

The Volunteer Services Office is proud to spotlight the

Cedar Rapids Community Schools

VOLUNTEER HALL OF FAME

2023-2024

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.



Volunteer profile information is provided by nominating schools.

Arthur Elementary School

Ashley Weir

Ashley Weir has been a fantastic parent volunteer in our kindergarten classroom! Ashley comes two or three times a week with reading and math games that help to support our kindergarteners' learning. The games she brings are always engaging and fun and allow the students to practice their reading and math skills. Not only is Ashley fun to work with, but she also keeps our kindergarteners focused and on task. When she comes in the morning to volunteer, our kindergarteners cannot wait to work with her as they enjoy spending time with her. Our kindergarten teacher is so grateful to have such a wonderful parent volunteer this year who supports our students' learning!

Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary School & Outstanding District Volunteer/Governor's Volunteer Award Honoree

Michaela Scranton

Michaela Scranton has been an outstanding volunteer at Cedar River Academy. When she is not busy finishing her senior year of high school, she finds time to help with our school's hearing testing, assists with class field trips, helps support our kindergarten classrooms, and helps on SOS days. She also takes time out of her summers to help with classroom setups and spends half days with students at Kids On Course University. Michaela is always willing to help out wherever she is needed. We will miss Michaela next year, but we wish her well in the military as she has enlisted in the Army.

Each year, a committee from the Volunteer Office selects one outstanding volunteer from all of the building honorees to be named the "District Outstanding Volunteer of the Year." We are pleased to announce that Michaela Scranton has been selected for this year's honor. Michaela will also be the District's designated recipient of the 2024 Iowa Governor's Award for Volunteerism. Governor Reynolds will present these awards this summer. Congratulations, Michaela!!

Cleveland Elementary School

Jessica Moore English

Jessica Moore is an amazing volunteer at Cleveland. She is always ready and willing to jump in and help wherever needed. She helps to support our teachers and staff and always goes above and beyond to help get anything our school may need. During parent-teacher conferences, she provides snacks & meals for the teachers. She also assists in our school nurse's office. Thank you, Jessica, for everything you do for our school!

Erskine Elementary School

Pat Flater

Although she is not related to anyone in our 5th grade math class, she is fondly known as Grandma Pat to all the students. Every Tuesday, Grandma Pat drives over the river and through the woods to get to Erskine from Toddville. She happily teaches and works with students needing a boost in math skills. It may be playing a game to increase math fact fluency, reading test questions aloud, or practicing a newly acquired math standard. She arrives with a quiet wave and a gentle smile. Often, her students are so eager to see and work with her that they pop out of their chairs even before their names have been called. Her generous gift of time has helped to boost the self-confidence and math skills of the kids she works with. She always follows up each visit with a friendly email to the teacher detailing each student's strengths or struggles for that day. Grandma Pat is a beloved addition to our Erskine 5th-grade family!

Garfield Elementary School

Brian Long

The life of a principal's husband should be one of glitz, glamour, and privilege.....but not for Brian Long. He often gets roped in, manipulated, begged, and bossed into filling every void at Garfield Elementary. Whether it's showing up at 9:30 sharp every Friday with our food bag donations or getting a call that he needs to be in a full mascot costume in 20 minutes, Brian does everything for Garfield that is asked. It might be getting on the roof, pulling weeds, trimming trees, taking pictures on back-to-school night, or cleaning the hallways the night before school starts! Brian, we don't deserve you. You always do everything that is asked of you, and you have saved us more times than we can count, usually with very short notice. You always show up for us without question. You will always be our hero at Garfield Elementary!

Grant Elementary School

Lindsey Janda

Lindsey Janda has been instrumental in ensuring students at Grant Elementary are fed. The school partners with HACAP for their Operation Backpack program, ensuring that nearly 100 students receive a bag of food to take home every Friday. This requires HACAP donations and having someone pick up and deliver the bags to Grant each week. Lindsay has generously taken on this role and faithfully delivered the food bags every week. We greatly appreciate her partnership as we work to meet our students and families' academic, social, and basic needs.

