

The Community Relations Office is proud to spotlight the

Cedar Rapids Community Schools

VOLUNTEER HALL OF FAME

2016-2017

The following individuals were selected by their school volunteer program to represent the many excellent volunteers that generously contribute to the academic success of students at that school.



Profile information is provided by building volunteer coordinators and school principals.

Arthur Elementary School

Pete Larson and Gunnar

Staff and students at Arthur always look forward to Tuesdays and Thursdays. On those days, Pete Larson and Gunnar, his handsome Golden Retriever, volunteer as literacy mentors. The duo works with kindergarten through third grade students to provide extra reading practice while building self-esteem, confidence, and communication skills. The students anxiously look forward to their time reading with the dynamic duo! More than 40 students have benefited from Pete and Gunnar's volunteer efforts. They are beloved members of the Arthur family!

Cleveland Elementary School

Kathy Kaufman

Kathy spends an hour each Monday through Thursday volunteering in a second grade classroom. She relates well with students and they look forward to her helpful visits. Kathy helps them with math skills and reading comprehension. Because of Kathy, students gain confidence in themselves and enjoy their day at school more. Because of Kathy, the teacher is able to direct classroom time to different areas and accomplish more. A veteran volunteer, teachers know they can count on Kathy. Her calm and friendly personality is appreciated by everyone at Cleveland.

Coolidge Elementary School

Susan Cano

Susan is a great asset to teachers, staff, parents, and PTA at Coolidge. She has held the leadership positions of PTA president and vice-president, organized and operated the school SCRIP program; assisted teachers with clerical needs; and been as a homeroom parent for multiple years, organizing class events and fieldtrips. She has also served on the school hospitality and retirement committees and coordinates popcorn sales for the school Boy Scout Troop. Susan is a parent committed not only to helping her own children but the entire school community. Coolidge has been very lucky to have Susan as a volunteer!

Erskine Elementary School

Jennifer Patterson

If there is an event happening at Erskine, you can bet that Jennifer had some part in the planning, organizing, setting up, operating, or cleaning up....or maybe all of the above! As the PTA vice president, she is deeply committed to the school community. From summer gardening to selling T-shirts Jennifer is an instrumental part of all "extras" that make Erskine a great place to work, learn, and grow!

Garfield Elementary School

Jenifer Vick

Jenifer stepped into the role of PTA president midway through the school year and has been a great leader! She tirelessly helps with every activity the PTA sponsors, volunteering her time and expertise. Jenifer advocates for all students and has been a wonderful community representative, securing donations and services through her contacts. Jenifer has made the Garfield PTA run more smoothly since the first day she volunteered her time! She also finds time to read on America Reads Day and to join students and teachers on field trips!

Grant Elementary School

Edwin Sevcik

Ed volunteers for several hours every Friday, working with fifth graders on core reading and math skills. Students are always excited to see him and enjoy working with him one-on-one for help and attention. He also visits with students about his exciting travels, giving them an understanding of places and experiences they might not know about. In addition, Ed allows teachers to save valuable instruction time by helping to correct papers. Ed is a great asset to Grant Elementary School.

Grant Wood Elementary School

Wendy Marner

Grant Wood students, staff, and families have benefited for 15 years from Wendy's volunteerism. Her impact is obvious even as you walk toward the school since she's responsible for the school's well-manicured landscaping. When there was a need to relocate the staff lounge, Wendy spent a summer cleaning out a basement space to create a brightly colored and well-organized lounge. She also took the lead on eight fundraising campaigns that each raised thousands of dollars for school needs. She currently chairs the Carnival food committee and Teacher Appreciation Week committee; she has also held various PTA committee chair and Executive Board positions.

Harrison Elementary School

Cindy Miller

Cindy drives from the Quad Cities to provide Harrison students with additional academic and emotional support. A retired kindergarten teacher, she often provides her own materials to help students. She often volunteers at school two or three days a week to help students and staff. In addition to helping with skill development, you can find her sharing hugs, smiles, and kind words. She even volunteers in the cafeteria and on the playground. The Harrison community appreciates her dedication to and support of student learning needs.

