

HURRAH Times



Spring 2007

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



WJHS eighth grader John Bottiglierio gives his HURRAH mentor, Gene Rados, a big thumbs-up.

HURRAH Mentor Gives Boy Courage, Confidence

Washington Jr. High eighth grader John Bottiglierio visibly brightened when he caught sight of his weekly HURRAH mentor, Gene Rados, in the WJHS Learning Resource Center (LRC) one recent Thursday afternoon. It wasn't time yet for John to meet with Gene, but, said the dark-haired boy during passing periods, "I wish it was."

Two years ago, when John was a sixth grader, he and Rados began forming a bond that bridges the generations and goes far beyond the limits of help with homework. Through a mixture of non-judgmental guidance and a listening ear, the soft-spoken Rados has earned the trust and friendship of a boy who was gravely intimidated by the transition from elementary school to junior high.

"John has no academic problems," said Rados, a HURRAH executive councilman
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HURRAH Couples Share Goal of Reaching Children

For many couples, retirement is a time to relax, travel, visit with grandchildren and develop new interests. For HURRAH couples, retirement is all of that and the mutual experience of reaching out to youngsters in our schools. Joining forces to make a difference in a child's life, Frank and Evelyn Bernd and Ray and Bettie Hill share why there is more than enough room in their hearts and lives for HURRAH.

Frank and Evelyn Bernd

For nearly a decade, Frank and Evelyn's weekly routine has included going to Beebe Elementary together to read with young students. "It gives us something to do together, which is important," said Frank, who still refers to wife of 62 years as his "beautiful bride." Frank, a WWII
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Evelyn and Frank Bernd

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HURRAH Daughter Pays “Royal” Tribute to Dad’s Valor

They are a charming pair, 85-year-old HURRAH volunteer Royal Lauing and his artist daughter, Carolyn Finzer. Sitting at his kitchen table amidst enough personal WWII memorabilia to fill a small museum, Royal is tenderly primed and primed for this interview by Carolyn, whose artsy side comes through in the way she arranges her father’s treasures just so.

Patton. Carolyn urges her father to talk about his participation in the Battle of the Bulge, the liberation of Buchenwald prisoners, the Normandy invasion and the various war reunions he has attended over the years.

This is a familiar scene to scores of students and citizens throughout Naperville and beyond. For over 15 years, Carolyn has lovingly assisted

got to share their own war experiences and demonstrated to youngsters that war is not pleasant, and freedom isn’t free. He regularly receives thank you letters from students who have heard his story, and, like other WWII veterans who speak with youngsters about the second world war, he is a living, breathing part of history that will all too soon be confined to textbooks.

“My father is a survivor,” said Carolyn, who grew up in the house in which Royal still lives, just around the bend from her current residence on Sylvan Circle in Naperville. “He has had quadruple bypass surgery, a hernia operation and two artificial hip replacements.” Donning another of her father’s campaign caps and a stylish camouflage silk scarf, Carolyn exclaims: “I’m his Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy in Company B!” Like her father, the iconic Naperville artist and storyteller has her share of admirers, too.

“Carolyn Finzer was my inspiration,” said art historian Jennifer Smith Trezona, of her art teacher at Jefferson Jr. High more than 30 years ago. “I have never forgotten her; I still have paintings from her class on my walls.” Indeed, one walk through Carolyn Finzer’s home and yard—a veritable mosaic of wildlife, whimsy and world finds—and one will not soon forget the visionary whose passion for art, culture and the good green earth pervades all that she is and does.



Backed by his greatest fan, daughter Carolyn Finzer, HURRAH member Royal Lauing displays the WWII memorabilia he shares with students each year.