Grant Wood Elementary School

Shelley McDowell

When a school has a paraeducator of 20 years who chooses to spend a portion of their retirement as a building and classroom volunteer, everyone benefits! Each week, Shelley McDowell works with 4th graders on math fluency, along with learning and playing games that support the newly adopted Bridges math curriculum. Ms. Minor, a 4th grade teacher, shares, "Shelley is organized and works hard to build relationships with each student. She is kind, has a positive attitude, is knowledgeable, and always looks for ways to reach more students effectively." Ms. Kjar, another 4th grade teacher, adds, "Shelley goes out of her way to know each student. They run up to her and ask, "Do I get to work with you today?" Shelley also helps with the school's Book Fairs, Santa's Workshop, and class field trips. You can tell that she loves working with kids as she always has a smile on her face. Grant Wood is blessed to have Shelley McDowell in our school, as she is NEEDED and truly makes a difference every time she volunteers!

Harrison Elementary School

Daisy Limon Arrezola

Daisy is an all-around rockstar and volunteers whenever needed! Often, she will walk into the main office and ask if there is anything she can help with, just to help take a load off of someone else. She has helped our PTA numerous times, from volunteering at after-school events to counting all of the Hy-Vee receipts people turn in. Daisy also goes above and beyond, constantly donating items teachers and students need, including clothing, underwear, hair brushes, winter wear, school supplies, Valentine's Day cards, and so much more. She also helps in the health office and volunteers her time for scheduled health events here at Harrison.

Daisy always has a smile on her face and is so kind to all of our staff and students. We know she is always just a phone call away if needed. We greatly appreciate all of her hard work and are so lucky to have her as a part of our Harrison family. Thanks so much for all you do, Daisy!

Hiawatha Elementary School

Susan Clapp

Sue Clapp is a teacher and leader who has been impacting the students of CRCSD for decades. Hiawatha Elementary has been lucky to have Sue as a building volunteer this year. Our kindergarten numbers increased by 50% this year, and they were full of energy. Sue volunteered to come and help these new students learn the ropes of the school and taught them the rules and expectations of the classroom. She also helped students with their clay projects and worked regularly with our first grade students. Throughout the year, you often hear her say, "Where do you need me?" - a testament to her selfless dedication to our students. Thank you, Sue, for your unwavering commitment.

Hoover Elementary School

Carmen Lewis

Carmen Lewis consistently goes above and beyond for our community here at Hoover. She is always eager to help when we need it most. She can be found spending a day in a kindergarten classroom when we are short help or volunteering in the main office. She also spends endless hours in the school library, helping to check books out to students, making crafts for upcoming library lessons, and working to keep the library clean and organized. Her hard work and dedication don't go unnoticed. The Hoover students and staff appreciate her so much for always showing up and having a positive attitude.

Johnson STEAM Academy

Doug Elam

Doug Elam volunteers weekly at JSA, working one-on-one with our 1st graders on reading and spelling. Doug is not only a volunteer but also a grandparent to one of our 1st grade students. His willingness to take time out of his weekly schedule to provide his expertise as a retired Reading Coach to JSA students is invaluable and does not go unnoticed. Doug always has a smile on his face and is always willing to lend a helping hand when needed. JSA is extremely grateful for the time, compassion, and positive outlook Doug brings to the classroom. Thank you for all you do!

Kenwood Leadership Academy

Tamara Covington

Tamara's exceptional creativity and dedication have greatly enriched and inspired students in our preschool classroom. Her willingness to assist with any task, no matter how big or small, exemplifies her commitment to the school community. Tamara's contributions are not just acts of service but also a testament to her genuine passion for nurturing young minds and supporting education. Thank you, Tamara!

