

HURRAH Times



Spring 2006

A publication
about Happy
Upbeat Retirees
(& other) Residents
Actively Helping
in Naperville
Community Unit
School District 203

HURRAH Dogs Take the “Ruff” Out of Reading at Highlands

Reading at Highlands Elementary School is going to the dogs, and students and staff couldn't be happier. In an effort to increase young students' comfort reading aloud, HURRAH volunteer Janet Hoff instituted “Ultimutt Reading Buddies,” an innovative program in which first and second graders read to her dog, Casey, a nine-year-old miniature American Eskimo.

“A dog is non-judgmental,” said Hoff, of the difference between reading before a human and an animal. A retired first grade and special education teacher, Hoff borrowed the notion of a dog reading program in the schools from a

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A Highlands student reads to lap dog Casey and his owner Janet Hoff, founder of Highlands' “Ultimutt Reading Buddies” program.

HURRAH Provides Mentoring Model with “PRIDE”

For years, HURRAH volunteers have set an example of steadfast support and fine citizenship for local students and fellow community members. Now, they are offering their model of excellence to a neighboring school district. Through a program called PRIDE (Proud Retired and other Individuals Dedicated to Education), community members and officials from Geneva School District 304 are bringing seniors and other citizens into schools to mentor youngsters, and they're using HURRAH as their prototype.

“HURRAH has received so many accolades, we didn't need to explore other programs for comparison,” said Geneva Board of Education and PRIDE committee member Mary Stith, who was introduced

to HURRAH when she attended a Geneva town meeting last year at which HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau spoke. Marineau's invitation to present HURRAH's success story to Geneva came from a mayor-appointed strategic planning committee charged with integrating senior citizens into the Geneva community and schools.

“The majority of residents in our community don't have schoolchildren, and the PRIDE program represented an opportunity to bring them into the schools as well as provide activities for them,” explained Stith. “The other obvious benefit was for our children in the district to receive one-on-one support in areas of

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Mary Stith, PRIDE committee member

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HURRAH Plays Tough in Madison Junior High School Mock Ellis Island Event

The tired, the poor, the huddled masses. Madison Junior High has them all, trudging through rooms and hallways throughout the school in its mock Ellis Island simulation each spring. From crossing the ocean to finding work and undergoing harrowing health and character evaluations, MJHS eighth graders re-enact every step on the road to a new life in America—right down to costumes, props and the constant threat of deportation.

For the past 15 years, the Ellis Island experience has been the dramatic culmination of Madison's eighth grade social studies and language arts units on immigration, lending students a first-hand look at the arduous European migration process at the turn of the 20th Century. It also requires the cooperative efforts of students,

staff, parents and community volunteers, some of whom are HURRAH members.

Assuming the role of a physician in last year's event, HURRAH Executive Councilman Bill Bien assessed the physical fitness of student "immigrants" with an attitude of mock cynicism toward their chances of becoming U.S. citizens. "Are you ill with any communicable disease?" was the question he asked of dirty, bedraggled youngsters in rubber delousing caps and oversized clothes. HURRAH member Bob Fieseler, a patent lawyer, enjoyed his role as an immigration official charged with checking worksheets that, if successfully completed, allowed students to "cross the Atlantic" by advancing through tables (boats) in Madison's cafeteria. "At the Intake Station, I decided to be corrupt," said Fieseler, who later adopted the role of a guard prone to offering bribes.

Bearing in mind such factors as ethnicity, mental and physical health, marital status, vocational skills, political and religious affiliations and criminal background, students become familiar with their assigned roles long before they don their cos-

tumes. "[On the day of the re-enactment], they put on their characters," said MJHS language arts teacher Nancy Aimonette, who, along with veteran social studies teacher and event founder Clement Brown, coordinated the 2005 immigration simulation.