Hiawatha Elementary School

Jan Lesan

Although officially retired from teaching, Jan never actually quit. After more than 30 years in the classroom, she now frequently volunteers in the classroom where her daughter teaches. Jan works with students on reading, mindfulness exercises, writing, comprehension, math, yearbook projects, science, and vocabulary. She is an America Reads volunteer, and she helps with classroom work like conference-papers filing, checking homework, and monitoring classroom behavior. Jan volunteers several times a week, and has even rearranged her vacation schedule around classroom needs. When something needs to be done, Jan does it – usually without having to be asked and always with a smile. Teaching remains an integral part of Jan’s life and the Hiawatha community is grateful.

Hoover Elementary School

Valerie Neubauer

A retired teacher, Valerie visits Hoover Wednesdays and on other days when needed. She leads small group reading instruction so that the teacher can provide one-on-one support to students in need of that support. During the holiday season, she made hats for each fifth grade student and gave them each an extra to share with someone else. Students were so excited that she launched a project to teach them to sew themselves so they could make their own hats to give to someone else. She also collaborates with the teacher on study topics and helps develop related learning activities. Valerie leads by example and her passion for students and teaching shines!

Jackson Elementary School

Amy Bower

When a project requires many hands, Amy is the person to take the lead. As Jackson’s Volunteer Coordinator, she has committed both the time and effort to collect volunteer data and to ensure that there is sufficient volunteer support for activities to run successfully. Amy is a positive presence with a “can-do” attitude. She is able to pull together teams of volunteers to do great things for students. The Jackson community counts itself lucky to have someone as dedicated, caring, and focused as Amy leading the volunteer effort.

Johnson STEAM Academy Magnet School

Heather & Dan Anderegg

The team of Heather and Dan make the Johnson Backpack Program happen. They visit the school each Friday to pack the weekend food bags into each students’ backpack. They also serve on the school’s Book Fair Committee, helping to coordinate both the Barnes & Noble’s Book Fair and the in-house Scholastic Book Fair, which help provide funds for the school to purchase new books for the library. In addition, they both chaperone field trips, help in the classroom, and volunteer at all the PTA family functions. Heather even serves as PTA Secretary this year. This is a winning team for the JSA community!

Kenwood Leadership Academy Magnet School

Jean Murray

Miss Jean - as she is known by Kenwood students - is a veteran volunteer. At 87 years young, many regard her as a loving grandmother and the one who stops them in the hallway to tie their shoe or make certain their coat is zipped as they head outside. She also shares her art expertise in the art room on a daily basis. It is her watercolor and ink artwork of the old Kenwood School that hangs in the school library and is part of the District's art collection. This spring Jean is leading a group students on the design of a mural at the school. Students are eager to learn from her and also to get or give a hug. She is definitely the epitome of one who provides selfless acts of kindness within our community.

Madison Elementary School

Shawnee Owens

Everyone at Madison knows Shawnee by name because of her enthusiasm for the school and helping students learn. Shawnee often volunteers several hours a day at school. Students benefit from the positive relationship, while also strengthening their reading, writing, and math skills. For those needing extra help, she is their biggest cheerleader! Her warm smile and helpful personality shine as she builds confidence in the students she works with. Shawnee also thrives at building positive relationships with staff at Madison. Teachers appreciate her ability to step in and help whenever she is needed. When the school was being painted, Shawnee helped teachers transition smoothly by helping them move to and from the temporary rooms. The Madison community is very grateful for her many talents.

Outstanding District Volunteer/Governor's Volunteer Award Honoree

Nixon Elementary School

Tomi Fuchs

Tomi is a wonderful asset to the Nixon school community, regularly volunteering 1-2 hours a day. She serves as PTA president, pops corn for PBIS Fridays, prepares take-home envelopes for families, and takes projects home herself to assist teachers. She also helps with classroom parties, chaperones field trips, and organizes fund raising events. When the PBIS team asked PTA to support a monthly breakfast recognizing students for good behavior, Tomi took the lead. She prepares and serves the hot meal each month for students and their invited guests. She has also helps prepare the special acknowledgements for these students. Staff and students know that they can count on Tomi. She goes above and beyond for the Nixon community.

Pierce Elementary School

Rebecca Jasper

Rebecca serves as a facilitator of the Pierce Book Cart Program, which provides a reading-level book for each kindergarten through second grade student to take home every night. She purchases and replaces books, and coordinates the team of daily volunteers who swap out books for students. Rebecca also volunteers in classrooms, filling a variety of needs for multiple teachers. Her commitment to literacy and to the Pierce school community is inspiring!