“Put your hat on, Dad,” Carolyn tells her father, placing atop his head the VFW cap that sports patches, badges and the five stars that represent each of the WWII campaigns in which he fought. She is visibly proud of her father’s heroism in Company B of the 25th Armored Engineer Battalion, a part of the 6th Armored Division under General George

her father in his WWII presentations, offered yearly to youngsters at Lincoln and Jefferson Jr. Highs and other schools and programs. Royal’s war stories have also been well-documented in various oral histories, including one at the Patton Museum in Fort Knox, KY. He has given awestruck students Nazi arm bands he confiscated during the war and shown them the weapons of the SS, inscribed with skull and crossbones. He has spoken for fallen grandfathers who never

“I like to be [thought of as] Carolyn the Catalyst,” said Finzer, whose backyard sanctuary has awed garden tourists from far and wide and is certified by the Illinois Audubon Society and registered with the National Wildlife Federation’s Backyard Habitat Program. It was also featured in the 2005 hardcover of *Best of Birds & Bloom*. With words such as “Courage,” “Spirit,” “Equality” and “Diversity” strewn about in trees and twiggy arbors and a “Goddess Grotto” devoted to woman’s nurturing power, Finzer hopes to open her visitors’ eyes to more than flora and fauna.

As a professional storyteller, Finzer strives to learn from other cultures and share with her community what she has learned. Beginning with the Native American campfire tales she told youngsters in the Girl Scout troop she established when her daughters started school, Finzer’s storytelling also includes song, dance and memorable characters and costumes of her own creation. Carolyn’s interest in Native American culture didn’t stop at campfire stories. Indeed, an entire room in her home is devoted to Native American art, artifacts and over 300 resource books on the subject.

The first art teacher at Jefferson Jr. High, when the school opened in 1969, Finzer takes great joy in returning to JJHS each year with her father for its annual Memorial Day program. To her delight, the fourth-generation Napervillian still finds pieces of her artwork on Jefferson’s walls. “I have art pouring out all over,” said

Carolyn, whose talents have been tapped by untold organizations and individuals throughout the years. Sponsors of the Naperville United Way’s annual public outdoor art event, for whom Finzer has created several fanciful sculptures, call on her every year. On a marble wall at Naperville’s

City Hall hangs a collage Finzer created in 1976 entirely out of “unusable junk.” At New York City’s Ground Zero, a fiber art panel called the “Ribbon of Hope” will feature Finzer’s trademark stamp of art woven from remnants.

Royal Lauing’s daughter is a model citizen, both figuratively and literally. The mother of two accomplished daughters and wife of airline pilot Melvern Finzer, Carolyn has volunteered her time and talent to numerous schools, museums and community groups and has earned more distinguished service awards than there is room to hang them. Twice, she was the

recipient of the Naperville Jaycees’ Distinguished Service Award for Culture and History. She is also a Eucharistic minister at Naperville’s Ss. Peter and Paul, where she attended elementary school. Add to that a modeling gig in catalogs for Marketplace Handwork of India, a non-profit fair trade organization whose clothing proceeds help women of India attain better health and education. “I represent women who have silver hair,” said the former Naperville Central cheerleader and homecoming queen, who still looks radiant at 59.

“Carolyn puts everything in place,” said Royal. Though he is referring to her meticulous attention to the mementos of his past, it is clear that the connection between Royal (a widower of 12 years) and his dynamic daughter goes far beyond photos and medals. “My father is my personal hero,” said Carolyn. “I tell students that all the time.” *

[Royal Lauing] has spoken for fallen grandfathers who never got to share their own war experiences and demonstrated to youngsters that war is not pleasant, and freedom isn't free.

Luncheon Honors Those Who Make a Difference

Held May 4, 2006, at Prairie Elementary School, HURRAH’s annual Appreciation Luncheon honored six special volunteers who make a hands-on difference in a child’s life. Outstanding School Volunteers for 2006 included:

Jack and Ruth Force, Ranch View Elementary

Doris Gott, Scott Elementary

Garth Kennedy, Kennedy Junior High

Jim Martin, Prairie Elementary

Chet Rybicki, Lincoln Junior High

Reschkes: For Generations, a Real District 203 Family

Joseph Naper may have founded Naperville, but nowadays it is another name heard time and again in our city and school district—Reschke. While Reschke roots run deep in Naperville, the legacy doesn't stop at mere heritage. Driven by what family patriarch Bob Reschke describes as a profound interest in the “people business,” members of this clan strive to make a difference in our community.

