Since its inception, the Denver Public Schools Volunteer Program has provided the school district with invaluable resources in the form of person-hours, financial contributions, and donated equipment and supplies. By far the most significant achievement of the program has been its ability to mobilize community involvement in our students’ progress. With the outpouring of community support and participation, over 4,000 community members have volunteered their time in the Denver Public Schools. As any student in one of these programs will tell you, volunteers make an enormous impact on students’ lives. That impact is made possible largely because the school district has been willing to invest in organizing programs that go beyond the scope of what district funds could achieve alone. Working together with community partners and parent volunteers, the school district has been able to turn a relatively small budgetary allocation into a significant return — for schools and programs, but mostly for DPS students.

**Sample of In-Kind Donations**

- State of the Art Weight Bench for MLK Gym
- Office Supplies
- 2000 foam trays
- 14 Office Chairs
- 2500 plastic accordion folders
- 4000 boxes of Kleenex

**“Waste Not, Want Not”**

Each month, the DPS Volunteer Services receives several phone calls from businesses and individuals who are interested in donating items. Sometimes the items are new, sometimes used, but always needed. This past year several companies that were relocating to another state wanted to clear their offices and warehouse of office furniture and supplies. One individual purchased a state-of-the art weight bench and never quite found the time to use it. He was generous enough to pay to have moved it to the gym of Martin Luther King and calibrated once it arrived at the school.

To donate an item, contact the department at volunteer_services@dpsk12.org.
Volunteer Orientation

The Office of Volunteer Services is excited about unveiling a district-wide volunteer orientation.

The orientation is designed to inform parents and volunteers about the benefits of volunteering and to provide information and resources to ensure volunteers have a rewarding experience. The orientation training covers essential topics including:

- DPS Mission
- Programs
- Benefits of Volunteering
- DPS Emergency and Safety Guidelines
- Student Confidentiality Policy
- Classroom Tips
- Tutoring Tips
- School Culture and Values

The following are the training dates for 2008/2009:

- Wednesday, Oct. 22
  6:00—7:00 pm
- Wednesday, Nov. 5
  10:00—11:00 am
- Thurs. Nov. 13
  6—7 pm
- Thurs. Dec. 4
  6—7 pm
- Mon. Dec. 15
  10—11 am

Contact Volunteer Services at 720-424-8245 or to make a reservation or request a school-specific training.

DPS & Youth Mentoring Collaborative

This year for the first time the Office of Volunteer Services partnered with the Youth Mentoring Collaborative (YMC) to recruit mentors for DPS students. It was an opportunity for current tutors to learn about what they could do to have a greater impact in the lives of the children they tutor.

Studies show that mentoring programs help young people improve their school performance, social skills, self-esteem and ultimately, their future.

The Youth Mentoring Collaborative is comprised of 15 mentoring organizations and 8 resource partners that share a united vision: “To positively impact youth who may benefit from volunteer mentoring through a high quality mentoring program.” For more information, call Brenda Vasquez, 720-424-8245.
Adaptive Devices Volunteers Win DOVIA Award

The Adaptive Devices Volunteers were the proud recipient of the annual Director of Volunteers In Agencies (DOVIA) award for outstanding volunteer group. DOVIA is a professional volunteer management organization.

The Denver Public Schools Adaptive Devices Volunteer group invents, designs, and builds equipment for special needs students throughout Denver Public Schools. Every Monday, this dedicated and vibrant group of retirees, designs, sews and builds all types of specialized equipment needed in classrooms. Items constructed include electrical switches for activating tape recorders at the tap of small, uncoordinated fingers, to leg rests for supporting little feet that don’t touch the floor, to slant boards for raising desks that meet tiny hands. The volunteers created wooden bird house kits which the special needs students assembled and decorated. This project allowed the students to work on their motor skills and the decorated birdhouses became Mother’s Day gifts.

Every week for the last 23 years, our Adaptive Devices volunteers have tirelessly donated their time, energy and expertise designing custom-made gadgets to help special needs students perform in their classroom. They’re a small but mighty group and the impact of their hard work over the years has positively impacted hundreds of students.

The Adaptive Devices Volunteer Group was started by Tony Julio in 1984. Tony was a retired electrical engineer. He spent more than 1,000 days at Hamilton Middle School heading the volunteer group. Walter Lopez is currently the dedicated leader.

“There’s a small but mighty group and the impact of their hard work over the years has positively impacted hundreds of students.”

Brenda Vasquez, Manager

DPS Volunteer Services
Property Tax Credit Volunteers

In 1992, the Colorado State Legislature passed a bill which allows citizens age 60 and over to participate in a property tax work-off program. The passage of the act allows DPS to offer a property tax credit (PTC) to eligible seniors who volunteer in the schools.

Currently, nearly 90 PTC volunteer are active in 37 schools. Most PTC volunteers tutor in the classroom. Other volunteers assist in the library and tell stories in the classroom as part of the Spell Binders program.

One Library Teacher writes “Lucy does invaluable work for the school — especially during this time when money is tight and she could not be replaced...”.

Please contact the Office of Volunteer Services for more information about the PTC program.

Spellbinder Volunteers — It's All About Stories by Judy Gordon

Remember how magical it was to listen to stories when you were young? It still is magical! Only now anyone can be the storyteller, the one creating the magic.