Taylor Elementary School
Sherril Walter-Glass

Sherril wears many volunteer hats at Taylor. Not only is she a motherly figure for students, she is their extra motivation. Throughout a school day, you'll find her greeting and helping students to make their way to classrooms, lunch, and specials. In the classroom provides one-on-one learning support, cleans and organizes the space, and helps distribute assignments and grade papers. Outside of the classroom, she helps provide students with healthy snacks by preparing the produce. This busy volunteer is a fabulous role model for students and staff!

Truman Elementary School
Christine Hodel

Christine has spent hundreds of hours over the past few years coordinating the Tiger Trot Walk-A-Thon. That event has raised over \$25,000.00 for the Truman PTO, supporting classroom needs, funding technology, and books. She has also served for several years as an officer with the PTO, helps teachers with clerical tasks, works one-on-one with students on skill development, transports and chaperones students to visit school partners at the West Ridge Care Center, and pitches in with field day, teacher appreciation events, conference meal preparations, and other school wide efforts. The Truman community is very grateful for her dedication and support.

Van Buren Elementary School
Jeff Foster

Jeff is affectionately known at Van Buren as the "popcorn dude!" Jeff spends every Friday (and often other days, as well) helping with such needs as organizing lost and found items, sharpening dull pencils, and - of course - popping corn for Pride Days! He is an official America Reads Day greeter and also volunteers for the mile run, Spring Fling and Field Day. Jeff has become an additional grandpa to many other kids and they all want to sit by him when he visits to have lunch with his grandsons. It helps that Jeff is well known at Van Buren; he's the school's former engineer. Van Buren is fortunate that he's remained such a dedicated member of the school community.

Viola Gibson Elementary School
Gary Van Middlesworth

Gary has volunteered for Lego League since the building opened 15 years ago. He volunteers several nights a week, on weekends, and even for an overnight trip to Ames for an event. The students in Lego League learn not only robotics and programming, but also what it means to give back to a community, teamwork, a quality work ethic, and so much more. The students take those skills back to their homerooms and share them with others. He brings other engineers to help, guides the teacher-coach to be a better leader, and makes a lasting impression on everyone involved. Former students of the Lego League program often comment on his influence. Gary is a quiet person, but his caring comes through loud and clear.

Wright Elementary School

Margaret Debner

During her two years as a Wright volunteer, Margaret has influenced the lives of numerous students by instilling in them a love for reading. She comes weekly to listen to students read. She goes above-and-beyond by providing extra reading opportunities on a certain topic, and even sends post cards to the class when she is on vacation! Her kind demeanor makes her a magnet for the students; there is always a line of students waiting to be the one to read next! Margaret has also made dozens of mittens to keep hands warm during the cold months and she always makes sure the Health Clinic has enough extra clothes on hand for those in need. She truly is an outstanding volunteer!

Franklin Middle School

Paul Salamon

Paul has worked with Franklin's Future Cities Program for more than 20 years. A retired engineer, his commitment to the program includes mentoring hundreds of teams, and even more students as they worked on all components of the competition. Even though he bikes to school, he is always there – rain or shine! He can simultaneously explain the mechanical workings of certain moving parts to one group while quizzing another group about a different scientific concept. His guidance allows students to figure out the answer on their own. The most recent team won first place at regional competition and traveled to Washington, D.C. this winter to compete on the national level where they won the award for Most Advanced Smart Grid! This volunteer is making a lasting impact!

Harding Middle School

Laura Grams

Laura is one of those individuals who sees a need and willingly steps in to help. Many of her volunteer hours have been spent helping with the Harding Show Choirs. Laura is one of those people that students connect with and parents turn to for questions and answers. As a "show choir mom," she helps order, alter and organizes the costumes, helps with hair and make-up for students before performances, and works to make sure students have whatever they need. Not only is she involved with the show choirs, she supports other fine arts as well. Laura has helped with set design, costumes, and performance communications. Her positive attitude and willingness to do what is needed is greatly appreciated.

McKinley Middle School

Ann Freeman

Ann is among McKinley's most involved volunteers. As an active PTA member, she maintains the e-mail distribution list and Sign Up Genius account to ensure communication is smooth and volunteers are informed. In addition, she has served as PTA vice president. Ann plays an instrumental role in the school's fundraising efforts. She organizes concession sales that fund extracurricular activities, is chairing this year's Variety Show, and is providing significant support to sub committees. Ann is also a very involved band parent. She heads up all the uniform checkouts at music concerts, and if a volunteer isn't in place, she attends the concert and does the uniform check out. In addition, she finds time to chaperone various band events. Ann's dedication to supporting McKinley exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism.