For Bob and Wilma Reschke, who settled in Naperville in 1955 and raised four children here, that difference begins in the schools. As president of the first District 203 Board of Education (when the elementary and high school boards combined in 1972), Wilma played a key role in ensuring that there was adequate land for schools at a time when Naperville was rapidly expanding.

Educated at Harvard and Boston University, Bob practiced family medicine in Naperville for over 45 years, treating as many as four generations of patients in some families. A prime example of a lifelong learner, Bob has logged 2,400 hours of post-graduate medical education and, since retiring 13 years ago, the equivalent of 24 semesters of collegiate work at College of DuPage. Upon retirement, Bob also set his sights on District 203 education and answered HURRAH Chairman and neighbor Russ Marineau's call to become a HURRAH mentor at Washington Jr. High, where he continues to meet with students every week.

Mentor Gives Boy Confidence *continued from page 1*

and student mentor at WJHS for the past 10 years. “He just didn't want to come to school. He would cling to his mother's leg. She used to bring him to school and sit with him in the LRC. But no more; John comes to school on his own now.”

“John says his meetings with Mr. Rados are reason enough to go to school,” reported John's mother, Tammy. “Mr. Rados gives him confidence in himself and the courage to stand up to what he doesn't understand.” Tammy also credits Rados with helping her son to realize that he doesn't have to be perfect. Said WJHS Assistant Principal Margie Nickels, who has been very instrumental in the HURRAH effort at Washington, “When it was mentioned to John that Gene would be working with him again this year, his eyes lit up.”

Perhaps John himself says it best: “I love Thursdays, because that's the day I get to meet with Mr. Rados.” To hear John articulate why his mentor is so special to him and witness the palpable ease between the two, it's hard to imagine the 13-year-old in the throes of the anxiety. “Mr. Rados is a great guy; he's funny, cheerful, easy to talk to, and he helps me understand my homework.” John also has a solid grasp of the importance of intergenerational relationships. “Older people have a lot of knowledge about history, and young people have knowledge to give to older people, too.”

“Last year, John tried to teach me how to play chess,” said Rados, who understands that his role as a HURRAH mentor is not to replace students' teachers, but to help kids feel comfortable and accepted for who they are. “Helping students with their homework may be the smallest aspect of what I do.” Added the grandfather of 13 and former Little League and youth basketball coach: “Sometimes kids just need someone to talk to. I like being there for them.”

When John contemplates his next transition—high school—he is quick to say that he will miss the man who, by the end of this year, will have faithfully mentored him for three years. “But,” added the boy who once wouldn't leave his mother's side, “Mr. Rados is helping me with things now that will get me through high school.” Until then, there's always next Thursday. *

Like most HURRAH volunteers, Bob is acutely aware that the bond between mentors and students is often more emotional than academic. “I am a father figure to some students, particularly those who come from split families,” he said. “You can measure students' improvement in grades, but you can't measure what they have accomplished socially,” he added. “Not everyone is equal, and not everyone is going to get A's. There's more to learning than that.”

Echoing that sentiment is Bob and Wilma's son, Dean, who, as a marriage and family therapist and president of the current District 203 Board of Education, has a keen understanding of the unique needs of young people. “There are more kids today with special needs than ever before,” said the 1975 Naperville Central graduate and father of two college students. “Our job is to make sure we're meeting the educational needs of every



Bob and Wilma Reschke (center) enjoy a day with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

child.” Dean’s concerns also revolve around properly preparing students for a world that is changing at an ever-accelerating rate.

