

The Volunteer Services Office is proud to spotlight the

Cedar Rapids Community Schools

VOLUNTEER HALL OF FAME

2022-2023

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 nominating schools.

Arthur Elementary School

Jennifer Ritchie

Jennifer Ritchie was chosen to be our Outstanding Building Volunteer for many reasons. Jennifer currently has 2 of her 4 children at Arthur. She also has a middle schooler and a high schooler. Jennifer also volunteered at Arthur while her older children attended Arthur and she's volunteered often this school year until being recently hired as a paraeducator. She continues to volunteer and support Arthur beyond her work day. Jennifer has always been very involved with her kids and their teachers. She volunteers in the classrooms, she has also provided snacks for several classroom parties. She has been a staple when it comes to helping add up all the Hy-Vee receipts that our school collects. Jennifer is very efficient and thorough in everything she does. She has volunteered for field trips and is always willing to help any way she can. She has done as much as sharpen pencils to go pick up food bags for our Food Bag Backpack program. Jennifer has spent many hours working in the hallways helping students with reading and math. Jennifer is also a member of our PTA. She has a very calming demeanor about her, and the students really enjoy working with her. Jennifer is a volunteer we can count on because she is so willing to help in any way she can and that is why Jennifer was chosen for our Outstanding Building Volunteer.

Cedar River Academy Magnet School at Taylor Elementary School

Kristi Pingel

Kristi Pingel has led two big projects over the past several years on behalf of CRA. Kristi organized volunteers to complete a make over of our library when we received new shelving. Her volunteers also cleaned shelves and lockers. Recently she organized fundraising for wood chips for our three playgrounds. Radiant Church volunteers raise \$1000s of dollars to cover the surface area of three playgrounds and our garden areas with wood chips. She had about 50 people on a Saturday spread the wood chips on our playgrounds. It was a full semi truck of wood chips. She has also raised money for school supplies for our school. Kristi is a great person to have on your team. She spreads light and love to our school. Thank you

Cleveland Elementary School

Doug Elam

Mr. Doug provides a consistent, caring presence to Cleveland that uplifts our school community. Every week he volunteers for two hours providing patient reading support for students that uses his expertise as a retired Reading Coach. The students smile when they see him, knowing he is a friendly and safe presence. Mr. Doug has also helped with the school's hearing tests, the PTA's February treats for teachers (his cake was a staff favorite), and currently is organizing meals for all teachers during their evening Parent-Teacher Conferences. Mr. Doug has a heart for service and is working in the broader community to promote service in schools and at the Salvation Army. He has truly been a blessing to our community and deserves to be honored for his commitment and care.

Erskine Elementary School

Cindy Monroe

Cindy has been a great addition to our school! She spends every Tuesday morning in Mrs. Cooper's 2nd grade class. She has bonded with all the kids and has even come on field trips! She has a kind and calm presence and is always happy to help anyone! We have really enjoyed having Mrs. Monroe in our building this year!

Garfield Elementary School

Chris Sawyer

Chris Sawyer is at every PTA sponsored event helping with anything that needs to get done. He pops popcorn, serves concessions, sells tickets, sets up games, sets up sound systems, etc. He has skills in construction and has built games for our carnivals and game nights and he also built the playground GaGa Ball pit. He is a great male role model for our students and his contributions to Garfield are very much appreciated.

Grant Elementary School

Pamela Smith

Pam Smith comes weekly to read to our kindergarten classes. Her grandson is in one of the classes, however, she reads to all three of our classes. She volunteers to read to all of the Kindergarten classes on a weekly basis.

