

*Volunteer Opportunities
at:*

The John Ward School



*The John Ward School
10 Dolphin Road
Newton, MA 02459*

*Your Guide to Family
Involvement
2010-2011*

Dear Ward family,

Parent participation is the cornerstone of the Ward School experience. Becoming involved with school activities is a great way to build connections with other parents and teachers, and feel a part of the Ward *community*.

Whether you are interested in creative arts, social action, library, or fundraising... whether you can volunteer every week or once in a while...whatever day of the week or time of the day...there is a place for you as a Ward volunteer!

This brochure describes the many ways in which you can volunteer and contribute to the life of the Ward community. We hope that every parent in our *community* will find a way to participate.

Your efforts will truly make a difference, and our combined work will strengthen Ward for our children and our families.

Your involvement matters!

Volunteer Registration Form

Yes! I would like to be a Ward volunteer!

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Children's Names and Grades _____

I am interested in (check all that apply):

Fundraising:

- Spring event
- Cookbook
- Family picture day
- Playground
- Mystery Dinner
- Teacher/Classroom Raffle
- In-House Book Fair
- Ad Sales for Directory

On-going Community Building Programs:

- Room Parents
- CARE Committee
- PTO Publicity
- Teacher Appreciation
- New Buddies

Once a year Community Events:

- Mom (or Dad) night out
- Community event

Curriculum enhancement/classroom support:

- Art Committee
- CASC
- Respect for Human Differences
- Library/Literacy
- UOD
- Student Garden

Once a Year school Events:

- Color Day
- Annual Art Show

On-going school operations:

- School Council
- Political Action Committee
- Crisis Committee
- Special Ed. Rep.

General Volunteer. List any y specific skills?:

Notes/Contact Information

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Annual Community Events

Back to School Picnic

September 16 (rain date 9-23)

Ward families join together on the Ward Playground for an Pizza and socializing. A wonderful opportunity to meet with families you haven't seen over the summer as well as to welcome all new incoming Ward families. The picnic is a great way to transition back to fall school days. Volunteers will handle the logistics for the event: posting flyers and signs, arranging the pre-order of pizza, purchasing drinks, set-up, handling food distribution at the event.

Time commitment is approximately 3 hours to plan plus volunteers are needed at the event (5pm—7pm).

Chair: Jen Weber

International Night

April 7

Celebrate the cultural diversity of the Ward School Community ! Ward School students & friends get 'passports' and 'travel' to country booths hosted by Ward School families. In the past, countries to 'visit' have included Ireland, Japan, Iran, Thailand, Morocco, Australia, Brazil and more. The evening also includes a yummy pot-luck dinner, international costumes and more!

Chair:
Marla Libraty

PTO Correspondence (Rachel Dayanim)

Generate thank you notes and other correspondence on behalf of the PTO and people running PTO events.

Time Commitment: 1 hour every other week.

Want to Help - But Don't Know How?

Can we call you when we need an extra hand? Many parents would like to be involved, but have only a few hours to spare. Or, you might have a special talent you would like to share. Then again, maybe you want to be the "go to" person that can be called upon in a pinch.

There are a variety of jobs you can do. Check off the **General Volunteer** Help on the form in this brochure, return this form to the PTO box outside the office, and we will contact you.

This Week at Ward Editor (Jennifer Hrycyszyn)

On weeks that the ForWard is not sent, an email announcing events taking place at Ward in the upcoming week will be sent. Event details are taken from the PTO calendar.

Time Commitment: 1-2 hour every other week.

This Week at Ad Coordinator (Beth Panella)

Reviews and organizes all ads that have been submitted for print in ForWard.

Time Commitment: 1-2 hour every other week.

PTO Calendar Coordinator (Claire Marré)

This position will be responsible for adding events to the calendar upon request. If events are announced in other publications ensures they are added to calendar. Will check in periodically with school administration, after school and committee chairs to be sure events are added. Some technical ability helpful.

Time Commitment: 1 hour every other week.

Webmaster (Tasha Eaton)

Maintain the existing PTO website. Adds items and updates current information. Coordinates with editor of the ForWard to upload the file for each issue. Assists with web based initiatives. Web design skills a plus. Experience with web design beneficial.

Time Commitment: 5 hour per month.

Mom/Dad Night Out

A great way to get to know other Ward School parents. Be involved in planning an activity for just Moms or just Dads. It could be a night out, at a local spot, a gathering at a families home, a morning coffee. You decide! Create a theme (if desired) and arrange the time and place.

Time commitment: Approximately 3 hours planning plus attendance at the event.

