



## *Best Practices Case Study*

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Editor's note: Kansas Partners in Education provides case studies as an educational service to KSPE members, affiliates, their organizations, and prospective partners.

### Creating a Win-Win Volunteer Program

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School volunteers make an important contribution to the education of America's youth. Volunteering to work with students is not only a noble cause, it is enriching and rewarding for the volunteer.

The quality of life and learning provided by the volunteers who contribute their time and talents to a school can have a powerful impact on students. A well-organized and effective volunteer program can be of such benefit to a school that its educational quality is noticeably improved. The relationships that students form with school volunteers can have a significant influence on their development of social skills, self-esteem, and personality.

Because school volunteers can play such an important role in the lives of students, that role must fit the needs of the school and follow specific guidelines. Schools are best able to perform their many functions by closely following structures and rules. The structures determine who is responsible for what, and the rules make learning possible. All school staff – both professional and volunteer – must work in cooperation to ensure safety, quality care, and effective teaching.

Knowing and understanding the roles played by school volunteers is a key to success for a school volunteer program. Strong and open communication among the volunteer coordinator, school administrators, teachers, and support staff are vital to molding the volunteer's role in the classroom, school office, and/or library.

Although school volunteers do not receive money for their time and effort, according to the Points of Life Institute, the value of one volunteer hour is \$20.25. The indirect budget savings provided by school volunteers increases the district resources available to educate students.

The greatest reward, however, is in the doing. School volunteers make an important difference in the lives of the children they serve. Once they have learned how best to blend their talents and interests with the needs of the school and its students, volunteers can help mold the lives that are America's future. This creates a win-win outcome for students, schools, and the community.

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Do you have ideas and activities to share? Please send them on the Kansas Partners in Education list serve by entering the following e-mail address in the "TO" line of an e-mail message: [kspartners@listserve.com](mailto:kspartners@listserve.com). Or send your information to [info@kspartners.org](mailto:info@kspartners.org) and we will help you with a case study.

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