

# the Volunteer voice

JCPS VOLUNTEER TALENT CENTER NEWSLETTER VOL 1: ISSUE 1

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## ✕ Hello! ✕

### Let Us Introduce Ourselves

Welcome to the first edition of the Volunteer Talent Center's (VTC's) volunteer newsletter, *The Volunteer Voice*. We're excited about this opportunity to spread the word about what's going on in the world of volunteerism in Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). We plan to distribute the news monthly, by e-mail and by regular mail, to volunteers whose names appear in the VTC's program database as well as to

volunteer coordinators in the schools. We expect to include interviews with volunteers, dates for training and other events, commentary on key issues in volunteerism, and messages from various volunteers. We'll need to hear from you if we're going to be a genuine voice for volunteers in the district. And we want to be. **So**, plan on our keeping in touch.



### Save the Date

December 27, 2010	January 11, 2011
Every 1 Reads Initial Training	Every1Reads Mentor Training
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.	10 to Noon
Park DuValle Community Health Center	Gheens Academy Rm 202 and 204
3015 Wilson Avenue	4425 Preston Highway

RSVP by calling 502.485.3710

# If You're Wondering Why...

it takes so long to get a School Volunteer Records Check Form processed

Many of you have asked why it's taking so long this year for the School Volunteer Records Check Form to be processed. The answer? There are really two reasons: a reduction in staff conducting the record checks in Frankfort and an increase in the number of checks being processed here in Jefferson County for review in Frankfort.

JCPS requires anyone volunteering in the school district to have, on a yearly basis, an approved records check before taking an active role as a volunteer. Submitting records check forms for all volunteers on a yearly basis has increased greatly the number of requests being sent to Frankfort for processing.



The increased volume of requests for records checks and a reduction in staff has been overwhelming for

the people in Frankfort who conduct the records investigations. A process that had taken just one to two weeks has now become one that can take six to eight weeks.

Fortunately, as with any new process, as we become more familiar and comfortable with the process, the change itself becomes easier to manage. One of the things we plan to address next year is the timing for resubmitting records checks. Instead of waiting until fall when most volunteer programs begin, we plan to start processing records checks for returning volunteers during the late spring and summer so that the volume of checks to be processed when school begins will be lessened.

In the meantime, we'll have to be patient.

## A Call for Volunteers

Reading program needs tutors

Please consider spending an hour a week as a reading tutor helping a struggling reader in one of our elementary schools. You choose the school (a neighborhood school or a school in greatest need), attend training (approximately two hours), and get underway. A typical session will allow you to talk informally about topics of interest to you or your tutee and then read together for about 30 minutes.

Will it make a difference in your student's reading skills? Absolutely! And it may make a positive difference in your life too. Try it and see. We're ready to give you a helping hand as you prepare to serve. Just call (485-3710), and we'll do the rest!

### VTC Contacts

#### Administration

Special Assistant to the Superintendent  
DeVone Holt

Director, VTC  
Allene Gold

VTC Coordinator  
Roy Birmingham

VTC Coordinator  
Connie Cameron

#### Program Staff

**SPAVA**  
Judy Lippmann

**Service Learning**  
Katherine Becker  
Connie Cameron

**Fantastic Choices**  
Mildred Lemaster

**Every 1 Reads**  
Connie Cameron  
Karen Mize  
DeeDee Hatfield

**Aquatics Resources**  
**Early Years Initiative**  
Roy Birmingham

**Records Checks, Volunteer Database**  
Kalai Annadurai

**Newsletter, Photography, Websites**  
Abdul Sharif  
Connie Cameron

**Receptionist**  
Helen Streeter



# Students Improve in Reading!

Mayor Jerry Abramson (middle) and his wife, Madeline receive recognition.

