

Dondero Volunteer Teams

Beginning this year we are organizing volunteer efforts as a coordinated pool, to provide consistent help to teachers. Each grade will have a Volunteer Team Coordinator who will work with teacher teams on tasks that allow them to focus more energy on the children in the classroom.

Volunteers sign up to contribute whenever and however they can -- any time you can provide is helpful and can be put to good use. Duties could include anything from administrative and clerical tasks such as making copies, laminating, binding booklets, filing student's work, stuffing take-home folders-- to helping with late slips, helping students at lunch, putting up bulletin boards or other classroom displays, or even weeding and preparing gardens. The list will certainly vary depending on the grade level/specialty, student-to-teacher ratio, time of year, and other factors.

This program is as new to the teachers as it is to us, so we expect there will be a learning curve before we all figure out the most efficient and effective way to help out.

How does it work? Here is a list of FAQs:

- **How will the volunteer teams be organized?** There will be individual teams for each grade level (K-5), as well as a team for each of the related arts (art, music, computer, reading, library, gym). Each volunteer team will have a parent coordinator. The coordinator will consult with the teachers to determine what needs to be done, and will then organize their volunteers to ensure that the work is covered.

The coordinators for 2011-12 are:

- Kindergarten – **Meg Yeaton**
 - First – **Stephanie Lazenby**
 - Second – **Amy Gum**
 - Third – **MaryEllen Bouchard**
 - Fourth – **Karen Duddy**
 - Fifth Grade – **Sally Zwick**
 - Unified Arts - **TBD**
- **How do I sign up as a volunteer?** A few options – the best one is to fill out the brief online form, go to 'Volunteer Teams' at <http://www.donderopta.org/>. Or, return completed form to your child's teacher or email Cliff Lazenby at cliff-lazenby@gmail.com.
 - **When will the program begin?** Right away! We are gathering names of volunteers and coordinators now. The goal is to **launch the program in classrooms by Oct. 1**. However, we will be putting volunteers to work prior to that, even before school starts.
 - **When will I find out which team or teams I am on?** We will send out a list in mid-September, detailing which teams you are on, and who the coordinators are for each team. If you indicated that you have multiple children enrolled at Dondero, you will be assigned to each of your children's grade level teams.
 - **Who will be on the "specials" teams?** Volunteers with only one child enrolled at Dondero will be assigned a slot on one of the specials teams. This is done to balance the workload, so that every volunteer will be on at least two teams. We are hoping that the volunteer pool is deep enough so that being on more than one team should not constitute a substantially larger commitment of your time.

- **I enjoy volunteering for PTA functions as well—will PTA activities be coordinated through this program?** We plan to leverage the same volunteer pool for those who indicated interest in PTA events. The Volunteer Coordinators will work with PTA Committee chairs to help fill their needs. The initial focus for our first year, however, will be in coordinating classroom volunteers. But there is no reason we cannot share the same model and pool of information for PTA events. The more adults who contribute to the greater Dondero community—and the more efficiently we utilize their contributions -- the more our children will benefit.
- **Can you give me more specifics about the role of the team coordinator?** Each coordinator will use their discretion in organizing and communicating with their team members. The goal of the coordinators will be to ensure that volunteers are assigned fairly, so that everyone has opportunities, but nobody is asked to do too much. As team members, coordinators may also participate in the actual volunteer work if they wish. ***In the signup process we are looking for volunteers to be team coordinators!**
- **How often will the volunteer teams be utilized?** This is a difficult question to answer because each teaching team will undoubtedly have different needs. You might expect that there will be plenty of work to do early in the school year as teachers put together their initial packets to parents, and fulfill other administrative requirements. It is then possible that things will taper off, and perhaps the volunteer teams will not be called on as frequently.

Some of the teaching teams may want to have some volunteers come in on a consistent schedule every week throughout the year, while others may only feel the need to press us into service during higher workload times (end of grading periods, prior to school vacations, etc.)

- **Will this program preclude me from volunteering directly in my children’s classrooms as the need arises?** No. Each teacher will undoubtedly still reach out whenever there are special needs or projects in the classroom, including field trip chaperones. So if you wish to take advantage of those opportunities, there would be nothing preventing you from doing that.
- **As a volunteer will I ever be working directly in my child’s classroom?** Chances are that you will be in the classroom at times, and working outside the classroom at others. The fact that you will be volunteering in “grade-level”, and “specials” teams means that your contribution will reach far beyond just your child’s classroom.
- **I don’t have any experience using large copy machines or laminators—will there be training?** Yes. Our goal is to train the team coordinators early in the school year, and they in turn will set up times to train their individual team members. We would like to accomplish this as quickly as possible due to the increased clerical workload on the teachers at the beginning of the school year.
- **I have other commitments but would like to help whenever I can—is it possible to be a “part time” volunteer?** By all means. We appreciate the fact that you are willing to help, even though you have other commitments. Team coordinators will be made aware of your individual circumstances, and will endeavor to afford you volunteer opportunities when possible. The fact that this will be a “pool” of volunteers, should afford that flexibility.
- **Speaking of commitments—what is expected of me?** As volunteers, we understand that circumstances can change. Ideally, we would like to be able to count on your services as a volunteer throughout the entire school year, but we understand that won’t always be possible in every case. All we would ask is that you let us know if you ever feel you need to be taken off the volunteer list, so that we can plan accordingly.