

**Cape Elizabeth School Volunteer Services
1992-2014
22 years**

Annual Report 2013-2014

Submitted by Gail Schmader, Director



Sunset Silhouette 2nd grader Ava C.

Ava's artwork showcases the 2nd grade integrated study unit of Africa.

Over **1,000*** **volunteers** - parents, grandparents, students, community members - provided academic and social/emotional support for Cape Elizabeth's 1,680 students. These volunteers donated approximately **\$330,000**** to our school system through a minimum of **22,000** hours of service. These service hours are the equivalent of 17*** staff positions. Approximately 60% were parent volunteers; 20% were community members and grandparents; and 20% 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.*

***Value of volunteer service hour: average of minimum wage and Independent Sector value of volunteer time*

****A staff member works 7 hours/day for 180 days*

Volunteers

A National Center for School Leadership survey was given to Cape staff, students and parents this fall. Sixty-seven percent of those completing the survey reported that

"many parents volunteer their time to assist in my school"

compared to thirty-seven percent nationally. Volunteers provided a wide range of support for the Cape schools.

A group of committed parents volunteered once a week at Pond Cove School for the tedious, often daunting, task of correcting tall stacks of 4th grade spelling workbooks. Friendships were forged among these stacks of workbooks and, some mornings, volunteers brought special snacks for each other.

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

Community members and parents provided critical support in the Pond Cove Media Center. They helped with circulation, shelving, processing and repairing materials, and assisting students with book selections and research materials. Students knew they could count on these volunteers to help them. An enthusiastic couple, in their mid-eighties, returned to the Media Center for the 10th year to shelve books!

Volunteers matted and hung artwork throughout the year and chaperoned field trips. They helped edit writings and discussed literature. They were guest speakers on a variety of topics.

One volunteer organized the middle school collection of book sets for small classroom discussion groups. Once, organized, the volunteer put bar codes on each book.

Nine volunteers helped conference with students in a 6th grade class for their Egyptian research papers.

A community volunteer, Ann Waecker, supported Betsy Nilsen's high school Technology program for the 19th year. Betsy Comments:

"Ann's extraordinary. She laminates and hangs student projects on my walls, puts up and takes down posters, notices, etc. She creates and mounts posters throughout the building for classes, yearbook, and other events. She does scanning, creating (docs, spreadsheets, lists, labels), printing and distributing, and the requisite photocopying. There isn't much she doesn't lend a helping hand to. I'm so lucky to have her as a dependable, informed, talented volunteer and as a special friend."

Four community members supported students in the Functional Life Skills swim program every Friday afternoon. These committed, patient volunteers made the program possible. The volunteers report gaining much more from the experience than they gave.

Many volunteers supported a wide-variety of special academic and enrichment projects in each school including: Arts Day at Pond Cove School, the Career Explorations Fair at the middle school, and the STEM Career Fair at the high school.

During National Volunteer Week in April, volunteers were offered "thank you" packets of flower and vegetable seeds when they signed-in at each school. Two hundred packets of seeds were distributed.

"Some sacred seed lurks in each human personality, no matter how lowly its origin on earth; to give every such seed the deepest possible roots and the highest possible flowering is in the vision and hope of those ideas of freedom and discipline which constitute the American dream."

Carl Sandburg

Tangible Resources

The community donated a wide range of tangible resources, valued at over **\$10,000**, through the Volunteer Services program. This figure does not include the many classroom supplies donated on a weekly basis throughout the year.

High school donations included: a new flip video camera to record student programming for the Instructional Support program, professional non-digital cameras for the Photography and Guidance programs, and several mountain bikes for the Phys. Ed. Adventure program.

The middle school received many small but invaluable donations. These included yarn for the 5th grade knitters, a small refrigerator for the Library Learning Commons, a new fire-retardant rug for a classroom, and multiple academic games for student enrichment activities.

Pond Cove School received large donations of LEGOS and Playmobile adventure sets for use during indoor recesses, generous "rainy day" clothing donations for the Health Office, a wide variety of large toy trucks for kindergarten recesses, and many donations of books for the Media Center. The school also received sixteen personal, rechargeable CD/DVD players for independent student listening centers.

Items donated 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 the community. High school guidance counselor, Eamon Keenan, thanks a community member for a donated camera:

"As we all know 'it takes a village' to raise our kids, and the students of Cape Elizabeth are no different. I've been fortunate in my own life to experience, explore, and capture my memories of the world through the lens of a camera. Now, thanks to your donation, that will be possible for our students. What better gift could there be?"

School Mentor Program

Thirty-six high school mentors provided support for Pond Cove and middle school students. Most mentors met one-on-one with their mentee, 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, fostering cooperative, inclusive, fair play.

High school teacher, Courtney Ferrell, continues to be a crucial link in the mentor program. As a teacher advisor for the high school Volunteer Club, she is the primary recruiter for mentors.

Matching a mentor with a mentee is a multi-faceted process. With permission and input from parents, students and teachers request a mentor. The volunteer director meets with the teacher to discuss the student's needs and interests, along with the challenging issue of scheduling. High school students are available during their study/free periods, which rotate at different times on a 4-day schedule.

The volunteer director then starts the recruiting process by contacting Courtney Ferrell and /or past mentors. Once a mentor is recruited, the director meets with the mentor individually to discuss the program guidelines, strategies for relating to students, and specific tips for working with the assigned mentee. Activities are suggested and a schedule is made. The director and the mentee's teacher check in frequently with the mentor.

Many of the mentors, who met with their mentees forty minutes once a week, provided reinforcement or enrichment 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 seven mentors in the kindergarten classes were an important part of the kindergarten program.

One mentor supported individual students in Mr. Nielsen's 4th grade class. She helped students with essays: brain storming ideas, organizing thoughts, and editing the writing. She also supported the students in their French class. The class expressed their gratitude to her by sharing their thoughts in a class "Tagxedo":

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. Fifteen sessions were held during the year. There were 88 participants this year. The sessions focus on confidentiality, building evacuation, physical 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.

All school volunteers are required to successfully complete the following before volunteering:

- Criminal Record Check - There is no cost to the Town of Cape Elizabeth. Fingerprints are not required. Currently 960 volunteers have completed a Criminal Record Check. Two hundred and ninety checks were processed this year.
- Volunteer Registration with confidentiality statement and confidential background information
- Attendance at one Volunteer Awareness Session
- Volunteer Application - This is only required for community volunteers without children in the schools. It includes a request for references.

Presenters/performers who work with a staff member present are exempt from these volunteer requirements.

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 are also posted on this site, as well as specific volunteer opportunities and requests for tangible items.

Parents complete the volunteer forms on-line through the parent PowerSchool portal for their student. Parent data is recorded on their student's PowerSchool record. Teachers and administrators can access a PowerSchool report, which gives the status of each parent's volunteer requirements.

Conclusion

Volunteers are one of the many 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