Coordinators:

Open

On-going Community Activities

New Family Buddies Committee

This welcoming committee works together contacting new families throughout the school year, providing them with information about Ward, the PTO, volunteer positions, etc. The purpose of this committee is to help new families feel comfortable with their new school environment as soon as possible. This committee also plans a welcome event for new families over the summer.

Contact:
Stacy Schwartz

Teacher Appreciation

This committee will plan several events for the faculty and staff to recognize and thank them for their dedication and commitment to our children. Volunteers are needed to help classroom children make cards, plan breakfasts and luncheon. Staff and faculty look forward to this the whole year!

Time commitment: 1 hour per month.

Co-chairs:
Klee Miller Magda Duchnowska

Written Communications

School Directory (Beth Coomber and Erik Britt-Webb)

The Directory is an invaluable, and an important way for us to get to know and stay in touch with one another. It is distributed free of charge to every family.

This position is responsible for updating the directory with incoming kindergarten and new families each fall, and for updating the class lists and teacher information. Volunteers are needed to support the compiling the information and for the production of the Directory.

Time commitment: Approximately 12 hours in the first weeks of school.

ForWard Editor (Jen Weber)

The ForWard is an electronic newsletter sent out every other week. The editor will receive and compose the newsletter from articles and announcements that are submitted from members of the Ward community as well as the Newton PTO newsletter distribution list. Some technical ability and an eye for detail is helpful.

Time Commitment: 4-5 hours up-front and then approximately 1 hour per issue. Work can be done at home in evenings.

PTO Photography/Publicity (Open)

Help give the Ward Community a clear picture of what events are coming up and where PTO funds are spent. Utilize the front boards, the outer railing, publications ... whatever seems best so people know what we are up to. This person has flexibility in how they do this ... digital pictures, signs, quotes from kids, notes in the Forward, banners in front of the school.

Time commitment varies and can mostly be done at home.

Room Parents

Room Parents are the main source of communication between the class teacher and class parents. Being a Room Parent is a unique and fun-filled opportunity that enables a parent to work more closely with your child's teacher, as well as the classroom as a whole.

Room Parent responsibilities include:

- Attend initial PTO meeting.
- Create emergency classroom phone/email chain.
- Support class teachers in any request for help.
- Disseminate information to the class parents by either phone or email.
- Work with teacher on Scholastic Book Club orders.
- Coordinate parent volunteers for special classroom activities, events and field trips.

This volunteer opportunity is a wonderful way to keep up with what is going on in your child's classroom. There is plenty of space for multiple Room Parents within each classroom, enabling Room Parents the room to work closely together within a supportive network.

Time commitment: The chair will spend approximately 5 hours during the 1st 2 weeks of school and then approximately 1 hour per month after that. The lead room parents will spend approximately 1-2 hours per month and additional room parents will spend time on an ad hoc basis.

Contact:
Kim Creem

Julia Johnston-Ketterer

Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force Representative

This group has been established to increase the number of children walking to school, to improve safety education, to identify safety issues and work together to resolve them, and to focus city efforts on improving the pedestrian and traffic situations around our schools. Each elementary school has a parent volunteer represent the school on this task force. Additional local support is needed by people passionate about getting more kids to walk, fixing the parking, driving and blue zone issues.

Time commitment: Daily walking school bus leader and ad hoc walking events several hours per month.

Contact:
Katie Brancato

CARe Committee (Community Awareness and Responsibility)

Develop and implement projects to increase social awareness for our children. Annual projects can include Trick or Treat for UNICEF, food bank collections and deliveries, Toys for Tots, the Walk for Hunger, and more.

Time commitment: 5-10 hours throughout the year based on events planned.

Co-Chairs: Sherri Wolf Debbie Slater

knowledge/background. We need someone to prepare our annual Federal tax return and any other filings required of non-profit organizations. Our Federal returns are due November 1st. Most work can be done at home.

Time commitment: varies

PTO Board—Secretary (Jessica Gilmartin)

Serve as liaison for the written communication coordinators, record decisions made at PTO meetings, facilitate communications between families and event planners.

Time commitment: 4-5 hours per month.

PTO Board—Fundraising Coordinator (Valerie Pontiff)

Serve as a central resource for the fundraising ideas that the PTO receives. Lead fundraising committee in the generation of new ideas. Set up annual calendar of events for fundraising and serve as liaison for chairs of various fundraising activities.

The time commitment will vary depending on the ideas you choose to pursue.

Volunteer Coordinator (Sheryl Kalis)

Help to maintain a list of available parents and match them with events and needs. Organize end of year volunteer appreciation event.

Time Commitment: 10 hours throughout the year as people need volunteers.

