

**Cape Elizabeth School Volunteer Services
1992-2010
18 years**

Annual Report 2009-2010

Submitted by Gail Schmader, Director



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed it's the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead

Volunteers -- parents, grandparents, students, community members -- collectively made significant differences for Cape Elizabeth's 1,810 students. Over **900* volunteers** supported these students academically, socially and emotionally. These volunteers gave the school system approximately **\$300,000**** through approximately **22,000** hours of service. The needs continued to increase this year and volunteers graciously and generously "stepped up to the plate" to meet as many needs as possible. The number of volunteers remained consistent with the numbers of the last six years.

** These figures do not include the many hours of volunteer support from parents association, extracurricular and booster club activities at all three schools.*

***Average of minimum wage and National Points of Light figure for volunteer service hours*

Tangible Resources

The community supported the education of all students with a wide range of donated tangible resources, valued at over **\$13,000**. This figure does not include the many classroom supplies donated on a weekly basis throughout the year.

Bank of America generously donated most of their office furniture, filing cabinets and supplies when they closed their local branch office. These office materials helped fill the needs in the offices and classrooms at each of the three schools.

A parent donated seven large cartons of word puzzles; time telling, sequencing, reading, math, visual pattern recognition, memory, and word retrieval games; blocks and other educational manipulatives. The Pond Cove lobby conference room was a "free-for-all" one winter morning as Pond Cove and middle school teachers and Ed. Techs. clamored for materials to help their students!

The High school athletic department was the recipient of a Sony Receiver, a large portable screen, and several pairs of crutches. The receiver is used for broadcasting on the outdoor fields. The Phys. Ed. Program was the recipient of many hand-knit hats and mittens for the x-country ski class as well as golf clubs and croquet sets. The Drama Program was the grateful recipient of a Yamaha full musical keyboard complete with instrumentals and tempos.

Requests for resources were made through the local newspapers, CETV, the Cape web site, school email newsletters, and posted fliers. This year, particularly, many resources were offered "at will" to the school by community members. They were appropriately placed by the Director of Volunteer Services.

Volunteer Projects

A new venture at Pond Cove, the Copy Cats, was instituted in the fall to help fill the void left by an Ed. Tech. I staff reduction. A group of reliable parent volunteers were scheduled weekly to photocopy academic materials for classrooms. Copy Cats worked well for long-term projects that could be planned in advance.

A group of 10 committed volunteers supported the Pond Cove Media Center. They donated 1,120 hours of service shelving, processing and repairing materials, and assisting students with book selections and circulation. Due to budget constraints, there is no Ed. Tech. available on Tuesdays or Fridays. The volunteers were especially important on these afternoons to help with 1st and 2nd grade classes. Three skilled volunteers also supported the high school library every week.

Another parent volunteer at the high school helped with a long-term Social Studies project. She organized a class set of academic binders, collating materials from a variety of sources.

A Literacy Volunteer Team at the middle school grew from a small pilot project last year to a group of 41 trained volunteers this year. This team of "on-call" volunteers assisted classroom teachers with individual reading or writing conferences, peer review writing conferences and literature circles.

A large group of volunteers (45 parents, 22 community members and 8 student nurses) were critical to the success of the system-wide flu clinics. They helped with registration, record keeping, student logistics and, those with specialized training, inoculations.

Community Volunteers

In addition to the numerous parent and student volunteers, over 65 community members supported all facets of student learning. Betsy Moir (volunteer for 18 yrs.), Jessie and Rip Haskell (6 yrs.), Caroline Carroll (6 yrs.) and Liz Sullivan (1 yr.) worked in the Pond Cove Media Center helping students with book selections and shelving and processing materials. Kathy Fabish (14 yrs.) offered the same service in the high school library.

Susan Macvicar (15 yrs.) helped 5th grade students hone their literacy skills by conducting individual reading and writing conferences. Ed Nadeau (9 yrs.) taught an eight-week Junior Achievement economics unit to each eighth grade class.

Ann Waecker (15 yrs.) supported all aspects of Besty Nilsen's computer classes, often providing outside research and program materials. Eric Jensen (6yrs.) worked with the high school robotics and engineering programs.

Karen Johnson (12 yrs.), Beth Webster (3 yrs.) and Ann Cranshaw (3 yrs.) helped with the Life Skills Swim Program every Friday afternoon. Mary Dwyer (1 yr.) provided reading support for 6 Pond Cove students two mornings a week.

School Mentor Program

High school mentors provided one-on-one support for Pond Cove and middle school students, focusing on their social/emotional and academic needs. Some mentors acted as classroom helpers, supporting students as needed. They were especially helpful in some of the large 1st grade classes.