Roosevelt Middle School

Mary Young

As Roosevelt's volunteer coordinator, Mary's contributions far exceed the basics of the role. During her tenure, she has been an active member of the PTA, has spent many long hours helping our Language Arts and Math departments, and is willing to help out whenever else help is needed. Most importantly, Mary is a strong advocate for Roosevelt within the Cedar Rapids community. Staff that work with Mary describe her as "friendly," "flexible," "caring," "patient," "positive," and "optimistic."

Taft Middle School

Bridget Ferry

As a 6th grade parent, Bridget volunteered in the library both before and after her going to her 'real' job working in the school cafeteria. She helped with a wide assortment of library tasks such as checking in, shelving, and book repair. As a 7th and now 8th grade parent, her commitment to volunteering remained steadfast each afternoon even as her job responsibilities increased. Bridget is willing to help any teacher and has made countless copies, created multiple bulletin boards, and become the queen of the laminating machine. Students also recognize Bridget's commitment to Taft as they see her as a friendly, helpful face in both her job in the cafeteria and in her volunteer work in the library. What a treasure it is for Taft to have this volunteer in the building each day.

Wilson Middle School

Melissa Walker

Melissa manages the Hy-Vee receipt program at Wilson...and anything else that's needed. She is known as "Johnny on the spot." She's there. No questions asked. Always with a smile. The mother of four also volunteers at other schools and cares for a relative. Her caring spirit of volunteerism can be depended on!

Jefferson High School

Lisa Dlouhy

Lisa has served on the Jefferson PTSA for 11 years and in many different capacities including President, Vice-President, membership chair, talent show chair, and volunteer coordinator. She has also been the president of the Cleveland and Roosevelt PTAs, the Cedar Rapids City PTA as well as being the current President Elect for the Iowa State PTA. All in all, Lisa has been volunteering for the benefit of parents and students since the year 2000. Under her leadership, the PTSA has raised and granted thousands of dollars for student and teacher scholarships and grants. She's truly an outstanding volunteer!

Kennedy High School

Terry Chostner

Currently president of the Kennedy Athletic Booster Club, Terry also served on the Board and been the most consistent, involved, and innovative volunteer. When a committee or event needs leadership, Terry is the "make it happen" volunteer. This has been most prevalent in fundraising efforts, where he took charge of Kennedy's Benchwarmers event and successfully raised \$15,000 to \$22,000 a year in each of the past 4 years. Terry has demonstrated the same leadership with the annual Cougar Golf Outing, helping to raise \$15,000-\$20,000 every year. Throughout it all, Terry stays in the background, leading by example and planning the next event. The Kennedy Cougars are proud of Terry's efforts and very grateful for his leadership.

Metro High School

Richard Dean

An electrical engineer, Richard volunteers each week to mentor students and assist with STEAM Academy projects. He teaches small electronics skills, drawing circuits, writing code, and using the Arduino micro controller. Richard is currently leading an Arduino seminar where he meets once a week with a small group of students helping them learn to wire and program using the Arduino Uno. Rich works to build a trusting and supportive environment for students to learn physical science concepts. His wealth of knowledge is an invaluable resource to the STEAM Academy staff and students.

Washington High School

Jane Hutchins

Rather than focus on a specific academic subject or activity, Jane has provided holistic support for students and school culture. Her leadership led to the establishment of the Warrior Closet, providing clothing, school supplies, and daily food support; and the Warrior Pantry, which provides monthly food support and emergency meals to families. Her interest in positive school culture led her to volunteer to support meditation as a tool for student success. She is now supporting teacher training in these techniques. As an executive officer in PTA, Jane has nurtured a welcoming spirit for parents and focused attention on the unique opportunities and gifts of Washington High School.



Cedar Rapids Community School District

Excellence for All

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (employment only), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (students/program only) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. District employees with questions or a grievance related to this policy should contact Rodrick Dooley, Executive Director of Human Resources, rdooley@cr.k12.ia.us 319-558-2000. Students and others should contact Ken Morris, Jr., Manager of Student Equity/Title IX Coordinator, kmorris@cr.k12.ia.us or Paul Hayes, Director of Learning Supports/504 Compliance Officer phayes@cr.k12.ia.us 319-558-2000. The District mailing address is 2500 Edgewood Rd NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405-1015.