



Lunch/Reading Buddy News

Vancouver Rotary Club

Volume 4, Issue 2

June 2003

Have a Wonderful Summer

It has been a great pleasure working with everyone throughout this school year. Thank you for keeping me updated on contact information changes, your status in the program, and contributing to the newsletter. The biggest thank you is for volunteering with kids that really appreciate you in their lives.

Remember to contact your school or Rotary Coordinator in late August 2003 to reconnect with your buddy or help a new buddy. Also, if you know someone who would like to volunteer for next year, please contact me at jenniferl@murdock-trust.org or 694-8415, your school, or your Rotary coordinator.

Have a wonderful summer and thanks again!

Jennifer Larson

Editor

Lunch/Reading Buddy Celebration 2003

This year's Lunch/Reading Buddy Celebration was a huge success. We had approximately 300 kids and adults attend from six of our seven schools. There was lots of food and fun with the magician and the face painter. Buddies played games such as Frisbee and ball, had fun on the playground equipment, and just spent time together in the wonderful June sun. The Principals race was another big success. The Columbian newspaper had a great picture of the principal's race in the Wednesday, June 4, Clark County section of the newspaper. The article also quoted buddies about their experiences in the program and our Chair, Jerry Rolling about the program as a whole.

A special thanks goes out to all our volunteers that helped make this picnic so special. Our wonderful leader and head coordinator Jan Fancher; without all her tireless work the picnic would not be possible. This year we had a committee that put on the picnic; Jan Fancher, Dale Bowlin, Larry Hull, Joann Lusky, and myself, Jennifer Larson.

We also recruited several other volunteers to help us cook. The chefs included Ray Borde, Ed Faulk, Terry Thomas, and Jack Zalaha. Also, a special thanks Jollette Fancher, Nadinne Robertson, Dawn Mabie, and Ali Hill for helping with anything that we needed.

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A great big "THANKS" to our corporate sponsors Burgerville, Frito Lay, Cascade Bar and Grill, Food Services of America, and the main sponsor the Vancouver Rotary Club.

We hope everyone had a wonderful time and it is just a great end to another fabulous year.

Chairman Jerry's Corner

Anonymous Stories

As Chairman I hear many stories that make me realize anew the need for the program and the many successes it has had and appreciate the progress we are making.

Recently one of our adults was sitting with 6 girls in the cafeteria. One of the girls commented that another of the group appeared to be depressed. The girl replied that she missed her father and that he seemed to be slipping out of her life. She hadn't seen or heard from him for a month. In going around the table it turned out that only one of these grade 4 girls had a father at home, 2 hadn't seen their fathers in the last year and the last two only saw or heard from their fathers sporadically. The girls were supportive of their friend but, tragically, on the basis of "never mind, it's normal".

My second tale is more complicated. The little girl is living with her father and girlfriend, sleeping in the basement and picked on by her older stepsisters. (Remind you of a certain Fairy tale?) The natural Mother had resisted granting permission for participation in the program initially and forbade any contact outside school period.

On the girl's birthday the mother showed up in the cafeteria bearing cupcakes. Five minutes later the adult Lunch Buddy arrived with a Burgerville meal. Fearing a confrontation she hung back until she was encouraged by a fellow Lunch Buddy to smile and introduce herself. There followed an extraordinary one-hour conversation. The mother had been bullied by the military into accepting a diagnosis of mental illness in order to protect her husband (their soldier). It affected everything she tried to do and she was afraid to exercise her custody rights since her past was constantly being brought up as "evidence" that she was unfit. After help and encouragement from the Lunch Buddy the mother now has confidence, a suitable apartment, and custody of the daughter who is doing much better.

Barbara Hammon

Barbara was the School District Volunteer Coordinator at King and a big supporter of our Lunch Buddy and Tutor programs. She has since moved on to Hough School and is starting a program there, which will be affiliated with Rotary. Hough has nearly all the children from homeless families in the county so Barbara is taking on a huge challenge. Good luck to her and, as ever, call me if you want to help.

Where are we going with expanding the program?

We currently have about 170 volunteers in Roosevelt, King, Washington, Harney, Walnut Grove, Image, Eisenhower and Hough. The superintendent of Evergreen has asked to meet with us to put programs into all his schools. Ogden has asked us to participate. Frankly all we can do at this point is to replace volunteer dropouts in our existing schools.

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Our recently adopted plan is to partner with companies, government departments, neighborhood groups and other service clubs to adopt individual schools. This will take the burden of recruiting away from us. We will continue to administer the program, produce the newsletter and run the picnic. Over a period of time we aim to turn over the program to a community non-profit with diverse participation.

