

To Create Joy

by the People of St. Albert.

Edited by Lauren Seal

Start simple:

a walk or bike ride

by the river, or through

the veins of green ravines.

Explore alone, mind empty

and calm, or with others.

Bring your fluffy-eared dog

and patience, as you will be

stopped by children asking

to pet your dog's soft fur.

Don't forget hot chocolate, a snack,

a picnic, something to savour

as you snake along the trails.

Follow the flowers flourishing

in the Botanic Gardens, immerse

yourself in the perfumed magic

of a lilac's bloom. Lay seeds

outside your window and admire

birds with your cat, who is wide-eyed

beside you. Save the suet seed for crows

and magpies – they're your favourite

though others think them pests.

Enjoy a casual Driveway Friday

with neighbours. Come on over,

pull up a lawn chair, grab a drink.

Everyone's invited.

If you need a lesson

on how to craft happiness,

look to children – they don't

complicate joy but live it.

Joy plays Minecraft, visits friends,

obsesses over Pokémon. Joy giggles

at the Children's Festival, pats

the dog statue playing Hide and Seek,

tells one too many "yo mama" jokes.

Their joy is open, silly, contagious,

affecting parents, grandparents, anyone

who chooses to share it.

And we should share every

pinprick of bliss because

we need it. Help others find joy

in the tumult of their lives.

Be a beacon, shining light,

a safe harbor where artists, young

and old, can grow. Give gladness –

bake treats, host a block party,

play violin or guitar in nursing homes.

Volunteer for the Kettle Campaign,
the Food Bank, a classroom, help
Spruce Up St. Albert. Take what brings
you unapologetic glee and share.

There may be days you cannot
create any joy. It happens.
Try not to create more sadness.
Say please, say thank you.
Hold the door for
the person behind you.
Gift gentleness to others until
you can gift it to yourself.

Remember, joy is as diverse
and beautiful as any city.

Joy is reading a good book, doling
out candy at the Rainmaker Parade.

Joy lifts weights with friends

at Servus Place, visits the Art Gallery,
works the dirt with the gardening group.

Joy supports local, writes hopeful
messages in pastel sidewalk chalk,
watches another Spider-Man movie
with cousins.

Joy is waiting for you

Start simple: a smile,

a greeting for someone on the street –

a small gesture that says:

I see you. You belong here.

Welcome home.