Denver Spellbinders is a group of adults who volunteer to visit Denver Public Schools classrooms and tell stories. The group always welcomes new members. Volunteers attend trainings and develop a repertoire of stories to tell in schools of their choosing. In addition to visiting schools, the tellers also meet monthly as a group to support each other and to improve their skills.

Started in 1989, Denver Spellbinders is the first chapter of what has grown into a national organization with 20+ chapters around the country. The Denver chapter's more than 30 active members tell stories in 40 DPS schools annually reaching 300 individual classrooms and over 60,000 students.

DPS Teachers love Spellbinders. “Our students are always asking me if it’s storyteller week! They love having the teller here on a regular basis. It would be even more wonderful if there were more tellers in our school so we could reach more students.”

Students praise Spellbinders. A 2nd grade student at Wyatt-Edison writes: “Dar Mis barb, Thank you for telling stories to us. You are nice. Your are exciting. You are a soopr star! We all like your storys. The storys are fun. Your storys make me happy.”

The benefits of storytelling to children are many:

- stimulus to reading;
- communication between the generations;
- acquainting children with the stories of many cultures and many lives;
- enhancing language development, listening skills, and oral comprehension;
- and stimulating creative imagination and sequential thinking.

For more information about Spellbinder volunteer opportunities, please contact the Office of Volunteer Services at 720-424-8245.

“Our students are always asking me if it’s storyteller week!”

DPS Teacher
Annual CAPE Awards Ceremony

Each year, the Colorado Association of Partners in Education (CAPE) recognizes an individual, group and business from each of the state’s seven Congressional Districts for their exemplary volunteer partnership with public schools. Recipients of the 29th Volunteer of the Year Awards were honored by the DPS Board of Education at their monthly board meeting.

Award recipients have volunteered hundreds of hours to DPS. Their creativity and service have enhanced student learning at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

CAPE is a state-wide coalition of volunteer directors whose mission is to provide professional growth opportunities and a network of members who advance the development, growth and recognition of school volunteers and partnerships.

2007 Denver Winners—

Individual Volunteer Award
John Castellano

Group Volunteer Award
DU Pioneer Partners

Business Volunteer Award
American Medical Response

John Castellano

Mr. John Castellano has made many contributions to the educating of young minds in the Greenlee Elementary School Lincoln Park Scholars program since 1992.

Mr. Castellano has been able to acquire Lincoln Park Scholars funding and any other needed tutoring supplies almost every year. He is instrumental in planning meetings, organizing educational development for our tutors, calling parents who did not bring their children, providing transportation to students, working with students missing a tutor and helping as required to make each tutoring night a success.

The one valuable attribute that Mr. Castellano never compromises on is his high expectations of each student in the program. He knows with parent involvement, quality teaching, and tutor help each motivated student will become a productive and valuable member of society who can attain their life goals.

The extremely successful tutoring program at University Park Elementary School relies on the outstanding partnership with Denver University. DU selects students from its service learning organization and other programs who tutor students.

The program benefits both the child who is struggling to meet grade level standards and the high achieving child who wants to go above and beyond the regular classroom curricula. The students enjoy the time spent one-on-one with their tutor and routinely ask in the beginning of the school year, “When is tutoring going to start?” The students feel it is a privilege to work with their tutor and view the time as productive and fun.

Another wonderful feature of the tutoring program is the enjoyment the tutors have being part of an elementary student’s education. Every effort is made to keep the same student-tutor partnerships throughout the sessions and years.
Volunteers Go The Extra Mile…

• Over 1500 new community members have volunteered their time in the Denver Public Schools.

• Spellbinder volunteers tell stories at 42 elementary schools in over 320 classrooms to nearly 10,000 children.

Colorado Association of Partners in Education Award Winner—American Medical Response

For the past twenty years, AMR (American Medical Response) has worked with Community Resources, Inc. (CRI), an educational non-profit, to bring programs and educational opportunities to the children of Denver Public Schools. Recently AMR was recognized for having presented over 500 programs in DPS.

AMR brings its “Ambulance Visits the School” program to classrooms throughout our school district. The EMT’s talk with the students about emergency medicine and when and why ambulances are utilized. AMR staff also volunteers as presenters at CRI’s Family Involvement Science and Health Nights. At these events parents and students are invited back to the school in the evening for an engaging and educational program.

Finally, AMR staff participates in CRI’s Career Fairs at elementary, middle and high schools throughout DPS providing students with information about the wide variety of careers in the medical field. They often do hands-on demonstrations of rescue techniques and uses of emergency medical equipment. The students love these presentations.

In addition to being a living example of the community’s commitment to education, AMR’s programs bring valuable information to our students in an engaging and memorable fashion.

AMR’s long-standing and deep commitment to public service and community engagement through their 500+ presentations to students and families in Denver make them highly deserving of recognition. Their professional presentations, their enthusiasm, their dedication to the public and their partnerships with the community are a true blessing to our students, families and city.

Sue Edwards, CRI Exec. Director, Brad, AMR, MaryAnn Mayo, CRI, Chad Fahlenkamp, General Manager, AMR, Debbie Turner, CRI