Madison Elementary School

Krystal Walter

Krystal Walter became the President of the Madison PTA this year and has done a great job of getting more parents involved in the school. The planned events go well every time, and she makes them exciting. Krystal is always the first in line to volunteer for anything the school needs, including Picture Day and student hearing testing. She consistently goes above and beyond and is always willing to lend a hand when needed. She is super sweet and inviting to all our staff and kids whenever she's in the building.

Maple Grove Elementary School

Darcy Oates

Darcy Oates is an outstanding volunteer and an extremely valuable member of our Maple Grove family. She is no stranger to the district, having worked several years at Jackson and Maple Grove Elementary Schools. Even though she is in her first year of retirement, Darcy has generously given her time to volunteer at our school. She frequently leads groups of 3rd-grade readers as they work with different novels. Recently, Darcy decided to increase her volunteer time and has begun working with some of our kindergartners. She is truly dedicated to building relationships with our students and helping them increase their academic achievement.

Nixon Elementary School

Tyler & Kate Turner

Tyler and Kate Turner are both on the Nixon Elementary PTA Board. They have spent countless hours organizing and rejuvenating our PTA and have gotten more families involved. They always keep our students and their families at the forefront of any PTA decisions. They supported making a free spring carnival, came up with the idea of donating tickets to FunStation, and helped create free family events like Bingo and Dinner and a Movie. Tyler and Kate also come up with ways to get donations and supplies for our school and staff. They volunteer their time during the day to pop popcorn for the school and coordinate and deliver meals for special teacher appreciation days. Nixon is so fortunate to have the Turners volunteering in our building. Their time, dedication, and hard work are greatly appreciated.

Pierce Elementary School

Holly Sholes

Holly Sholes has been a valuable volunteer for several years. She always has a big smile and is willing to help whenever needed. Holly has assisted in the classroom with PBIS rewards, worked one-on-one with students who need extra support or attention, helped with classroom parties, and taken groups of students to the library to get a new book to read. In addition, she has assisted with kindergarten lunch time. If you have never eaten lunch with 75+ kindergarten students, you might not realize how frequently they need help opening wrappers and milk cartons. Plus, the myriad of stories they want to tell you.

Holly is also active on our PTA and is currently on the PTA board. She always comes ready to support our staff and students in any way possible, and always with a smile! Her organization and new ideas for our annual school events have made a huge difference in both making the jobs of others easier and bringing more fun to our school community. Thank you for being an outstanding building volunteer, Holly!

Truman Early Learning Center

Dayna Jensen

Dayna Jensen is a wonderful volunteer for us at Truman Early Learning. She is extremely helpful and willing to help in any way she can. She is also courageous enough to help with our preschool lunchtime routine. The students love seeing her every week and often save a spot for her at the lunch table. Thank you for making a difference and for supporting our students and staff.

Van Buren Elementary School

Kathy Griffith

Kathy Griffith is our very own Energizer Bunny! Always cheerful, with a spring in her step: she exudes joy wherever she goes! In addition to being a mentor, Kathy helps with school picture days, health screenings, and other school projects. She also volunteers weekly in one of our 1st grade classrooms. She is a tremendous help to the teacher by helping to redirect students as needed and fielding questions as they work in their workbooks and computers.

Kathy has donated a multitude of clothing and supplies for our classrooms and students. But she is best known for the beautiful, handcrafted quilts she donates to our school's Family Resource Center. In her time at Van Buren, she has donated 602 quilts over the last 17 years. Our kids and families absolutely love them, as it's like getting a big, warm hug from our dear friend, Miss Kathy! Thank you, Kathy!

Viola Gibson Elementary School

Roger Akers

Mr. Akers volunteers twice a week in our building. This year, he has been helping with our kindergarten and 4th grade classrooms. He works with our kindergarteners one-on-one and in small groups on their kindergarten skills. In fourth grade, Mr. Akers works with small groups of students on their foundational math skills. Students love working with him! When students are asked about Mr. Akers, they say he is funny and helpful, he makes them feel smart, and he teaches them strategies that really help them learn. Mr. Akers is a retired "Master Teacher of the Year" in Illinois, with 40+ years of experience. He brings his teaching expertise to Viola Gibson and directly and consistently supports our students. He builds strong relationships with all of the students he works with. We are fortunate to have Mr. Akers as a volunteer at Viola Gibson.

