

**Cape Elizabeth School Volunteer Services  
1992-2012  
20 years**

**Annual Report 2011-2012**

Submitted by Gail Schmader, Director



Japanese Shogun's Garden by CEMS 8<sup>th</sup> Graders

*"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

Over **950\* volunteers** - parents, grandparents, students, community members - provided academic, enrichment and social/emotional support for Cape Elizabeth's 1,700 students. These volunteers gave the school system approximately **\$280,000\*\*** through a minimum of **19,000** hours of service. The number of volunteers remained consistent with the numbers of the last several years. Approximately 65% were parent volunteers; 22% were community members and grandparents; and 12% were students.

*\* These figures do not include the many hours of volunteer support from parents' associations, 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 **\$10,000**. This figure does not include the many classroom supplies donated on a weekly basis throughout the year.

Two pitch backs, several croquet sets and a used, repairable canoe was donated to the high school Phys. Ed. program. A Nordic trac and a sit-up bench with steel weights were donated to the Physical Therapy and athletic conditioning programs.

The Instructional Support programs at the middle school received two iPods, seven new chef aprons for their cooking class, and a large donation of manipulative materials. An almost-new stove was donated to replace the old, well-used one in the teachers' room.

The Instructional support programs at Pond Cove School received a microwave, a dollhouse and many games and puzzles. The Physical Therapy programs received three mini trampolines. These were placed in grade level hallways, making it possible for identified students to take quick motor breaks when necessary.

As always, the most requested item by staff were tennis balls. The balls are used to "quiet" student chair and desk legs. All but one request was eventually met.

Donated items by community members were often made by people who wouldn't ordinarily be connected to the schools. Most of these people responded to "ads" posted on CETV. It was an excellent opportunity for good conversation, fostering a positive connection between the school and community.

### **Community Volunteers**

Community members also connected with the schools by giving "hands-on" service. Over 125 enthusiastic members, ranging in age from early 20's to mid 80's, reached out to our students.

Bill Gross was a regular volunteer (for the 4<sup>th</sup> year) at the high school. He worked closely with Dr. Efron and his students. Bill worked with the students in the Achievement Center as well as in the classroom. He sat in on some of Dr. Efron's classes so he could be consistent with his instruction.

Ann Waecker (17 yrs.) continued to support all aspects of Betsy Nilsen's computer classes, often providing outside research and program materials. Eric Jensen (8 yrs.) and Tim Jones (3 yrs.) worked with the middle school and high school robotics programs.

Karen Johnson (14 yrs.), Beth Webster (5 yrs.), Emily Croft (1 yr.), and Tina Hess (1 yr.) helped with the Functional Life Skills swim program every Friday afternoon.

Betsy Moir (20 yrs.), Jessie and Rip Haskell (8 yrs.) and Ann Webber (2 yrs.) volunteered in the Pond Cove Media Center helping students with book selections and shelving and processing materials. Kathy Fabish (16 yrs.) and Wendy Seltzer (8 yrs.) offered the same services in the high school library. Leslie Girmscheid (1yr.) volunteered at the middle school circulation desk.

Priscilla Mageles (2 yrs.) and Buddy Earle (1 yr.) supported specific students in the ELL programs at Pond Cove School and the middle school.

This spring a Community Connections event was held at Pond Cove School. Eleven community members joined six small groups of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students for lunch and conversation in the cafetorium. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders realized that the entire community supported their education, not just their parents. They wanted to get know some of these community members. New multi-generational friendships were forged.



Community members, Mrs. Ann Webber (top) and Mrs. Betsy Moir, join 4<sup>th</sup> grade students

### **School Mentor Program**

Fifty 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. Others acted as role models for students on the playground.

High school teacher, Courtney Ferrell, was a crucial link in the mentor program. As a teacher advisor for the high school Volunteer Club, she was the primary recruiter for the mentors. Only three mentor requests were unmet. One was due to scheduling conflicts. Two requests were submitted too late in the year to establish a solid relationship between mentor and mentee.

Many of the 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. The ten mentors in the large Kindergarten classes were an integral part of the Kindergarten program.

Eleven mentors joined Pond Cove School students on the playground during recesses. They modeled safe, inclusive, fair play by:

- Helping/encouraging students to include others in their game
- Making positive/supportive comments to all students playing
- Using calm words to work out conflicts
- Playing fair and deciding on rules as a group
- Having fun while staying in control

Mentors gained as much as their mentees. Trish Brigham, mother of three mentors, comments:

"Without exception, my children have immensely benefited from their experience. They have grown as individuals; developed kindness and empathy; learned the importance of confidentiality and the value of individual differences, and gained self-confidence."