Grant Wood Elementary School

Maura Pilcher

Since joining the Grant Wood community two years ago, Maura Pilcher has made a huge impact on our school with equity and inclusion being the two factors that drive her leadership and decision making for all events, programming, and projects that she helps plan and lead at our school. Maura immediately got involved at Grant Wood! She embraced the diversity of our population and wanted to make sure that the PTA board evaluated all of our traditional events and programming with the goal that they fit the needs and accessibility for ALL students. This included having PTA offer a “no cost” component to all of our PTA events and programming like Santa's Workshop, Griffin Grill-Out, Ice Cream Social and various other events and programming to make these events accessible and affordable for all families. Maura is a natural bridge builder. She has a personality that is energetic, passionate, and positive. When asked about why she encourages others to volunteer Maura replied, “ I cannot think of a more guaranteed return on investment than volunteering in our public schools!” She adds, I feel like my volunteering is quite selfish. I get lifted up every time I walk on the grounds and I see teachers and staff doing really hard work and doing it with empathy.” Maura Pilcher is a TRUE supporter of Grant Wood and sees the strength and value of diversity and inclusion. She is a true “Hope Spot” for our school and our families.

Harrison Elementary School

Mary Stubblefield

Miss Mary volunteers in Mrs. Cahalan's Kindergarten classroom 2 to 3 times a week. She helps children as they enter the room and begin their entry tasks. She greets all the children and helps to refocus them, as needed. She meets with 3 children one on one to review letters, sounds and sight words, has them practice handwriting, and shares a story with them. The students truly enjoy working with Miss Mary. She motivates them with praise and helps them to feel successful. Those who do not work directly with her enjoy chatting with her and sharing stories with her. She makes them feel seen and validated. I feel blessed to work with such a dedicated volunteer. Mary is also a volunteer who is always there to help in any way she can (even if it is a last minute thing) Harrison is blessed to have her as our volunteer and we truly appreciate all that she does.

Hiawatha Elementary School

Leah Moser

Leah Moser is the epitome of selflessness. She simply sees a void and fills it. She regularly asks what is needed in the classroom and happily provides it. Leah's contributions and support to Hiawatha are great! One of her early acts of service was heading up the distribution of t-shirts for our annual fundraiser, the Cougar Challenge. She made sure every child received a free t-shirt that fit them. She has also served on our building's Tier 1 committee for the last two years as a parent representative. She provides valuable insight on how to support and recognize positive student behavior. As such, she has found volunteers to pop popcorn weekly as one of Tier 1 incentives. Leah takes care of HyVee receipts, organizes the Kona Ice celebration, copies and distributes flyers for all of the school fundraisers and organizes conference meals for teachers. During the most recent holiday celebration, Leah took time off to come in and help run a station during the party for which she bought all the supplies and made the activity. When the PTO presidency became vacant mid-year, Leah was the logical choice to fill that role. Though Leah works full time, she finds the time to do the behind-the-scenes work that makes Hiawatha great! Hiawatha is so lucky to have her!

Hoover Elementary School

Jill Zeck

Jill has been supporting Hoover and the community in this area for many years now, she is selfless with her time and her outreach/ impact has been tremendous for us all. Jill goes above and beyond for Hoover families, staff, and the community around us. We can always count on Jill to be a supporting parent for our PTA , a community member , and for our staff. Jill is a part of our Hoover family and shows the Hoover way through everything she does.

Johnson STEAM Academy Magnet School

Robert & Mary Wangsness

Bob and Mary Wangsness have volunteered many hours in kindergarten for the 2022-2023 school year. They have helped with everything including zipping coats, tying shoes, helping with counting, writing numbers and letters, learning letter sounds, and most importantly being huge cheerleaders for the kindergartners and their learning. They are dependable and incredibly patient with our littlest learners. They both have been a big reason for such a successful kindergarten year at JSA.

Kenwood Leadership Academy Magnet School & Outstanding District Volunteer/Governor's Volunteer Award Honoree

Trystin Lashley

It takes a good person to walk the line and do the better things in life; however, it takes a great person to go the extra mile and be a volunteer. Trystin Lashley is not only a very busy senior at Mt. Vernon High School, participating in 3 sports, marching band, show choir, and various other activities, he happily assisted at Kenwood this past year assisting the custodial staff, moving furniture, cleaning and sorting student devices, and volunteering in Nancy Raue's alternative kindergarten classroom. Trystin always stepped up to the plate and rose to the challenge with a smile on his face. We are very proud to introduce Trystin as Kenwood's Volunteer of the Year.