West Willow Elementary School

Barb Staub

Barb Staub has been an outstanding volunteer at West Willow this year. She comes in two days a week to work with our 3rd graders on their reading. Barb is always dependable and willing to help out whenever asked. Barb is excited to come and lend a hand. She loves working with any student to help them learn and grow. She always asks if there is anything else she can help us with. Thank you, Barb, for the time you gave to our students this year.

Wright Elementary School

Smitarani Dalei

Wright Elementary's Outstanding Building Volunteer, Smitarani Dalei, is dedicated and hardworking. Smita was an elementary math teacher in India, and when she moved to Iowa, she decided to use her talents and time to help teach our students math. Smita volunteers four days a week, working with both 2nd and 3rd graders. In addition to classroom learning, Smita has assisted with school fundraisers and student health screenings. Each time we send an email asking for volunteers, Smita is always the first to reply and offer her time. We are fortunate to have Smita at Wright Elementary, and we appreciate the compassion and dedication she shows our students.

Franklin Middle School

Leon Lueck

Leon Lueck is a tremendous asset to Franklin Middle School. He provides and tracks the beautiful art pieces hanging throughout our building. In addition, he volunteers his time to work with our school's PACT program and assists students with their work for the annual Optimist Speech Competitions. Leon provides so much to Franklin each year, but with this year being Franklin's 100th Anniversary, he has provided invaluable contributions to our 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee. Franklin has a deep history and wonderful stories that Leon helps to keep alive for future generations. As we celebrate 100 years at Franklin, we also celebrate the years and service that Leon has provided. Thank you, Leon!

Harding Middle School

Audrey McGrath

Audrey McGrath has been instrumental in getting the Charger's Parent Brigade (PTA) started back up this year after several years of inactivity. She also worked to create a 501(c), social media page, Venmo account, and even created a logo! She has made countless connections with area businesses, securing donations for our students and staff. She has obtained monetary donations, set up donation nights at local restaurants, secured gift certificates to provide as student incentives, and collected snacks and drinks for students. One of her goals this year was to ensure our teachers and staff feel supported and appreciated. To do so, she has helped arrange meals for parent-teacher conference nights and monthly appreciation gifts and snacks for staff. Audrey is fully committed to connecting with all of the Harding parents, students, staff, and community to help strengthen our school. We appreciate all her hard work!

McKinley STEAM Academy

Mary Reynolds

After teaching at McKinley for 18 years, Mary Reynolds continues to give her time, talents, and expertise to students in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Mary comes to McKinley two days a week to help students with reading and writing. Her calm and caring demeanor helps students focus, complete their work, and realize they are capable of great things. Mary is a compassionate educator who keeps working to better our students. If not at McKinley, Mary can be found helping in PACT classes at Harding Middle School or popping popcorn for school events at Garfield Elementary. Mary is known for her welcoming hugs and her love of current events. And, if you ever need a book recommendation, just ask Mary! Teachers and students at McKinley are forever grateful for her continued service to our students and staff. Thank you, Mary!

Roosevelt Creative Corridor Business Academy

Nikki Skogman

Nikki Skogman's incredible support and dedication have been instrumental in the success of Roosevelt's Word Flight program this year. Every Thursday, Nikki joins our 7th grade classrooms to work one-on-one with students as they engage in the curriculum. Her calm and easygoing demeanor helps put students and teachers at ease. Nikki's support and individual attention to students have made a huge difference. Roosevelt is grateful for your commitment to our students' success. Thank you, Nikki!