Thirty-five years ago, when Wilma served on the new school board, the issues of the day were less about student diversity and global change than suburban sprawl. “At the time,” said Wilma, a former Northwestern-educated nurse and leader of such efforts as the Edward Hospital volunteer nurse program and the establishment of the new Nichols Library (to name just a few), “Naperville was growing rapidly, and we wanted to make sure that education could keep pace.” Toward that end, Wilma and her associates drafted a land/cash ordinance that required developers to set aside land for schools or give cash to the school district, a push that eventually reached the State Supreme Court and paved the

way for cities across the country to pass similar ordinances. Said Dean Reschke, “My mother and her colleagues did some fairly amazing things to give birth to this district.”

Perhaps it is only fitting that another of Bob and Wilma’s sons, Keith, is a science teacher at Kennedy Jr. High. Keith’s wife, Sally, is a teacher in Elmwood Elementary’s Early Childhood program, and all three of the couple’s children wish to pursue careers in education. “I love teaching, and I enjoy each day with the kids,” said Keith, adding that he is proud of his parents’ and brother’s involvement in the schools and community over the years. “District 203 is special because of the way teachers, administrators and parents all work together to create an environment that gives

kids a chance to be successful in school and life.” Said Sally Reschke, who also grew up in Naperville and comes from a long line of District 203 educators herself (her grandmother, Lois Stauffer, was one of the first women principals in Naperville), “Keith and I stayed here in Naperville not only because of our jobs, but because we loved Naperville growing up and wanted the same wonderful school experiences for our children.”

“Naperville is the perfect place to raise a family,” concurred Wilma. While mindful of the balance and boundaries needed in a competitive community such as ours, Dean lauds Naperville’s safety, services and “can do” spirit. Bob feels privileged to have cared for so many Naperville families and pleased that our city is still attracting the same “like-minded” people who started it. Joe Naper would have been proud. ✱

Remembering Louis Trierweiler (1918-2006)

As a golfer, Louis Trierweiler was a natural. During his lifetime, he shot 13 holes-in-one, played in two U.S. Opens and the 1938 Masters, triumphed in countless golf tournaments and became the first amateur ever to win over the 1941 Illinois Open. But to students and staff at Lincoln Junior High, the 88-year-old HURRAH volunteer (who passed away May 15, 2006) was a generous and treasured friend.

“Lou was a gift to the LJHS school community and all those who crossed his path,” said former LJHS Assistant Principal Janet Kenyon. “He was routinely prepared with a smile, warm welcome and special treats to share with others.” Mr. Trierweiler was also very giving of his time, serving Lincoln as a weekly greeter, regular participant in the school’s Veterans Day program and mentor to students in Lincoln’s after-school intramural golf program.

According to Kenyon, Louis was happiest when he spotted his two grandchildren, Brad and Allison Rook, in Lincoln’s hallways. In addition to their grandchildren, all three children of Louis and his wife, Alice, attended Lincoln. “Lou had been a friend of Lincoln Junior High for many years,” noted Kenyon, adding that he was often seen in the school bleachers, cheering on the Lincoln Lancers.

A WWII veteran who fought in the D-Day invasion at Normandy Beach, Louis proudly helped raise the American flag at Lincoln Junior High on Veterans Day. “Preparing for and conducting the Veterans Day program was one of my favorite projects at LJHS when I served as assistant principal,” said Kenyon, who is now Director of Human Resources for District 203.

Born in Aurora, Louis graduated from East Aurora High School in 1938 and moved to Naperville in 1959. In February 2005, the retired insurance broker was inducted into East Aurora High’s Hall of Fame for his high school sporting feats as well as his lifetime accomplishments as a champion golfer and dedicated volunteer. Janet Kenyon and her husband, who nominated Mr. Trierweiler for the honor, were thrilled to attend the ceremony. “It was our pleasure to be present that evening and to see Lou receive the Hall of Fame honor,” said Kenyon. “Lou was very proud of that evening and made us equally proud to have such a wonderful friend.” *



In one of his favorite photos, Louis Trierweiler poses with former LJHS Assistant Principal Janet Kenyon in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Lincoln's 2005 Veterans Day program.