Many of the 37 mentors, who met with their mentees 40 minutes once a week, provided reinforcement for math and literacy skills. Mentors played math games and practiced number facts. They helped with comprehension, oral fluency and decoding skills in reading development, and helped organize the students' thoughts so they could put them into sentences and paragraphs.

Two mentors helped their mentees gain confidence in peer relationships. Zach Culver spent lunch recesses on the playground with his mentee. He role-modeled how to join in games with other students. He then ate lunch with his mentee and another classmate and role-modeled conversation techniques. His mentor thrived with Zach. He learned to relate positively with his peers.

Joey Doane met his mentee on the playground at 8:00 am before school. The two of them joined the basketball game. Like Zach, Joey role-modeled how to relate with other students. Marlene Potter, the Ed. Tech. on the playground reports:

"Joey's out there as a mentor but he's doing much more than that. Kids look up to him. They have fun with him. Kids don't question him when he makes sure a team is fair. Any arguing among the students ceases. There's no debate about whether the ball is "in" or "out". Joey's a great role model for every student, not just his mentee."

At the end of recess, Joey accompanied his mentee to the classroom where he helped him get organized for the day. Susan Michaud, 4th grade teacher, reports:

"Joey is absolutely WONDERFUL in every way. He is patient, calm, encouraging and interacts very well with his mentee inside our classroom and on the playground. It is no surprise to me that he wants to become a teacher. He will be very good at it! "

Ben Berman helped provide a smooth transition from 4th to 5th grade for his mentee. He worked with him for two years at Pond Cove School and then a 3rd year at the middle school. They have a strong, respectful and supportive relationship. Ben is a very important part of his mentee's life.

All mentors attended an initial training session. Additional training was provided this year for Ross Greene's Creative Problem Solving. The new information is included in the mentor manual.

Mentor matches are dynamic interventions for the mentees. The caring, committed high school mentors make measurable differences in the lives of kids who need support.

Mentors learn to make good choices and to become caring, responsible adults. They increase their self-confidence, their ability to take risks, and their resiliency. They learn to set boundaries and to embrace diversity. Being a mentor encourages the high school students to stretch and challenge themselves through the unique opportunity to do meaningful service.

An ELL student was placed in a second grade class as a mentor. Her teacher, Joni Hewitt, comments:

"It was a wonderful friendly place for my student to practice what she's learned. Her confidence and self-esteem were boosted and supported by wonderful staff members and the natural warmth and acceptance of the second grade children."

Other mentors comment on their experience:

"I'm learning a lot about myself in the process." Sasha Lennon

"Mentoring is going great...I've figured out some ways to help these kids stay on task and focus." Katherine Sullivan

"I just LOVE mentoring! I love that I'm making a difference in these young children's lives!" Chelsey Whynot

The mentor program benefits both the mentees and the mentors. They all grow from the experience.

Rights and Safety of Students

As a safeguard in upholding the rights and safety of students, all volunteers are required to attend one Volunteer Awareness Sessions. The sessions are offered many times during the year. The session focuses on confidentiality, building evacuation, behavior concerns, and sensitivity to students with learning challenges. Special attention is given to the volunteer's role in health emergencies, particularly for any student with a life-threatening allergy. Volunteers are also required to sign a confidentiality statement and provide confidential background information on the annual registration form. Seventy-nine percent of the students in Pond Cove School, eighty-three percent at the middle school, and sixty-eight percent at the high school have at least one parent who has attended an Awareness Session. There continued to be an increase in the number of dads and grandparents who attended these sessions.

New procedure as of January 1, 2010:

All new community volunteers working with students during the school day must complete a Volunteer Application and a Criminal Record Check. This is in addition to the required Annual Volunteer Registration form and the Volunteer Awareness Session. The criminal checks are completed on-line by staff using the volunteer's name and birth date and are offered at no charge to the Town of Cape Elizabeth or the volunteer. Fingerprints are NOT required. Presenters/performers who work with a staff member present are not required to have a record check.

New procedure as of September 1, 2010:

All parents volunteering during the school day who have not attended a Volunteer Awareness Session as of July 1, 2010, will be required to complete a Criminal Record Check in addition to completing the required Annual Volunteer Registration form and a Volunteer Awareness Session. At this time, volunteers who have attended a Volunteer Awareness Session prior to July 1, 2010 are exempt from a criminal record check. A letter from the superintendent explaining this new procedure will be sent to parents in the fall.

All volunteer forms will be available on the Cape Elizabeth school web site and Gail Schmader's google web site in the fall.

The background checks are another step in making our schools as safe as possible and aligning ourselves with area school procedures.

Conclusion

Volunteers are one of the multi-faceted strengths of the Cape Elizabeth School System. Their dedication, expertise and compassion help students reach their potential.

*"Education is a shared responsibility among students,
teachers, staff, parents, and the community."*