Community volunteers helped JCPS lower the number of students reading at below grade level from 18 percent to 9 percent according to data shared by the school district at a celebration breakfast on November 19 at Lincoln Elementary Performing Arts School. This success is due, in great part, to “the partnership between the school system and community organizations,” said Joe Tolan, president of Metro United Way. “In other words, student success absolutely requires community involvement.” Initiated in 2004, the **Every 1 Reads** initiative has recruited over 18,000

volunteers who have been trained in reading strategies to apply when working with student struggling readers. “We’re apparently on the right track,” points out DeVone Holt, Special

hour a week to devote to this important effort, please call the Volunteer Talent Center at 485-3710 and sign up.”

of the **Every 1 Reads** initiative since its inception. Thanking him for this support, Sam Corbett and Jim Allen, members of the Jefferson County Public Education Foundation, made presentations. The mayor and his wife, Madeline, were given a plaque, a collage of photos taken over the 21 years of the mayor’s tenure, and an annual scholarship in their honor (the Madeline and Jerry Abramson Scholarship) was established for graduating seniors from a Close the Deal program school.



**Volunteers and student performers enjoy the Every 1 Reads report card breakfast.**

Assistant to the Superintendent. Holt says that the program calls for a cadre of 3,000 to 4,000 active volunteers this year. He adds, “If you have a free

## Mayor Cited for Program Support

Retiring Mayor Jerry Abramson was honored at the breakfast for his support

## In the Spotlight

### Joe Herrmann and His Daughter Make a Difference

By Connie Cameron

What do you do when an avid fisherman, caring parent, skilled salesman, and Scout Master reaches his 80s and retires from what he calls active work? You do nothing. Just watch him as he continues his fishing, teams up with his daughter, mentors some excited and energetic kids (5-18 years of age), and engages his scout troop in regular monthly meetings to talk over old times and new challenges.

Who is this human dynamo? He's 89-year-old volunteer Joe Herrmann, who has been an active volunteer for the VTC since 1992 when he joined the Aquatic Resources Program, trained as a mentor, and took students fishing for the first time at the Boy Scout camp at Crooked Creek.

Encouraged by his wife Dot, Joe entered the volunteer field with enthusiasm and dedication. "She just wanted to get me out of the house," explains Joe.

Over the years, Joe has played many different roles as a volunteer for the fishing program. He has been mentor, instructor, and photographer. And when things seem too calm, he'll ask, "Is there anything else I can do?"

Cited for a special volunteer recognition award from Mayor Jerry Abramson in 2004 for his volunteer work, Joe taught his son John his fishing skills, persuaded him to join him on fishing trips, and ultimately, to share his father's passion for



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fishing. But it wasn't so for his daughter, Mary Lee Herrmann-Cays, who says that "he didn't take me fishing." He did, however, introduce her to volunteerism, and Mary Lee is currently following Joe's example by serving as a reading tutor for several English as a Second Language (ESL) students at Waggener Traditional High School. Mary Lee says her dad is "my hero" and points out that he gives comfort to people he knows are in need. And she volunteers in the fishing program too!

Other family members who have been introduced to the casting rod include grandson Joseph Patrick, granddaughter Tara, son Edward, and grandson Timmy Joseph. Declared to be the "Big Fish," Joe has the respect and admiration of the family group, all of whom are "proud of our dad/granddad."

Joe also sets aside time to meet with his old scout troop, which has a

dozen scouts who were members of Joe's troop some 50 years ago. Troop members, all of whom are in their 70s, meet monthly for dinner and conversation about "almost any topic of interest to us." Currently, two of the troop members - Scott Schroering and Bob Scully - are also volunteers for the Aquatics program.

In his spare time, Joe reads or cooks. Among the books he recommends to his fellow volunteers are *Heart Song*, a book of poems written by teenager Mattie Stepanek and a book about redemption titled *Same Kind of Difference as Me*, written by Denver Moore.