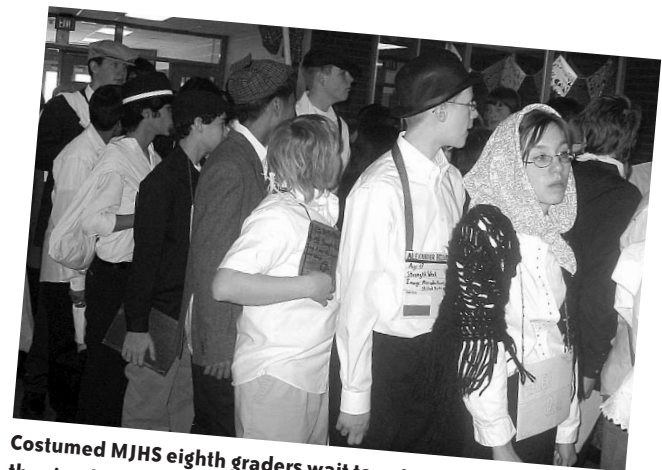
When "Dr." Bien sent "Nick Totti" to the Clearance Station after a period of isolation for lice, the Madison Junior High student portraying the middle-aged immigrant last spring wasn't sure whether he'd be admitted into the United States or deported back to Italy. Regardless, he was certain of one thing: "It was fun to be deloused!" *



Mock Ellis Island coordinators Clement Brown and Nancy Aimonette accompany students waiting to "cross the ocean" to America.



"Doctor" Bill Bien, a HURRAH board member, inoculates a student "immigrant" in MJHS' annual Mock Ellis Island re-enactment.



Costumed MJHS eighth graders wait to enter the next station of the simulated Ellis Island immigration process.

Illinois Intergenerational Efforts Heed HURRAH Success Story

Leaders across Illinois are mobilizing statewide efforts to bring older and younger generations together. In the process, they are relying upon dynamic retirees like HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau to bear witness to the importance of bridging the generations for the sake of education.

“Our generation of retirees looks upon retirement as a time to give back to our communities,” said Marineau at a December 2004 launch meeting of the Illinois Retiree Volunteer System, a cooperative program initiated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Community College Board to recruit retirees from higher education and the community into schools across the state. Joining Marineau at this key meeting was Illinois Senate President Emil Jones Jr., who recently convened an historic Senate forum to discuss the importance of diverse generations and cultures working together to enhance education. Co-sponsored by the IHBE and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale’s Intergenerational Initiative to strengthen and capitalize upon relationships between older and younger Illinoisans, the Senate forum brought together college students and retirees from across the state to ponder the meaning and implications of intergenerational leadership.

Marineau also shared HURRAH’s successes with members of the Illinois Education Excellence Task Force last July. Formed by ISBE Chairman Jesse Ruiz and championed by Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, the IEETF seeks to find new solutions to Illinois’ state public education challenges through public testimony and ongoing dialogue among Illinois

educators, employers, parents and college administrators. Bolstering Marineau’s witness to the importance of involving retirees in the education process was District 203 Director of Community Relations Nina Menis’ overview of the District’s six support organizations (including HURRAH, Home and School, the School Family Community Partnership, Naperville Education Foundation, Business Partnership Executive Council and District 203 Alumni Association) at the IEETF meeting. Task Force members also heard testimony from Dr. Jane Angelis, director of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale’s Intergenerational Initiative, who cited HURRAH as “one of the most successful intergenerational programs in the state.”

“Hopefully, our message [of connection among the generations] will get through, and the IEETF will recommend more programs like HURRAH,” said Marineau. If forward-looking leaders like Senate President Jones have their way, that is precisely what will

happen in a society increasingly populated by older, active citizens. “Leadership evolves,” said Jones at the November 1, 2005, Senate forum on intergenerational leadership. “It isn’t something that retirees and students will take home with them on November 1, but something that will give them a fresh perspective and commitment to foster connections between generations on our campuses and in our communities.” *



Illinois Senate President Emil Jones Jr. (left) greets HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau at the launch meeting of the Illinois Retiree Volunteer System.

Opportunity for HURRAH Volunteers

Below is a specific opportunity for current HURRAH volunteers—or for those who would like to join Happy Upbeat Retirees (and Other) Residents Actively Helping—to assist District 203 students and staff.

STUDY SKILLS ACADEMY - The Study Skills Academy is an after-school program that assists students who need a little extra help outside the classroom. It is sponsored by the Naperville Education Foundation in partnership with District 203. Study Skills Academies are in place at all 14 elementary schools and all five junior high schools. Assistance is needed for homework and academic support as well as skills assistance in reading and math. Days of the week vary, but elementary times are 2:30 – 3:30 PM, while junior high times are 3:00 – 4:00 PM.

