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Welcome To a New Year!

We are off to an amazing start this Fall. It's great to see so many new volunteers and to have volunteers returning as second, third and fourth year volunteers. Everyone is ready and willing to help in our schools. Thank you!

Without you, who would provide suggestions when a student doesn't feel capable of writing an essay? Who will help a student understand the square root of 25? It's volunteers like you who can take the time to explain a solution in a different way until a student says "I know the answer!", followed by a smile and thank you.

This school year is already full of successes. I recently came across a quote that represents what the staff and volunteers are experiencing. "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success." I believe it represents the teamwork volunteers and teachers experience as they work together to support our student. I look forward to hearing about the successes, challenges and learning moments you have this year. We are in this together!



Volunteer Training

Date: January 10th

Time: 6:30p.m. - 7:30p.m.

Motivating students in a world of family stresses, peer judgment and the expectation to perform well in school can be a challenge. Often students feel overwhelmed by the demands coming from parents, teachers and friends.

Despite the desire most students have to do well in school, they sometimes encounter obstacles that affect their ability to stay focused and on track with their studies. Stresses students experience can change year to year or even hour to hour.

Kirkland Junior High Counselor Carol Hinrichs will share contributing factors that can play into a student's ability to perform at their personal best. She will discuss outside influences that may have an impact on a student's academic performance and how you can encourage them to stay on track and do well in school.

Lunch Buddies at Redmond Elementary

Meet Rick and Mario



Rick and his lunch buddy were matched in March of 2009. When I asked what he gets out of it, Rick said, “I look forward to my one hour lunch with Mario as a great diversion from the work week and a chance to play that I otherwise wouldn't have. It's like getting to be a kid again but with the responsibility of being an adult and being a good male role model.” Rick encourages learning by playing spelling games like Scrabble with Mario. When they first began meeting, Lunch Buddy Coordinator Kathy Dennis immediately saw an improvement in Mario's attitude.

Kathy shared, “Rick is always here on his lunch buddy day and that consistency is really important in a mentoring match. I think it's helped to form the great bond they have. Rick encourages Mario with his schoolwork and Mario loves the one-on-one attention. They truly have a great friendship. It's so much fun to see them together.” Rick added “During the second year of our match, Mario just seemed to smile and talk a lot more. I must say that he is certainly now a rather outgoing young man who seems to be very confident.”

Rick was asked what he would tell someone who's on the fence about being a lunch buddy. His response was, “The biggest obstacle for the potential volunteer always seems to be the time commitment. I am just programmed to have a lunch date with my lunch buddy the same day each week for most of the school year. I look forward to it, and feel rejuvenated from the experience. I'm really not sure who benefits the most from our time together - Mario or me?”

Redmond High School Volunteer

Linda Burns



Kia duNann is thankful to have a LINKS volunteer helping in her geometry class. Linda volunteers four days per week to work with a group of ELL students during their math class. Kia commented, “She spends time working with each student in a group setting, guiding them through different problems and translating all of the material so the students are more comfortable with the math. Linda is always there to translate the tests or quizzes, but never tells them what to do or how to do it. She always wants the students to put in their best effort.”

When asked what do you get out of volunteering, Linda’s response was, “It is very satisfying for me to be able to directly impact the kids by helping them understand what they are learning. When they get it, I see their faces light up and when they are struggling, I can help by giving them the tools they need to succeed.” Linda has created a positive learning environment for the students she works with by boosting confidence in themselves. She is truly making a difference!

Teamwork is most certainly the theme in this match. Every day Linda stays after class and talks with Kia about how each student did, what they did well on and where they struggled. She’s passionate about their abilities and encourages the students to be successful in this class. Kia added, “She has been such a blessing for me!” Linda comes to the class with a smile every morning, along with the heartfelt encouragement she provides to the students.

I asked Linda if she could recall a significant milestone one or more of the students made and this was her response, “I think that my involvement has helped the kids participate more in class, because they aren’t as afraid to volunteer an answer when asked. I feel that their confidence has improved. I am grateful to be able to volunteer through LINKS because it has allowed me to use my talents to help others in a positive and meaningful way. I feel that the school officials, teachers, IAs, secretaries have responded so well to my presence at the school and so have the kids! It has been a very positive experience for me all around.”



DATES TO REMEMBER

'No School Days'

December 19th –
January 2nd

Volunteer Training

January 10th, 2012

6:30 p.m. at the LWSD
Resource Center



LINKS

Program Coordinator:
Nanci Wehr
425-936-1410
links@lwsd.org

December Holiday Celebrations

It's that time of year when holiday cheer is in the air. Below are upcoming holidays LWSD students may be celebrating in the coming months.

- ◆ Hanukkah - December 20 at sunset
- ◆ Christmas - December 25
- ◆ Kwanzaa, - Dec. 26 – Jan. 1
- ◆ New Year's Day - January 1
- ◆ Japanese New Year festivities - January 1-3
- ◆ Epiphany (Greek Orthodox Christian) - January 6
- ◆ Orthodox Christmas (Eastern Orthodox Christian) - January 7
- ◆ Chinese New Year (Start of the Year of the Dragon) - January 23

Although this is a time for many of us to celebrate one or more of these holidays, please remember to be conservative in sharing your personal views of religious holidays with students.

It may also be tempting to do something special for the students you meet with regularly. If you are considering doing this, please talk with the teacher you work with, the school office or Nanci Wehr at links@lwsd.org to determine what is best depending on the circumstances.

Make Your Hours Count!

Do you know that in the state of Washington, one volunteer hour has an estimated value of \$21.62?

During the 2010-2011 school year, LINKS had 158 volunteers sharing their time in our schools. Together, their combined hours totaled 4,399! That's an estimated value of **\$95,106.38!**

Help us to continue growing our pot of gold!

Please remember to sign into the LINKS binder every time you volunteer in a school. Contact Nanci Wehr if you have questions about this.