Senior mentor Sasha Lennon comments:

"My experience mentoring has been invaluable and I think it is the most important act of community service I have done! It feels good to be a positive role model and influence on their lives."

A Pond Cove School teacher comments:

"Life is difficult for my student right now and I can tell you that my student's time with his mentor is the highlight of his week. The mentor is making such a positive difference in my student's life!"

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.

Mentor relationships are low-key interventions for mentees. The caring, committed high school mentors make positive differences in the lives of kids who need support.

### **Volunteer Projects**

Copy Cats volunteered weekly at Pond Cove School to photocopy academic materials for students. They provided solid support for teachers, especially with the Chicago math materials. Volunteers provided similar support at the middle school.

World Language volunteers created bulletin boards with student work and helped prepare teaching materials for middle school teachers. They also provided technology support by searching for graphics for Smart board lessons, posters and flash cards. One volunteer helped students create an on-line magazine for a language arts project at the middle school.

A committed corps of twenty volunteers continued to provide critical support in the libraries at all three schools. They helped with circulation, shelving, processing and repairing materials, and assisting students with book selections and research materials.

Volunteers matted and hung artwork throughout the year and chaperoned field trips. They helped edit writings and discussed literature. One volunteer cut dozens and dozens of tennis balls to fit on student chair and desk legs.

Volunteers worked tirelessly on many fundraising projects to support a wide range of school projects. They also supported staff morale by offering breakfasts, luncheons and snacks throughout the year.

We are indeed fortunate to have such a large committed group of volunteers. Every student and staff member was touched in some way by a volunteer effort.

### **Rights and Safety of Students**

As a safeguard to uphold the rights and safety of students, all volunteers are required to attend one Volunteer Awareness Session. Sixteen sessions were held during the year. There were 76 participants. The sessions focus on confidentiality, building evacuation, volunteer contact with students, 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.

Eighty-one percent of the students in Pond Cove School, eighty-four percent at the middle school, and seventy-seven percent at the high school have at least one parent who has attended an Awareness Session. One parent commented at the conclusion of a session:

"This (session) makes me feel like my son is in good hands."

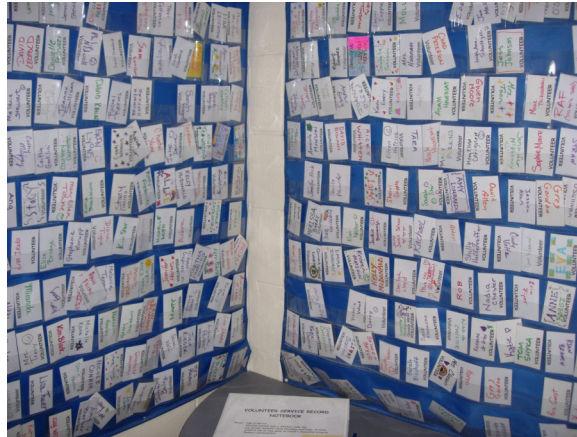
Volunteers are also required to sign a Criminal Record Check Request Form if they have not attended a Volunteer Awareness Session prior to July 1, 2011 and sign a confidentiality statement and provide confidential background information on the Annual Registration Form. Presenters/performers who work with a staff member present are exempt from these volunteer requirements.

Criminal Record Checks are completed using names and birthdates. There is no cost to the Town of Cape Elizabeth. Fingerprints are not required. Currently 184 parents have competed a Criminal Record Check.

In addition, Community members (volunteers who have no children in the Cape Elizabeth Schools) must complete a Volunteer Application, which includes two requests for references.

All volunteer forms are available on the Cape Elizabeth school web site, which is linked to the volunteer director's site. The Volunteer Guidelines, the Staff (including volunteers) Conduct with Students Policy, and the Volunteer Services annual report is also posted on this site.

This year, for the first time, parents completed the volunteer forms on-line through the parent Powerschool portal for their student. Parent data is recorded on their child's PowerSchool record. Teachers can access a PowerSchool report, which gives the status of each parent's volunteer requirements.



Volunteer Badges at Pond Cove School

### **Conclusion**

Volunteers are one of the multi-faceted strengths of the Cape Elizabeth School System. They strongly support the staff and students in a wide variety of student-centered programs.

*"We value the connections among our school, local, and global communities that foster meaningful participation in a dynamic and diverse world."*

Cape Elizabeth School Mission, Vision and Values Statement