If you are interested in assisting the students and staff of District 203 through this opportunity, or if you would like more information about HURRAH, please contact the Office of Community Relations at (630) 420-6475. And remember: you don’t have to be retired to volunteer! *

HURRAH Dogs

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teacher in Salt Lake City, UT, who brought dogs into libraries. "I thought, 'If they're doing it in the library, why not in school?'" said Hoff, who was named "Volunteer of the Year" at the 2005 District 203 Awards Reception for her novel approach to helping students read. Casey, a certified therapy dog at Rush-Copley Hospital and the DuPage Children's Museum, proudly joined his mistress onstage when she accepted her award.

"Year after year, students gain confidence and enthusiasm in their reading skills, partially attributable to their time shared with Casey," said Highlands Principal Susan Stuckey. "This dog friend is always happy to

have them share a story, and Mrs. Hoff offers the positive praise that Casey cannot voice."

Joining Hoff in the dog reading program at Highlands are HURRAH volunteer Gordon Friday and his beloved Murphy, an 11-year-old Portuguese Water Dog and certified therapy pet at Edward Hospital.

A retired RR Donnelley senior vice president and long-time HURRAH tutor at Washington Jr. High, Friday eagerly jumped on the dog wagon last year when he learned of Hoff's initiative.

"With a non-threatening peer like a dog, students let it all rattle out and read quite well," said Friday, whose dog sits patiently on a towel during his

weekly meetings with Highlands second graders.

While only certain students are pulled from their classrooms to read with Casey and Murphy on a regular basis (Hoff allows all students a chance to read with

Casey at the end of the year, however), almost every-

one at Highlands relishes the days

when these four-legged friends come

trotting through the halls. "[Janet Hoff's

dog reading program] has been a great partner-

ship," said Principal

Stuckey, "and now we are privileged to have expanded it with

Mr. Friday and Murphy. For both the kids and the animals, the smiles they share clearly indicate their enjoyment and love of their time together." *

"With a non-threatening peer like a dog, students let it all rattle out and read quite well."

Gordon Friday, Highlands Ultimutt Reading Buddies volunteer

2005/2006 HURRAH Contacts

Elementary Schools

Beebe: **Judy Rubenstein**—420-6332

Ellsworth: **Sue Hannan**—420-6635
(HURRAH Contact Char Linne)

Elmwood: **Molly Elsen and Juliann Sturgeon**—420-6341

Highlands: **Susan Stuckey**—420-6335
(HURRAH Contact Dottie Krejci)

Kingsley: **Mary Alice Lindvall**—420-3216
(HURRAH Contact Joanne Graham)

Maplebrook: **Lynn Matyas and Pam Vaughan**—420-6588
(HURRAH Contact David Wise)

Meadow Glens: **Dr. Linda Tusin**—420-3201
(HURRAH Contact Margene Meis)

Mill Street: **Tanya Hughes**—420-6356
(HURRAH Contact Polly Davidson)

Naper: **Diane Pancoast**—420-6345

Prairie: **Kathy Klees**—420-3892

Ranch View: **Pat King**—420-6578

River Woods: **Helen Halkias**—420-6832

Scott: **Karen McKissick and Pat Gaskin**—420-6477
(HURRAH Contact Ruth Weber)

Steeple Run: **Lora Nowicki**—420-6385
(HURRAH Contact Caroline Kalkis)

Junior High Schools

Jefferson: **Kaye Corrigan**—420-6362
(HURRAH Contact Bill Bien)

Kennedy: **Wally Loague**—420-3224
(HURRAH Contact Bill Bien)

Lincoln: **Mike Frost**—420-3257
(HURRAH Contact Bill Bien)

Madison: **D.J. Skogsberg**—420-6416
(HURRAH Contact Bill Bien)

Washington: **Margie Nickels**—420-6390
(HURRAH Contact Gene Rados)

High Schools

Naperville Central: **Jackie Pfeiffer**—420-6440
(HURRAH Contact Ray Hill)