PTO Administration

Ensuring smooth coordination among the various groups and activities is a team effort of all members of the PTO board. If you like to organize and plan, one of these roles might be right for you! The board will meet 4-5 times during the year and communicate regularly via email/ phone.

PTO Board—President(s) (Mindy Peckler, Stacy Schwartz, Maria Sullivan)

Primary liaison with school leadership on large-scale issues involving parents and students. Sets direction for PTO activities and supports committee chairs as needed so that PTO programs and events run smoothly. Ensures PTO budgetary needs are met. Time commitment: 2-10 hours per month.

PTO Board—Vice—President(s) (Beth Coomber and Julia Johnston-Ketterer)

Supports PTO presidents on assigned PTO initiatives and activities. Serves as liaison to designated groups and communicate with board on group activities. Participate in board-level decision-making. Attend board meetings. Time commitment: 2-10 hours per month.

PTO Board—Treasurer (Tim Mahoney)

Can be done by one person or split into two functions. One role is the routine operations such as depositing and writing checks and documenting all transactions in Quicken. No accounting or finance background is required. The other role is a tax function and is much easier with a strong tax

Support to School Operations

School Council

This is an elected group of four parents, four teachers, the principal, and a community member appointed by the principal. This committee is an advisory body responsible for assisting the principal in setting educational goals, identifying educational needs, reviewing the school's budget, and providing input for the school improvement plan.

Time commitment: The group meets four to six times each year. Meetings usually take place from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. One parent volunteer is needed to help reach the group goals above.

Contact:

Audrey Peller

Mindy Peckler

Crisis Committee

This group is made up of staff members who regularly review and update emergency plans for Ward. The group meets once or twice a year, and in the event of an emergency. Meetings usually take place early in the morning before school. One parent volunteer is needed.

Time commitment is low.

Contact:

Audrey Peller

Political Action Committee

Educates the Ward School community on issues affecting the school on a city or state level. One parent volunteer is needed to attend school committee meetings and relay back key information on current issues. May organize community efforts to influence local and state legislative activities related to education through appropriate channels and forms of communication. Time commitment is dependent upon current issues impacting education. School Committee meetings are at night.

Time commitment is dependent upon current issues impacting education. Typically 3 hours per month to attend meetings.

Contact:
Jean Kelley

Special Education Representatives

The requirements for this role are: liaison with city-wide Parent's Advisory Council, and develop avenues of support to families receiving special education services for their children through community meetings, education, and outreach.

Chair:
Laurie Gershkowitz

Annual Event

Spring (Every other year)

Help run and plan a large-scale fundraiser for the school. Typically an auction/adult only event this is a lot of fun to work on. Let your creativity, organizational skills or energy help make it a spectacular event.

Time commitment: varies

Chair:

Jessica Gilmartin

Playground Committee

Plans and oversees playground improvements. Researches opportunities and plans fundraising activities as needed.

Chairs: Bev Craig Joe Verdone

Teacher Raffle

Our wonderful teachers provide precious time and/or fun, creative contributions that the children then raffle for. Volunteers work with the entire faculty/staff, print up raffle items, draw and post winners. All of Ward's children just love their teachers, so you can just imagine how fun this event is.

Contact:

Katie Brancato

Classroom Baskets Spring (Every other year ... Spring 2011)

Volunteers work with room parents to create basket themes and purchase items to raffle. Baskets are created and gift wrapped. This too is a very fun project.

Contact:

Magda Duchnowska

Curriculum Enhancement

Art Committee

Parents are invited to assist in Art classes on a regular basis. Parents typically assist during the period of their child's art class. Duties might include helping the children complete their projects, helping with clean-up, and distributing supplies. Sign-up sheets will be available early in the year through room parents.

Contact:

Stina Gronbeck Deb Gilpin

Library/Literacy Committee

Volunteers from each classroom are needed to help in the library during library time to help their child's class with book selection, sign in and out of books, and shelving. A schedule of your child's library time is made available at the beginning of each school year.

Typical commitment is 1 hour per week but alternate weeks are also an option.

Chair:

Peggy Evangelakos Anne Joyce

Creative Arts and Sciences (CASC)

Recognizing the impact that an interactive, hands-on learning experience can have on our children, this committee brings the well known citywide Creative Arts & Sciences programs to children grades K-5. Each program is selected to partner with grade level curricula, capturing the attention of children in each developmental group.

Programs focus on Dance, Language Arts, Music, Science, Social Studies, and Theatre Arts. Past programs have included, but were not limited to, Mass Audubon Society, authors, poets, The Golden Lyre, Science Discovery Museum, Life in Ghana, Wing Masters, Bay Colony, Justice at War, The Boston Dance Collective, Opera to Go, and Poetry in Motion.