## Students Get To Make Fantastic Choices

By Mildred Lemaster

Back in 1994, the VTC sponsored a volunteer program, Fantastic Choices, in which elementary school students (primarily third graders) were encouraged to make positive choices when dealing with decisions that affect personal safety and health. The program was “Fantastic Choices” and the agenda called for the involvement of a five person volunteer team.

How does it work? Well, the volunteer team meets with individual, primary classes at an elementary school and presents a four station presentation through which the students move, in small groups, for approximately 15 minutes per station. The stations focus on four main topics: healthy personal habits, drug safety in the home, identifying situations that “bug” students and the use of safety equipment at home and at play.

Follow up includes a visit by one of the members of the presenting team. The visit includes a classroom review of the students’ completion of the program workbook and a group decision to create and share a service-learning project based on one of the Fantastic Choices topics. The program culminates in the students’ presentation of their project and a celebration of their efforts.

Fantastic Choices was and can be again a fantastic program, and it is being brought back by popular demand. The program will need volunteer support and will welcome your participation if you have the time and the interest. Telephone Mildred Lemaster, 485-7046, if you have interest and/or questions.

## Red Cross Trains Volunteers

More than 30 volunteers participated in a Red Cross Emergency Care workshop sponsored by the VTC’s Aquatic Resources Program on November 2 at Waggener Traditional High School. Designed to provide volunteers with first aid techniques, the Red Cross training included responses to wasp and bee stings, broken limbs, heat exhaustion, seizures and other common health and safety issues that may require first aid responses from volunteers present on fishing program field trips.

“It was an informative and helpful workshop that taught us not only how to deal with emergency situations when we take kids out fishing but also how to respond to something that might arise in your personal life,” pointed out veteran fisherman Bill Guenther.

While the training was specifically designed to address common health and safety incidents that can occur when students are enjoying a field trip outside the school setting, the volunteers attending the training also had an opportunity to learn how to respond to incidents that may occur at any time at home or abroad.

“This was a first time experience for us,” said Roy Birmingham, JCPS Aquatics Program Director, “but it was so successful, we’ll definitely ask the Red Cross to come back again next year.”

## SPAVA Fights Bullying

By Judy Lippmann

Do you remember a time you were bullied years ago or just yesterday? The scars endure, even after time and apologies. Bullying is a vicious behavior choice with stinging, often devastating, results. It hurts everyone involved—the one who’s bullying, the target, and those who witness it.

The Society for the Prevention of Aggressiveness and Violence among Adolescents (SPAVA) teaches young people in grades one through twelve the forms bullying takes, how it’s different from teasing, and how we all can choose to be part of the problem or part of the solution (there’s no middle position) in addressing this destructive behavior.

Bullying is one of the topics addressed in the 11-year-old SPAVA program which has the following goals: to promote respect, honor and integrity; to recognize and understand feelings to develop anger-management skills, and to recognize the characteristics of famous peacemakers. During the ten, 45-minute weekly sessions, the mentors and students discuss or role play empathy, assertiveness, respect, and integrity. The mentors discuss bullying and help equip students to deal with it.

Currently the program has 56 trained volunteer mentors working with 43 JCPS classes to help “create a nonviolent society by being role models for the younger generation (SPAVA’s mission). Students are challenged to have a positive attitude, to be grateful, to do kind acts for others, and to be peacemakers.

For more information about SPAVA, call Judy Lippmann at 485-7731.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

From The Volunteer Talent Center



2010

Thank you for your commitment!

Connie Cameron

Kvalai A.  
of Birmingham

Shelley Hatfield

Alene White Gold

Karen Mize

Katherine Becker  
Joan  
A. D.

Helen Streeten  
Mildred Lemaster

# The Volunteer Talent Center

*In operation since 1990, the Volunteer Talent Center recruits, trains, and places volunteers to meet identified student needs. The options for service cover a broad range - from tutoring and or mentoring individual students to serving as judges for academic fairs, chaperoning school events and making writing books for classroom use.*