Naperville North: **Tim Wierenga**—420-6483
(HURRAH Contact Ray Hill) *

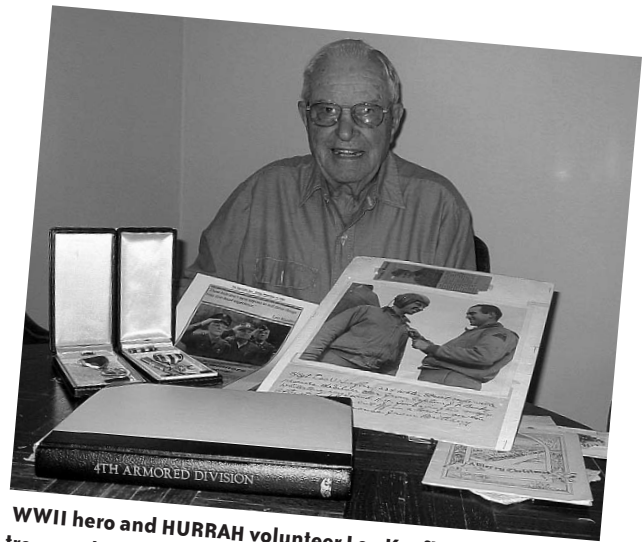
World War II Hero Leo Keufler Shows JJHS 8th Graders Freedom Isn't Free

Though he speaks of the German ambush that shattered his legs and killed half of the men under his command, the ten people who were obliterated by shellfire when he was rushed to an ambulance (leaving him the only one alive) and the Silver Star he earned for saving his platoon in an attack on its tanks, WWII veteran Leo Keufler laments that there is still so much more to say about the second world war. Yet, each year, the local hero visits schoolchildren to try to put into words just what it was like to be part of this extraordinary chapter in history.

“If we don’t come and talk to these kids, they won’t get the real effects of war,” said Keufler, a former tank commander and Staff Platoon Sergeant in the Army’s 4th Armored Division, who, along with other WWII veterans, has shared his war experiences with Jefferson Junior High eighth graders around Memorial Day for the past 20 years. Bearing medals, photos and the mottled calves

that skin grafts and 18 months in orthopedic hospitals couldn’t fully repair, the 87-year-old HURRAH volunteer brings to youngsters a real-life bit of history that will all too soon vanish. “[The students] seem interested in what we have to say; they ask a lot of questions,” affirmed Keufler, who fought in three major battles in France.

Upon graduating in 1936 from Naperville Community High School (now Naperville Central, from which Keufler received an Alumni Recognition Award in 2001), Leo worked as a mechanic at an Ogden Avenue truck stop. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, he was drafted into the war that would earn him some of the military’s highest honors. Prior to November 14, 1944, when anti-tank weapons destroyed



WWII hero and HURRAH volunteer Leo Keufler displays treasured war medals, photos and mementos.

Keufler’s legs and he was discharged from duty with a Purple Heart, Keufler risked his life during a bloody reconnaissance mission by taking charge of a tank crew whose commander had been injured. It was this act of heroism that earned him the prestigious Silver Star Award for gallantry in action.

Following a year and a half in hospitals in England and Kansas, Keufler was stable enough to return home, where he ran a service station for 17 years on the current site of Naperville’s Municipal Center. During this time, he met his wife of 40 years, the late Shirley Schuster. In 1963, Keufler teamed up with District 203, working as head mechanic for its fleet of eight school busses. Born into a family of five brothers (three of whom also served in WWII) and five sisters, Keufler has four children of his own and four grandchildren. While these children and grandchildren will one day inherit Keufler’s prized medals and memorabilia, Keufler plans to share for as long as he can the most vivid reminder of the war—himself. *



Leo Keufler (bottom row, second from left) and fellow veterans prepare to share war experiences with JJHS students around Memorial Day.



REMEMBERING PAUL HARRIS

Beloved Volunteer Made Lasting Impression at Prairie School

Teachers and students at Prairie Elementary bade farewell to a treasured friend March 22, 2005, when HURRAH volunteer Paul “Rusty” Harris passed away at the age of 83. “We will feel Mr. Harris’ presence forever,” said Prairie teacher Jeni Rogers. Infusing his own life experiences into the literature he read each week to Prairie first and second graders, Paul Harris brought much more to children than words on a page.

“Mr. Harris personalized presentations with stories and pictures that the children loved,” said Prairie first grade teacher Debra Joseph. “He shared with us the best of himself and the best of his generation; those of us who knew him will always have a part of him in our hearts,” added Prairie first grade teacher Marilyn Hamadej.