NCHS, HURRAH Weigh in on Fitness for All Generations

Naperville Central High School and HURRAH are putting muscle behind the idea that physical fitness is a lifelong process that spans the generations. Along with NCHS Physical Education Department Chairman Paul Zientarski and other HURRAH members, HURRAH Executive Councilman Bill Bien is spearheading a program that creates personalized physical training programs for HURRAH members, based upon information from computerized individual health profiles.

Launched in early February, the program allows HURRAH members use of Naperville Central’s weight training and cardiovascular equipment on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:30-12:30 p.m., once they have received a doctor’s permission to participate in the program as well as their customized health profiles and training plans. Health profiles (computer-based and conducted at the school by HURRAH volunteers) evaluate such factors as blood pressure, heart and cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, strength, flexibility and body mass. Eventually, qualified HURRAH members will be working out alongside NCHS students, demonstrating District 203’s active embrace of the PE4Life philosophy that physical education is no longer 40 minutes of a game in gym class, but a lifetime commitment to overall health and fitness. In addition to training with NCHS students, HURRAH volunteers will also lend their support in student P.E. classes and other special projects within the department.

In Central's effort to detect potential heart defects among students, HURRAH members are also helping to conduct EKG tests at the school.

"Our goal is intergenerational contact," said Bien, of his and Zientarski's push to bring younger and older people together in the fitness process. "Physical health is a number one concern of seniors, and [HURRAH members in training] would be proof that physical fitness is lifelong," added HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau, who has received his own health profile and begun his follow-up training program. According to Bien, who is also a familiar figure in Central's weight room, personalized fitness programs will not remain static; after six weeks, participants' progress will be

evaluated, and recommendations for improvement will be given. "This program is a win-win situation for both seniors and students," Marineau said.

*For more information, or to join this program, contact Bill Bien at 718-0825. Participants must first receive a doctor's approval before beginning this program. Physical training begins after personal health profiles and customized training plans have been formulated. **



With the help of NCHS P.E. Chairman Paul Zientarski (rear), Bill Bien keys in data for the personal health profile of fellow HURRAH member Russ Marineau (on floor).

Opportunity for HURRAH Volunteers

Below is a specific opportunity for current HURRAH volunteers—or for those who would like to join—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 21 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 and junior high times are 3:00 – 4:00 PM. High school times are 3:30-4:30 PM at Naperville Central, 3:15-4:15 PM at Naperville North.

If you are interested 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! *

2006/2007 HURRAH Contacts

Elementary Schools

Beebe: **Judy Rubenstein**—420-6332

Ellsworth: **Dick Allen**—420-6338

Elmwood: **Dave Cleveland and Alice Parrott**—420-6341

Highlands: **Deana McAllister**—420-6335

Kingsley: **Dr. Mary Alice Lindvall**—420-3208

Maplebrook: **Pam Vaughan**—420-6588

Meadow Glens: **Dr. Linda Tusin**—420-3201

Mill Street: **Tanya Hughes**—420-6356

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**—420-6477

Steeple Run: **Lora Nowicki**—420-6385

Junior High Schools

Jefferson: **Mark Pasztor**—420-6363

Kennedy: **Wally Loague**—420-3224

Lincoln: **Mike Frost**—420-3257

Madison: **D.J. Skogsberg**—420-6416

Washington: **Margie Nickels**—420-6390

High Schools

Naperville Central: **Jackie Pfeiffer and**

Lynne Nolan—420-6440

Naperville North: **Tim Wierenga**—420-6483 *

Active Volunteer Brings HURRAH Spirit to Synagogue

More than a decade ago, Ruth Weber's rabbi at Naperville's Congregation Beth Shalom synagogue encouraged the recently transplanted New Yorker to get involved in her new community by joining HURRAH. Today, Ruth is urging members of her temple to do the same. In a presentation she offered to worshippers at Beth Shalom last November, Ruth worked up the confidence to express the immeasurable importance of HURRAH in her life.