Taft Middle School

Matt Peiffer

Matt Peiffer has been an outstanding building volunteer for Taft Middle School. Since 2019, Matt has given his time and talents as a Junior Achievement volunteer in our 8th grade classrooms. He has taught our students the importance of looking closely at their skills, interests, and values in helping them make future career decisions. Matt has also helped them look at the various paths they can take after graduating high school and stressed the importance of making good financial decisions. He shares his personal experiences to connect with the students and answers any questions they may have. Matt was also gracious enough to teach a second class when another volunteer was unable to do so. Taft is grateful for Matt's commitment and dedication to our students. Congratulations Matt!

City View High School

Logan Schultz

Logan Schultz is the owner of Upload Media and has been an invaluable community partner for City View High School. Logan works with our students to design curriculum around content creation and promotion. Through the lessons, students learn about critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, and communication, all skills that will be useful beyond high school. Thank you, Logan, for your collaboration and innovation!

Jefferson High School

Kate Bangs

Kate Bangs has been vital to the continued success of the Jefferson Athletic Booster Club. She has been a volunteer coordinator since 2019, working with coaches and parents to ensure concession stands are fully staffed at sporting events. She also works to find volunteers to be openers and closers for all events and is continually training new volunteers. Kate works with our athletic director to coordinate concession stand schedules, supplies, and other logistics. During the Covid pandemic, Kate's work was crucial in keeping the concession stands open due to the restrictions on the number of people allowed in a small space. Kate and another volunteer did most of the work, covering every event that year. Kate's dedication, time, and talents have benefited countless Jefferson student-athletes and spectators.

Kennedy High School

Whitney Alber

Whitney Alber has been an outstanding supporter and volunteer for our athletics programs for the past five years. She serves as our concession stand manager and works to staff, stock, and run concession stands at numerous Kennedy athletic events throughout the year. Whitney works tirelessly to make sure everything runs smoothly and is pivotal to ensuring we have money to support our student-athletes. She is a passionate Cougar fan who helps rally parent and community support around our teams. Thanks for everything you do, Whitney!

Metro High School

Missa Coffman

Missa Coffman is an interdisciplinary artist and is the Resident Artist at NewBo City Market. She has been an invaluable community partner, collaborating with Metro teachers and students. Missa helps to co-teach art lessons and assists students with their artwork. She has also opened up her space for classes to tour and has invited students to participate in some of the opportunities she has created at New Bo. Thank you, Missa, for your contribution to our classes and students.

Washington High School

Laurie Tauber

Laurie Tauber has been an incredible asset to Washington High School through her work with our athletic booster club, the Washington Athletic Club (WAC). Laurie has taken the lead as concessions manager for the last few years. She organizes all aspects of our concession stands and has dedicated countless hours to making sure things run smoothly. Laurie manages the money, orders food and drinks, and finds other volunteers to work in the stands. The Washington Athletic Club supports and funds all 23 sanctioned sports at WHS. The impact that Laurie has had on our student-athletes through these fundraising efforts is truly immeasurable. We can't thank her enough for the countless hours she has spent volunteering at Washington.

Home School Assistance Program

Clayton Shotwell

Clayton Shotwell has been a Lego League volunteer for the past two years and has been an invaluable addition to our program. As an employee at Collins Aerospace, he shares his technical knowledge in a way that the students can understand. He's approachable and easy to talk to, making the students comfortable to ask questions. When asked, students say he encourages them, is nice, makes good suggestions, is a fun coach, and lets them have time to be creative. Clayton's leadership and dedication led the team to qualify for the state competition, instilling perseverance and teamwork along the way. We truly appreciate him.



Cedar Rapids Community School District

Every Learner. Future Ready.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School District not to discriminate in educational programs and/or activities on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, national origin, religion, disability, age (except for permitting/prohibiting students to engage in certain activities) or genetic information and in employment opportunities on the basis of age, race, creed, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability or genetic information. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact Darius Ballard, Educational Leadership and Support Center, 2500 Edgewood Rd NW, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 558-2000. Updated 6/2023