Born in Normal, IL, Paul Harris (nicknamed “Rusty” for his reddish hair) grew up in small towns in central Illinois and became an Eagle Scout at the age of 16. A Navy veteran of WWII, Harris served on the USS Pamanset in the Pacific Theater. After the war, he received his degree in education from Illinois State University and wed his wife, Mary, to whom he was married for 59 years. Together, the couple had three children and several adored grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A former high school social studies teacher and long-time employee in the textbook industry, Harris was thrilled to be immersed in books and remained passionate about reading all of his life. When he and his family moved to Naperville in 1966, he soon made his mark on the community, serving as a member of the Naperville Evening Kiwanis Club for 39 years and, later, as a volunteer with local nursing homes, Edward Hospital and the Meals-on-Wheels program. When Harris discovered HURRAH, the opportunity to help students read became his fondest pursuit.

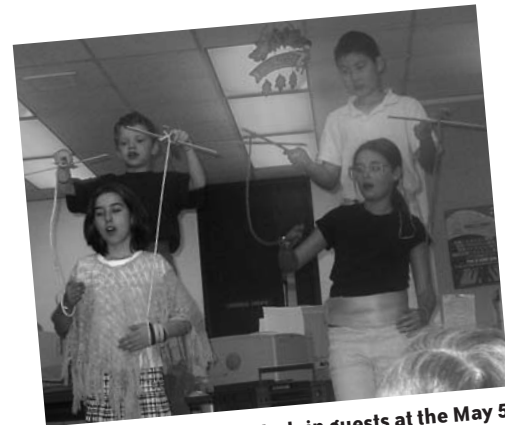
“My father was so proud to be a HURRAH volunteer,” said Polly Benton, Harris’ daughter and a Prairie reading specialist. “His favorite day of the week was Monday, because that was the day he came to Prairie.” Beyond reading with Prairie students, Harris shared a living history of wartime stories with District 203 youngsters on Veteran’s Day. He also worked diligently with Prairie ELL students, making certain that they understood new content and vocabulary, and regularly attended Prairie’s Winter and Spring Programs.

“Regardless of how a child struggled during his or her reading session, Mr. Harris always found a way to say something positive to me and to the child,” remarked Jeni Rogers, who dearly misses Rusty’s “treasure” of information about the war, early Naperville and how things have changed. But she and the Prairie community can take heart in the fact that Mr. Harris made an impression that will not soon fade. Said Rogers: “I know he continues to grace our halls with his wonderful spirit.” And now, a reading garden dedicated to the indelible memory of Paul Harris will grace Prairie’s playground as well. *

Annual Luncheon Celebrates HURRAH’s Broadening Imprint

Guests of the May 5 HURRAH Appreciation Luncheon followed cheery paper footsteps into Prairie Elementary’s Learning Resource Center to celebrate the tremendous strides HURRAH volunteers have made in District 203 schools and beyond. The theme of “Follow in My Footsteps—Volunteer!” also punctuated HURRAH’s efforts to attract more volunteers, including those who have not yet reached retirement age.

Organized by Prairie LRC Director Mimi Sprague and Kingsley Elementary Assistant Principal Mary Alice Lindvahl (who has lent her creative tal-



Prairie fifth graders entertain guests at the May 5 HURRAH Appreciation Luncheon.

ents to the HURRAH luncheon for the past five years), the program featured songs from Prairie fifth graders dressed as marionettes and puppeteers. Other students served lunch at tables topped with notepads in the shape of a theme-appropriate flip-flop sandal (provided by the General Home and School Association).

Following heartfelt thanks to HURRAH volunteers from District 203 Associate Superintendent of Operations

Tom Paulsen and Board of Education Vice President Debbie Shipley, HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau enumerated HURRAH's multiple statewide accomplishments as well as all of the new District 203 programs in which HURRAH members are making an impact, particularly the Naperville Education Foundation's signature after-school Study Skills Academy. Via the Naperville Education Foundation, HURRAH's \$1,000 "Champions in Education" prize from *Midwest Living* magazine furnished supplies for Prairie School's F.L.I. (Fluent, Literate, Independent) program. "Our HURRAH volunteers are invaluable to our students," noted Prairie Assistant Principal Kathy Klees.

HURRAH member Bettie Hill updated guests on Beebe Elementary's "Study Buddy" program, in which HURRAH volunteers tutor K-2 students in math and the fine motor skills required in handwriting exercises, and also accepted a plaque honoring HURRAH members' commitment to become computer-literate via the PC Training program at NNHS. Three of the program's mentors, NNHS students Matt Rasche, Richard Bessler and Alex Kolbosov, attended the luncheon to show their appreciation of HURRAH volunteers in the PC workshop and in their school.