"I'm not really comfortable in front of groups, but I worked on my presentation for a good month, and think it went very well," said Ruth, whose discussion sparked interest in HURRAH. "I told people that volunteering even one time a week makes a difference and that everyone can contribute something at any age," added the woman who spends four hours a week reading with Scott School elementary students. "I get more out of [being a HURRAH volunteer] than the children do; it absolutely thrills me to see the kids' accomplishments."

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Ruth relocated to Naperville 13 years ago to live with her daughter. Recently, she moved into in her own apartment. Far from being idle, Ruth has been an enthusiastic volunteer since she moved to Naperville. "If I'm at home during the day, I don't

watch TV; it's a waste of time," said the vivacious senior whose only "play day" is Friday, when she gets her hair done and plays mahjong with friends at Naperville's Community Center. In addition to the time Ruth spends tutoring students each week, she is also active in her synagogue's "Opportunities for Aging" program (through which she hopes to launch a surrogate grandmothers group and give her HURRAH presentation again) and has donated several hours of service to a local cancer center.

It is HURRAH, however, that is Ruth's most "perfect fit." Said Ruth: "I just love children, and from the minute I walked into the door [as a HURRAH volunteer], I was treated as a member of the family." Indeed, when she took her rabbi's advice and answered an ad calling for new HURRAH members all those years ago, not an hour went by before she received a call back from HURRAH. She joined the organization two days later. "My time with HURRAH is the happiest I've been as a volunteer."



Ruth Weber enjoys a weekly game of mahjong with friends at the Naperville Community Center.

Ruth's feeling of belonging goes beyond the HURRAH community to all of Naperville. "I just love Naperville," she declared. "People are so much nicer here than they are back in New York, and District 203 is so involved in helping kids reach their full potential." A widow whose husband died in 1985 just two months before their first grandchild was born, Ruth refuses to go gracefully into old age. "I want to live to see my two sons and two daughters pass the age of 60!" Ruth also asserts that regular interaction with children keeps her in a young frame of mind. "Being with kids gives me a new attitude not to be an old 'fuddy-duddy.'

HURRAH is an absolutely invaluable program, and as long as I can walk, talk and drive, I'm going to be a part of it." *

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"Being with kids gives me a new attitude not to be an old 'fuddy-duddy.' HURRAH is an absolutely invaluable program, and as long as I can walk, talk and drive, I'm going to be a part of it."

HURRAH on Agenda at Key State Education Meetings

HURRAH continues to make its mark on the Illinois intergenerational landscape. Last fall, Chairman Russ Marineau was invited to present the HURRAH model at three key meetings across the state. The first, a brainstorming session called “Aging is an Asset” in Normal, IL, convened leaders in education, retirees and members of aging organizations to examine how the fastest-growing segment of the population today—citizens over 60—can experience a “win/win” situation in which retirees and the educational system mutually benefit one another. Retirees have much to offer, and increasingly, as leaders in education realize the largely untapped potential of intergenerational relationships for seniors and students alike, they are calling upon members of HURRAH to evidence just how much. “Reinventing retirement will happen most successfully...through people like Russ Marineau, who coordinates retiree volunteers in Naperville,” stated a summary

of “Aging is an Asset” objectives and solutions.

Marineau also served on a panel entitled “Retirees Make a Difference in Schools” at the Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Administrators in Chicago. Along with Dr. Jane Angelis, Director of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale’s Intergenerational Initiative (and a sponsor of the “Aging is an Asset” meeting), Marineau demonstrated how HURRAH has effectively brought older and younger generations together to produce stronger students and happier retirees.

In DeKalb, IL, Marineau and Angelis were guest speakers at the kick-off meeting of DeKalb School District 428’s initiative to launch a program like HURRAH in its schools. Before nearly 80 people, Marineau presented the HURRAH prototype; by meeting’s end, 20 community members had stepped up to mentor students in DeKalb schools. According to Robin Stearnes, whose man-

agement consulting firm was retained to support District 428 in creating a more inclusive learning community, these volunteers recently became active at all school levels throughout the district.

