

# Always Caring, Always Sharing



**Middle & High School & Alternative High School**  
Left to Right: Jeannie Meinka, Sandy Noonan, Mary Weaver, Patti Kanaan



**Brooklyn Elementary School**  
Left to Right-Back row: Michelle Weaver, Pam Wincent, Lori Kouba, Cindy Graves, Valerie Buksar  
Front row: Marlene Roulo, Beth Andrews, Jo Force, Kelly Sovoda

Rosalyn Carter, former first lady, writer and humanitarian once said, *“Do what you can to show you care about other people and you will make our world a better place.”* This can certainly be said in our “school world”. The classroom assistants show us every day how they truly care about the students and the educational service they can provide as they assist our teachers. This can be best expressed through their responses when asked about their work.

- My days vary (and are never boring) from tying lots of shoes to assisting with boots, buckles, zippers and lost mittens.
- My job is perfect for me. I am a former teacher...my job as an instructional aide affords me the opportunity to work with students on a one-to-one level.
- Going to work is one of the highlights of my day...love the kids and feel that I've made a difference.
- I work with a student in a wheel chair as well as the classroom.
- To be a classroom aide is very rewarding to me. I really enjoy helping the students with their studies, and watching them grow academically.
- I review the notes from home, collect lunch money, read stories, assist with group discussions, escort students throughout the building, provide assistance at lunch time (opening milk, etc.)...I work with wonderful teachers and each day is fun for all of us in Kindergarten.
- My favorite part is watching the kids learn and seeing their smiles everyday.
- I assist the teacher in preparing the students.
- I get to know the children well and enjoy them as the special young people they are.
- The most important thing that I do is work one on one with the children giving them a little extra help where they may need it.
- Just seeing a child's smiling face when they accomplish a great achievement, makes my job worthwhile.
- As instructional aides we are truly an extension of the classroom teacher working with individual students or small groups on a daily basis reinforcing the lessons taught by the teacher.
- There are many things I love about my job...the best is the children.
- The day's challenges change from minute to minute...I love that it is never the same.
- I love to work with the students and see their personal growth and outcomes.
- Providing educational assistance for the teachers.
- I am blessed being able to work with students and totally enjoy working for the Columbia School District.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, our Paraprofessionals must become “highly qualified” for their positions by completing at least two years of study at an institution of higher education or obtaining an associate's degree (or higher) or meeting a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate through a formal state assessment test. At Columbia School District, all of our Paraprofessionals are highly qualified. We truly do appreciate all of their commitment to our school, the classroom teacher and especially our students. Do they show they care and are making our “school world” a better place?...you bet!



**Miller Elementary School**  
Left to Right-Back row: Mary Schutter, Debbie Seffernick, Peggy Hennessey, Sharon Schwab  
Front row: Jean Jones, Nianne Prendel, Donna Williams, Wendy Eastman



## Art Blooms in the Elementary Classrooms

Working artist, Ms. Kim McGowan recognized an educational value to share her passion and talent for art education to elementary school age children. Five years ago she created a program based on Michigan's Curriculum Benchmarks and Standards to introduce different age appropriate levels of art lessons within the public school system. For the past three years the PTO groups from both of our elementary schools decided

to sponsor this essential program as an adjunct to the art curriculum being offered through the school. Ms. McGowan currently provides this service to seven school districts within Jackson County. She has three additional artists working with her and they all have Bachelor of Fine Arts/History or Applied Arts Degrees. Principal, Mr. Geoff Bontrager said, “This program gives kids one more avenue, one more option to discover

their hidden talents.” The students in Ms. Laurie Beer's third grade class were busy working on an exercise in pattern that Ms. McGowan explained due to their uniqueness their end result is a piece of art. Columbia School District is thankful for the time and enthusiasm these specialized instructors offer for our students and appreciate our parents support of their efforts.