In recognition of those HURRAH members honored at the 2005 District 203 Awards Reception, Marineau and District 203 Director of Community Relations Nina Menis introduced "Those Who Excel" award recipients Louis Trierweiler and the state-recognized HURRAH Executive Council of Russ Marineau, Gene

Rados, Ray Hill, Bill Bien and Joanne Graham. Outstanding School Volunteers included Ray Hill, Bob Dietsche, Zink Sanders and Janet Hoff. Posthumously awarded were Outstanding School Volunteers Ray Garside and Paul "Rusty" Harris, both of whom made an indelible mark at Prairie School. Also specially recognized were Jaycees Distinguished Service Award recipients Frank Osterland and Carolyn Finzer and active HURRAH couple Frank and Evelyn Bernd, who had recently celebrated 60 years of marriage.

In closing, Menis thanked luncheon speakers, Prairie students and staff, District 203 Executive Assistant Maureen Dvorak, Marriott-Sodexo Services, Mary Alice Lindvahl and Stitches and

HURRAH Mentors with "PRIDE" *continued from page 1*

academics, specifically reading, at a time when staffing and funding for schools is carefully monitored." Added PRIDE Chairman and former District 304 school board president Steve Lillie: "With the Baby Boomers reaching retirement age, we knew there would be plenty of active seniors looking for meaningful and fulfilling opportunities to contribute to the community."

Heeding advice they received from HURRAH, PRIDE's executive board is implementing its program slowly, beginning with one pilot elementary school and focusing predominantly on reading support. Using the HURRAH application as a starting point, the PRIDE program plans to adapt first to the partic-



(front row, left to right) HURRAH Appreciation Luncheon honorees Joanne Graham, Louis Trierweiler, Janet Hoff and (back row, left to right) Zink Sanders, Russ Marineau, Gene Rados and Polly Benton.

Stuffing for the loan of a display quilt featuring fanciful footwear. To the HURRAH volunteers themselves, Prairie second graders said it best. Holding a long line of beautiful, hand-painted letters high above their heads, the youngsters spelled out "THANK YOU" in enormous living color. *

ular needs of its pilot school and then, as HURRAH has done, expand to the middle and high school levels. Efforts to recruit volunteers have thus far focused on retired teachers and individuals previously involved in the schools; the PRIDE committee is also setting its sights on senior organizations and church communities.

"We believe the PRIDE program offers endless possibilities at all levels," asserted Mary Stith. HURRAH Chairman and PRIDE mentor Russ Marineau wholeheartedly agreed: "Programs such as HURRAH, and now PRIDE, are good for the volunteers and good for the community." *

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Are You a HURRAH Volunteer?

Nearly 15 years after the first HURRAH volunteers appeared in District 203 schools, our program numbers over 120 members strong and has gained national attention for its longevity and outstanding organization. Like any volunteer effort, however, HURRAH relies upon the continual influx of new members. What does it take to be a HURRAH volunteer? To answer this question, the HURRAH Executive Council has identified some defining characteristics of a HURRAH volunteer. Chances are, you need look no further than your own mirror to spot the “ideal” HURRAH candidate.

H
Happy: HURRAH volunteers are part of the largest, fastest growing, healthiest, best educated and most financially-secure segment of the population.

U
Upbeat: HURRAH volunteers are positive, high-energy people with a strong commitment to their community and a desire to support the educational system with their time and talents. They have great concern for the future of our children and want to share the wisdom and skills they have acquired throughout their rich and varied lives. In return, HURRAH offers members the structure, social interaction, status and sense of contribution that work, homemaking and/or parenting once provided.

R
Retirees (& other)

R
Residents: HURRAH volunteers view retirement as a time to stay active, meet new people, learn new things and give back to their community. Because they also value their free time and flexibility, HURRAH members control their own schedules, spending as much or as little time volunteering as they wish. HURRAH volunteers need not be retired—they can join us at any stage of life!

A
Actively

H
Helping: Helping students to achieve their educational goals and realize their individual potential is the driving force behind HURRAH. While most of our members no longer have children of their own left at home, they still enjoy interfacing with youngsters and establishing meaningful intergenerational ties with them. HURRAH volunteers know that they, too, gain so much by making a difference in a young person’s life.

Join HURRAH today! For more information, contact HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau at 420-1029 or District 203 Director of Community Relations Nina M. Menis at 420-6475.