Big Brothers Big Sisters

I have become a Big Brother to my Lunch Buddy. I also joined the board. Debbie Coppenger, the Executive Director (and also one of our Lunch Buddies), is multi talented, very experienced and doing a tremendous job helping the Bigs make better lives for their Littles. I have personal knowledge of this.

However, with the economy, 9/11, little Foundation money being available for ongoing expenses and being a young operation in Clark County fund raising has been a challenge. Debbie has obtained a matching grant from the Meyer Foundation promising \$40,000 if the local Big Brothers Big Sisters can raise \$40,000 from small donations. The bulk of these matching funds have been raised and I am asking you to call me if you can help put them over the edge. A cash donation or a pledge to donate with this calendar year is sufficient but that donation or pledge has to be in June.

This has been frustrating to the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of SW Washington as most of the established chapters have sufficient funds but few volunteers to be Bigs. SW Washington is blessed with volunteers, the challenge of many at risk kids waiting for Bigs but insufficient funds to do the job according the national rules. Call me, Jerry Rolling at 281-8222 for a pledge form or where to send a check.

Being a Lunch Buddy is all in the Family

Larry Hull started at Washington Elementary as a tutor buddy and did that for two years. Some time in that two years, he took over as the Rotary coordinator. That was about 5 years ago. At first he was apprehensive about committing to one child as a lunch buddy because his work travel schedule made it difficult to be there every week. He learned that you didn't have to be there every week if you communicated with your little buddy that you might not make it. So about 4 years ago, he took Alberto. Alberto and Larry have had a good time ever since. Alberto will be moving on to Middle School next year so he will be getting a new buddy. I think the experience of building the program at Washington has been great because it is so important to these kids to have someone they can count on to pay attention to them.

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Also Larry's first year as coordinator he and Dick Pakenen and started an after school basketball program with his lunch buddy and some other 4th graders. It was fun at first, but got to be a real chore because the kids got bored, and there were some real behavior issues that we were dealing with. It made Dick and Larry appreciate how it takes a professional to do something as simple as organize an after school event. So Dick went back to work in Hillsboro and gave up his lunch buddy and I stuck with Alberto.

Megan Hull joined the program on the recommendation of Larry in September 2002. She has enjoyed the program so much that she as recruited others from her work. Her first buddy moved away but she was paired with another buddy and has been enjoying the experience.

It just goes to show that Lunch buddying can be all in the family. To follow in her dad's footsteps maybe we will have to get Megan to be the coordinator at Washington some day. 😊



Barbara also wanted to personally add her thoughts about all the volunteers and the program:

The Lunch Buddy program..... I'm the president of the fan club, a huge supporter!! This program proves itself over and over again. In my 4 school years implementing the program at King Elementary, I have watched children improve attendance, raise academic scores, gain self-esteem and become happier kids. As the program grew, I watched as higher numbers of students became invested in their school community and just plain proud to be a part of it. Recently one child's needs required a move to another school to take part in a Life Skills program. Her buddy went with her to continue their relationship and help her integrate into her new surroundings. Another student moved on to a Structured Learning Center and his buddy made the change as well to help this transition go smoothly and let the little buddy know he's still there for him. These situations are the best of what we'd hoped for with the program and it's happening at all the Lunch/Tutor Buddy schools. I now have the opportunity at another high-risk school (Hough, just in case you want to know) to begin this program with the knowledge of just what it will bring to Hough students.

I have been blessed to work with the Vancouver Rotary and to witness children's lives being touched by caring adults, both Tutors and Lunch Buddies. Many thanks to Mr. Dale Bowlin for keeping me updated, being a wonderful role model to King kids and my friend. I will miss working with Dale. Also a HUGE "THANK YOU" to Vancouver Rotary for making King's beautiful reader board sign possible.

CALDENDAR

Last Day of School

**Friday
June 20, 2003**

First Day of School	September 4, 2003
In-Service – No School	October 10, 2003
Thanksgiving	November 26-28, 2003
Winter Holiday	Dec 22 – Jan 22, 2004

Have submissions or suggestions for the next newsletter?

Please provide them to:

Jennifer Larson
jenniferl@murdock-trust.org
Fax: 696-4183
Phone: 694-8415



Until Next Time

Have Fun With Your Buddies

Small Children Need Big Friends Committee
**Dale Bowlin, Wayne Clemetson, Dick Kunkle,
Jan Fancher, Glen Lamb, Jerry Rolling,
Karey Schoenfeld**

Your Editor
Jennifer Larson