Stearnes became aware of HURRAH after her mother attended a ground-breaking Senate forum on intergenerational leadership in 2005. Intrigued, Stearnes began researching the possibility of bringing retired citizens into District 428 schools and learned that HURRAH is the number one such program in Illinois. She then contacted Marineau, who invited her to meet with HURRAH’s executive board and attend its September 22 orientation meeting.

“HURRAH has been very instrumental supporting and assisting me in the research necessary to introduce [a program like HURRAH] to the DeKalb community,” said Stearnes. Chief among Stearnes’s goals for District 428 are providing at-risk students with one-on-one tutors and mentors, bringing positive role models into the schools and creating opportunities for the DeKalb community to respond cooperatively to changes and challenges. “All generations need to work together to provide quality education for our kids and young adults. Doing this is in everyone’s best interest,” said Stearnes. HURRAH volunteers have known this for years, and their effect has been profound. In the words with which Russ Marineau concluded each of his state presentations: “Volunteers are not paid—not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” ✨



HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau confers with change management consultant Robin Stearnes (whose company is helping DeKalb School District 428 develop a program like HURRAH) at the project’s launch meeting in DeKalb.

veteran, also shares his war experiences with Jefferson and Lincoln junior high students each year around Memorial Day. “I get letters from the kids I’ve visited telling me, ‘You were so brave to fight that war,’” said the former 8th Air Force lead bombardier, who is all too aware that there will soon be no more WWII veterans to share their living histories.

Grandparents of seven and great-grandparents of two, the Berndts attest that they have always been interested in children. “[Our involvement in HURRAH] is more about what the children do for us than what we do for them,” said Evelyn. “It’s a wonderful experience to get inside the lives of young people and have them be a part of ours.” Noted Frank: “We’ve been able to watch the children [we’ve tutored] grow. I still get high-fives from former students.”

The Berndts’ involvement with HURRAH began when they responded to an ad calling for new members. They chose to volunteer at Beebe because of the school’s proximity to their condominium on Ogden Avenue and their admiration for Beebe’s “excellent teachers and principals,” explained Evelyn. Both Chicago-bred, Evelyn and Frank have lived in Naperville for over 40 years and raised two of their four grown children in the District 203 school system. “We really feel like we’re contributing something by volunteering with HURRAH,” Evelyn said.

“We also love a challenge,” added Frank, acknowledging the hesitation some older peo-

ple have about interacting with youngsters. “HURRAH activism keeps you in the new generation.” Keeping up with the new generation is clearly important to the Berndts, as evidenced by the way they have kept their own youth alive. They remember the night they met as if it were yesterday, and among their favorite keepsakes are a photo of the two on their wedding day (when they were barely out of their teens) and their framed front-page copy of the *Naperville Sun*, which featured the Berndts’ 61st wedding anniversary last year. To make sure their vitality isn’t locked away in mementos, the Berndts make a point of walking together five mornings a week at Fox Valley Mall. “It gives us a chance to talk about important things,” said Frank, who is grateful for his and Evelyn’s good health.

“HURRAH activism keeps you in the new generation.”

Though Frank, a former lighting company partner, and Evelyn (who went to work in an office after her last child graduated from high school) have volunteered their time in many capacities throughout their 21 years of retirement, it has been their joint venture with HURRAH that has consistently remained on their calendars. “There would be a void in my life without HURRAH,” said Evelyn. “I love being surrounded by young people.”

Ray and Bettie Hill

Bettie Hill is another familiar figure at Beebe School. Since 1995, when two of Bettie’s grandsons were students there, the former grade school teacher



Bettie and Ray Hill

has been sharing her passion for reading with Beebe youngsters, some of them ELL students. Bettie also assisted her daughter, Beebe first grade teacher Jennifer Gerard, in launching the school’s “Study Buddy” program to boost students’ math and fine motor skills. An active volunteer in District 203 schools even before HURRAH was established, Bettie’s assimilation into HURRAH seemed inevitable. Inevitable, too, was Bettie’s conviction that her husband, Ray, should also become involved with HURRAH.