Grade volunteers work closely with teachers in selecting, setting up, and implementing programs. Children love to see their parents helping out in their classrooms!

Time Commitment: Approximately 6-8 hours/yr.

Co-Chairs:

Helen Ceres-Marsh

Sheryl Kalis

In-House Book Fair

December

Once a year Scholastic books are sold at full price and the school earns 25% of sales. Proceeds benefit the Ward PTO. Volunteers are needed to set up, cashier, and break down the fair.

Time commitment: Hours are between 8am and 1pm on the dates of the fair. Volunteers are typically for 2 hour shifts. You can arrange to be there when your child's class is scheduled.

Co Chairs:

Carol Kirson

Heather Pozen

Mystery Dinner

Fall

A great way to get to know your fellow parents while supporting the PTO. We have a variety of themed dinners offered. There are opportunities to host, cook or just line up a sitter and attend. The more volunteers the better!

Time commitment: Volunteers are needed to host dinners, and to help with planning logistics.

Contact:

Beth Coomber

PTO Fundraising

Fundraising Committee

Through our fundraising efforts we are able to provide funding needed to supplement the school budget and support areas such as Creative Arts and Science Programs, the purchase and maintenance of Technology used by our children, Teacher and Staff Development, Curriculum Enhancement, Classroom and Library Materials, Student Garden, Care Committee, Community Events, as well as the publishing of the student directory, and communication to all Ward Families.

These programs that so enrich our children's experience require funding beyond that which is in the annual school budget. Volunteers are needed for the implementation of specific fundraising events and generation of new ideas.

Chair: Valerie Pontiff

Family Picture Day

Each year Ward families have the opportunity to sign up for a portrait sitting on one of 2 Saturdays in October. Part of the proceeds are given back to the PTO. Volunteers are needed to arrange publicity, distribute materials, collect payments, arrange scheduling for sittings, and serve as liaison with Coffee Pond Productions.

Time commitment: Approximately 15 hours in the fall.

Chair: Debra Minard

Understanding Our Differences (UOD)

This citywide, award-winning program provides children in grades 3, 4, and 5 information about people with disabilities. The goals of UOD is to increase awareness and understanding of individuals with differences, enabling children, as well as adults, the opportunity to overcome their reluctance and become accepting of people with differences, bringing us closer together as a community.

This unique program presents 7 units in all:

1. Blindness and Visual Impairment, grade 3
2. Deafness and Hard of Hearing, grade 3
3. Learning Disabilities, grade 4
4. Special Medical Conditions: Asthma, Diabetes, and Epilepsy, grade 4
5. Physical Disabilities, grade 5
6. Developmental Disabilities/Mental Retardation, grade 5
7. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), grade 5

Time Commitment: Grade/unit coordinators can expect to spend 6-10 hours per unit. Parent volunteers requires 3 hours/ unit. **UOD cannot run without parents volunteers.** No experience is necessary. Training is provided.

Fifth Grade Coordinator: Helen Ceres-Marsh,

Fourth Grade Coordinator: Andrew Miller

Third Grade Coordinator: Beth Newman

Respect for Human Differences

This committee of parents and teachers works together to develop school-wide activities that enhance the Core Values of Ward School. An event, such as a school "Read In" or film viewing normally takes place in the evening, and requires some parent training in leading group discussions, along with 2-3 planning meetings leading up to the event.

Time commitment: The chair will spend approximately 8-10 hours to plan the event as well as attendance at the event. Usually 1-2 planning meetings at school. Parent volunteers will have a short amount of preparation but primarily will be at the event 1.5 hours.

Contact:
Julia Johnston- Ketterer

Student Garden Committee

This group of volunteers organizes "beautification" projects to address the landscaping needs of the school and works with faculty to develop and maintain gardening projects that supplement the curriculum. Parent volunteers are needed from each classroom during Gardening Day in the spring.

Chair: Angela Weiss Wendy Kritzer

Annual School Events

Art Show

May

Volunteers assist the art teacher, in special projects and the annual art show. Approximately 20 volunteers are needed for the art show to set up and take down the art work. Fewer volunteers help in the task of matting art work at home.

Time commitment is low.

Stina Gronbech Deb Gilpin

Color Day

June

You've heard about "saving the best for last," well this day is it! Color Day is on a day in late spring, in the field, where teachers and children come together to play a number of games. It culminates with staff, faculty, and parent volunteers in an egg toss. Volunteers are needed at each game site, giving children directions, and supporting them in their play. Fun, fun, fun!

Time commitment: Volunteer the day of the event.

Chair:
Cheryl Schainfeld