Annually, the volunteer office invites a committee of three to select a volunteer, out of the honorees submitted, as our Outstanding "District" Volunteer. Trystin Lashley was selected for that honor this year. Trystin will be the District's designated recipient of the 2023 Governor's Award for Volunteerism. Governor Reynolds will present these awards this summer. Congratulations, Trystin!!

Madison Elementary School

Stacey Straub

PTA is a great organization but we don't have as many volunteers as we would like. It takes so much time to organize and execute the events, and that falls on the small number of PTA members' shoulders. Stacey has done an excellent job of leading the group so our school reaps the PTA benefits. She works hard to make sure the PTA is active and keeps going. She does a lot of behind the scenes work that goes unnoticed unless you've attended a PTA meeting and know. She has undertaken so much to help organize and restart our PTA. It is even more successful and supportive for all students and staff at Madison!

Maple Grove Elementary School

Amie Peck

Amie has been an active member of the PTA for years, serving as treasurer and filling in for other needed roles. She has developed, coordinated, and implemented many successful events for Jackson and Maple Grove Schools. When she is not the coordinator of an event, she shows up as a supportive volunteer, with helping hands, and a positive attitude. This year Amie took on the major task of leading a new school community through an essential fundraiser. The initial goal of \$10,000 was more than DOUBLED because of her efforts. Clear communication with caregivers, teachers, staff, and students laid a foundation for success. She laid out clear goals, great incentives, and the week ended with a powerful and fun assembly for the whole school to celebrate crushing goals together! Amie committed many hours to this single event, but that event became our first WIN as a community and an important positive energy was created. Amie continues to lead the GLOW dance, a favorite family event. Year after year, this event grows, and really we are just getting started! We are grateful for the time, talent, and treasure that Amie continues to share. We appreciate her ideas, passion, and organizational skills. Thank you, Amie!!

Nixon Elementary School

Pamela Long

Nixon Elementary School chose Pam Long as our Outstanding Building Volunteer. We are so lucky to have Pam volunteer at our building. Pam volunteers 2 full days a week. She plays academic games with small groups, listens to students read, and she helps complete work one on one with the learners. Pam always brings special treats for students on holidays. She also brings little goodies for the student store where they shop and spend their rewards they've earned. Pam is so kind and patient with our learners. The students love it when she is here and they have so much fun playing games and learning with her. Pam also helps with material prep such as laminating, cutting things out and organizing supplies. The Nixon staff appreciates her help so much and they love seeing her friendly face.

Pierce Elementary School

Deanna Hartke

Deanna has been an outstanding volunteer at Pierce for many years! She is always willing to help teachers or the building in whatever ways needed. Classroom teachers have greatly appreciated the work she has done in individual classrooms supporting reading and spelling. She has helped with picture day- escorting children to have pictures taken and making sure they look their very best. She volunteers weekly at Pierce with our Pierce Page Turners program which allows our kindergarten through second grade students to take home books each night that they are able to read. She is seen weekly at Pierce swapping out books and celebrating our readers. Deanna has supported our "backpack" program by picking up food from HACAP for families in need. This is a real service for our students that experience food scarcity. Deanna is ALWAYS willing to help! She has a positive attitude and her smile is contagious. Teachers and students appreciate her and we say THANK YOU! We are thrilled to celebrate Denna this year!

Truman Early Learning Center

Donna Claflin

In our first year of full day preschool at Truman, we knew we needed several hands to help our youngest students navigate their new environment. Donna has been a huge support to our Truman Tiger Cub team. She helped us take an empty IMC and organized our books in the IMC to make it a fun place to pick out books. Her greatest skill is in reading interactive stories to our students. Our four year olds love it when she brings out her many props to help engage them in wonderful books. We are thrilled to have Donna part of our early learning team to help us build a strong foundation for learning. We hope Donna comes back for many, many years!

