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Meet the new principal: Mr. Curtis Liberty

by *Charity Winters*



Curtis Liberty has always wanted to revisit Alaska. This year, he made that dream a reality by becoming the new principal at Susan B. English. He and his wife, Ronanda, and their two children, Merlee (6), and Caden (4) moved into town August 7 th from Ritzville, WA. Ronanda will be teaching alongside of him as the middle school teacher. Curtis stressed that he and his family were “very, very excited” to be in Seldovia and that they “felt honored to be selected.”

This is not the first time the Libertys have taught in Alaska. In 1999 he was up for a very desirable position at North Idaho College. When the job suddenly fell to half time, Curtis looked elsewhere. In a remarkably short time following, he and Ronanda found themselves in Nunapitchuk, Alaska, a small village outside of Bethel. “God opened up the door,” Curtis said. They loved their experiences teaching in the bush. “It was different, but you had to learn how to embrace the differences,” Curtis explained. The couple had to return to Washington after one year for family reasons but hoped to return someday. They kept in touch with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, hoping that something would come up at a time when they would be ready to return.

Last year, Curtis worked as the English department head at his school in Connell, WA while he finished his administrative internship. A chance to work in Nanwalek came up but things fell through. Now they find themselves in Seldovia and as far as this school year is concerned, Curtis says he is mainly interested in simply surviving his first year as a principal/teacher. He is serious about being sure that the school faculty teaches what they are supposed to teach and that they meet state and district standards.

The Libertys couldn't be more excited about being here. And their time in bush Alaska has prepared them for Seldovia's more isolated aspects – this town doesn't even phase them! They were especially impressed by how the townspeople coordinated efforts to help them move in. With little time to unload their U-Haul before placing it back on the ferry to

return it to Soldotna, Jenny Chissus arranged for a group of people to meet at their house to unload. With the kindness of those around them and Seldovia's pristine beauty, they feel that it couldn't get any better. As Ronanda likes to say, "It's like we're living in a postcard!"



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