“I could see that HURRAH was going in a very positive direction, and I wanted Ray to be part of it,” said Bettie, adding that it’s healthy for couples to share common interests. Sparked by his wife’s encouragement as well as HURRAH’s call for volunteers at the high school level, Ray (a former Ball Corporation international business executive) teamed up with Naperville North business teacher Marty Frattinger five years ago to offer his global business acumen to NNHS students. Not one to shy away from digging in, Ray is also HURRAH’s representative on the Board of Education’s Facilities Task Force.

He didn’t stop there; in short order, Ray also joined the HURRAH Executive Council. To

HURRAH Chairman Wins “Spirit of the Generations” Award

HURRAH Chairman Russ Marineau received *Continuance* magazine’s 2006 “Spirit of the Generations” Award for his role in “leading, inspiring and empowering older citizens in the community to become involved as tutors and mentors.” (*Continuance*, Spring/Summer 2006.) Founded upon the traditional underpinnings of democracy, when all generations worked and learned together to build a strong country, the “Spirit of the Generations” honor is given to retirees who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to multi-generational and multicultural learning. The award also recognizes outstanding leadership and lifelong civic involvement.

As head of HURRAH, Russ has devoted numerous hours in our community and throughout the state extolling the educational and emotional benefits of intergenerational relationships. He has served as a valued advisor in high-profile state-wide efforts to replicate the success of the HURRAH program, including those of the Illinois State Board of

Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Geneva School District 304 PRIDE program. He has also been a frequent partner to Southern Illinois University’s Intergenerational Initiative Director Dr. Jane Angelis in her drive to “foster intergenerational relationships and promote lifelong service and learning.”



As a long-time HURRAH volunteer at Washington Junior High and in other schools across District 203, Russ has mentored countless youngsters throughout the years, helping them to become stronger, more independent learners. He has been a tireless advocate for the preservation of high-quality education in District 203, serving on numerous school committees and playing a lead role in the passage of the District’s 2002 educational tax referendum. Congratulations, Russ, on this well-deserved honor! ✱

this end, he has helped bring in HURRAH volunteers to read tests to high school students with special needs (an ongoing effort) as well as addressed specific student requests on a case-by-case basis. Ray has also been instrumental in instituting the greatly successful computer training program at North, in which high school students teach computer skills to older adults, some of whom are joining HURRAH in the process. According to Ray, much more than computer literacy is shared between seniors and students through this endeavor.

“There’s an immediate bond between seniors and teens,” said Ray, who asserts that high school students are extremely receptive and helpful to older people. “My experience with

high school students has been quite contrary to what people might think. They are very interested in seniors and also in how we view them,” said Ray, who played a role in NNHS’s production of “West Side Story” three years ago.

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For Bettie and Ray, who raised five children in several areas due to Ray’s frequent job relocations, HURRAH represents the ideal bridge between the schools and the community. Said Bettie, “I have volunteered my time in many school districts over the years, but I have never seen such commitment from the [district administration] to bring seniors and kids together.” Educated in a one-room Kansas country school with children of all ages, Bettie was accustomed to a bond between younger and older peo-

ple. “It’s natural to me,” she said. But for Ray, who grew up with “essentially no grandparents,” the link that HURRAH creates between children and older adults is invaluable.

In addition to the couple’s determination to send all five of their children to college, Ray and Bettie were equally committed to playing active roles in the lives of their seven grandchildren. That commitment also extends to the children of this community. “We have our hearts in these kids,” said Ray. Agreed Bettie, “It all comes down to working with the children; they always give you a new perspective.” Puzzled that they aren’t more HURRAH couples, Ray insists, “Young people are interested in older people. We have so much to offer one another.” ✱

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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.