Van Buren Elementary School

Peggy Musil

Peggy jumped in with both feet at the beginning of the school-year and has been going strong since! She has been helping in her twin daughters' classrooms, yes, she has twins that both teach at Van Buren (Emily Edkin - 5th grade) and (Elissa Kuennen - Kindergarten) and as a result, we gained an amazing volunteer! It is obvious her love of children and education has influenced her daughters tremendously. Peggy spends at least every Friday with us, splitting her time between a 5th grade class and kindergarten! From grading papers, helping students get caught up on missed work, to running errands for our PBIS Celebrations, there is nothing she can't or won't do! Peggy also single-handedly sized each of our 375+ students for a tie-dye shirt project, orchestrated by one of the twins! Her pleasant demeanor and can-do attitude are such a welcome asset to Van Buren! We look forward to seeing how her magical skills will impact future projects! Thank you, Peggy!

Viola Gibson Elementary School

Nancy Green

Nancy consistently volunteers each week helping out in our Library. She helps shelve books, organize materials, and helps teachers with special requests and projects. Nancy also helps with our school wide events and special activities. Nancy supports activities, roller skating, our book fair, drop in volunteering, school wide celebrations, and much more. If there is an activity we need help with Nancy is always willing to help our staff and students. We appreciate her dedication and support.

West Willow Elementary School

Meagan Prestegard

Meagan Prestegard is a volunteer that many wouldn't even know is in the building. With her soft spoken voice and quiet disposition, she flies under the radar, but has played an important role at West Willow and Coolidge for many years! She comes weekly and works with students from different grades, assists teachers with classroom clerical needs, and volunteers with PTA every chance she gets! She is also a mom that's available to help with picture day, hearing testing, or any event, even with a moment's notice! West Willow staff and kids are all very lucky to have Meagan and that's why we have nominated her for our volunteer of the year!!

Wright Elementary School

Mary L Rasmussen

Mary has been an ardent supporter of Wright School for many years. Her son, Dan, was a student at Wright and after his untimely passing Mary gave many generous donations to the school library for books in Dan's memory. After retiring from the Cedar Rapids School District Mary also began volunteering as a classroom reader. She spends her time listening to and working with emerging readers in 1st grade. Mary works with the classroom teachers by sharing a child's struggles and celebrating their successes with each book they read. Mary helps instill in our students a love of books and reading. The staff and students at Wright School appreciate Mary and everything she has done and continues to do for our kids!

Franklin Middle School

Jennifer Gibbons

Jennifer Gibbons does so much for Franklin! She has been a vital part of bringing the PTA concession stand back to school events. She volunteers countless hours with our PTA to provide snack bags for our students, to providing meals for our students, families, and staff during Parent-Teacher Conferences, and so much more. We are lucky to have her at Franklin!

Harding Middle School

Jennifer & Jason Fenoglio

Jason and Jennifer have gone above and beyond to give their time to practices and supporting students in Harding's Neo Classic Show Choir. Jason has been our lead tech dad. He has contributed many fun and amazing ideas for us to use in our show this year. From back drops, tents, props, he volunteered much of his time at the beginning of the season to help build them. He has and continues to lead our technical crew (imparting crucial knowledge to students to help them when they go on to high school) and working backstage with them at EVERY competition. Jennifer has been at every rehearsal and is always there to be a support for students if they need it. She actively supervises rehearsals, reaffirms communications during rehearsals and answers side questions that students need answers, she leads communications and announcements on social media. Together the Fenoglios are valued and trusted volunteers in rehearsal, backstage, and in the audience. They are the definition of what it means to be a parent volunteer. They care deeply for students to succeed as people, performers, and community members and show it in how they spend their time investing in our show choir program.

McKinley STEAM Academy Magnet School

Angel West

Mrs. West has been an extremely invested volunteer at McKinley STEAM Academy for the past three years, with her efforts having an immense impact on our MSA community; including students, staff, and families. During this time, Angel has always been available and willing to support our school with whatever needs may arise; whether it be chaperoning several field trips and school sponsored events, being an active member of the PTA, or strong supporter and promoter of our Performing Arts Department. This school year, Mrs. West also took on the role of editor of the McKinley yearbook. In addition, she has been instrumental in the design and remodeling of our innovative learning spaces, including the McKinley STEAM Lab and the McKinley Recording Studio. These efforts will allow our students the opportunity, for years to come, to communicate their learning in a Future Ready way! Words alone cannot express how much we appreciate what Angel has done and continues to do for McKinley!

