flats, yogurt containers, egg cartons, milk containers, etc. If you do not have garden space to transplant them, plant in large planters, or give away as a gift.*
2. *Fly a kite: find a dry field or parking lot (watch for power lines!)*
3. *Go for a hike: listen for different birds, notice the tender plants sprouting from the earth.*
4. *Earthworm hunting!*
5. *Play in an April rain shower. Breathe in the fresh smell!*
6. *Decorate Easter eggs.*
7. *Join a community clean-up day. It gives a sense of pride in the community you live in.*
8. *Paint flower pots.*
9. *Wash and pack away winter wear (put a couple dollars in the pockets to be a pleasant surprise next winter!). I love doing this: Adios, Cold Weather!*
10. *De-Clutter a room, or closet, or even just a drawer. Enlist help from your kids. It feels good to simplify.*
11. *Go playground hopping. Visit ones that you may not have been to before.*
12. *Snap some pictures of newly budding flowers or trees. Use it as a wallpaper on your phone.*
13. *Plant sunflower seeds.*
14. *Go on a spring scavenger hunt.*

Spring is like a second opportunity at new resolutions. So gather your kids and maybe the neighbor's kids too, and truly enjoy the season!

This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. Tammy advocates for students and parents, providing a link between to other supports within the community. Tammy has been a social worker for over 20 years and is a mother to 4 children, 3 of which are teenagers.