Roosevelt Creative Corridor Business Academy Magnet School

Michelle Kruse

Michelle continuously goes above and beyond for staff, students, and families at RCCBA outside of regular school hours, whether it be recording and assisting with band concerts, helping staff with technology after school, serving extra time in the IMC for family events, and many others.

Taft Middle School

Tara & Kasey Klein

Taft's Outstanding Building Volunteers for 2022-2023 are Tara and Kasey Klein. We recognize them this year, but this really represents many years of dedication to Taft's performing arts programs. This year, they have arranged every meal for our show choir as well as snacks for the school play in December. Tara has helped with all the details that go along with these programs. She has emailed, picked up materials, arranged volunteers, and organized the rehearsal parents. Kasey has helped lift and move props, costumes, and instruments for the show choir for each performance this year. If there is a job to be done, Kasey and Tara are up to the task. As a couple, they have always been giving with their donations of snacks, drinks, and materials for our performing arts programs. However, they give something much more valuable... their time and positive energy. They make Taft a better place.

Wilson Middle School

Jerry & Ruth Anne Eccles

Ruth and Jerry engaged with the iJAG student at Wilson Middle School. They taught the students Powerful Choices. Through this series, the students were taught many skills. They learned about the prevalence and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, how to stop and think before making choices, how drugs and alcohol affect decision making, how to be assertive rather than passive or aggressive when dealing with pressures to ignore their boundaries, and what boundaries are and how to set them for themselves. They were also challenged to set personal goals for the future and be aware of potential roadblocks. The school community benefits from their support in many ways. For example, the iJAG students miss out on taking Wellness class in middle school. This couple was able to provide them with information they would go over in Wellness. This information helps our students make the best decisions for their future. These sessions allowed the students to think and discuss in a way that they haven't before. I am happy the students have this knowledge to take with them as they go into high school.

Jefferson High School

Angi Kevitt

Angi Kevitt represents the entire booster club and their efforts to support Jefferson. The public view of Angi is that she is at so many of our events. Ms. Kevitt works hard to bring in as many volunteers as she can to fill all the time slots, but if any go unfilled, Angi, and her team, are always there. What people don't see is the countless hours she puts in behind the scenes. The meetings she organizes, the treasury that she keeps accurate and growing. The other parts of her job, such as stocking the venues and ordering all the necessary goods. This is all done to support the athletics at Jefferson. She doesn't stop there, as she has joined with our leadership class to coordinate the projects for the community.

Kennedy High School

J.R. Grawe

JR has been an invaluable volunteer in our food pantry and with a variety of projects. She is always in the building, always looking to find ways to help, and is just a genuinely caring person. Even when her own family was having struggles, she was here trying to make sure our pantry was stocked and open for students.

Metro High School

Alexa Christiansen

Alexa is a mentor of our FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Robotics Team, 4175, MechaMETROZilla. Alexa is a student at the University of Iowa in the College of Engineering and an employee of team sponsor Collins Aerospace. Alexa worked with our robotics students in our lab throughout the robotics season helping them in a variety of ways. Alexa worked with students on CAD modeling, generating 3D designs of unique parts for their robot as well as modeling the chassis assembly of their robot. Her enthusiasm and motivation was contagious in our robotics room and her presence helped our students build their Robotics & Automation skills and contributed to this season's success, with the team advancing to the FTC Iowa Championship. Having Alexa in our classroom provides an opportunity for students to interact and ask questions of a former high school FTC student as well as a current engineering student and future engineer. We are so thankful to have Alexa volunteering in our classroom and hope she will continue to find value in mentoring students in our community.

Washington High School

Lori Weih

On behalf of Washington High School we would like to express our appreciation for Lori's valuable contribution to our school . We are grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and dedication she brings to multiple organizations within the Washington Community. Lori is a main swim mom, main football mom, co-chair of Mo-Show, helps with State Speech and many WAC/ PPA activities. Thank you for your time and service to make these events a success. Washington Administration Team



Cedar Rapids Community School District

Every Learner. Future Ready.

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