

John's Journal
September 2008

Dear Colleagues:

It is good to have school back in session! Thank you for all the time, energy, and effort each of you put in to get school off to a smooth start.

This year, it was a particularly memorable start of school for central office folks who typically don't spend a lot of time out in schools. The day before school started, central office administrators spent part of a day or more assisting schools with whatever work needed to be done. We laid bark, washed windows, pulled weeds, counted out student planners, assembled first day packets, and unpacked boxes.

On the first day of school, central office folks went out to schools to help with first-day logistics. It was a great way for people who are not school-based to see (or be reminded) what it takes to open school for the year.

Then on September 12, we joined in on the United Way Day of Caring, on which employees of businesses and organizations across the county dedicate the day to community service. Central office folks were out at schools again doing campus beautification.

I know this is a very busy time for central office staff, too. I want to thank all of you who put your own work on hold to participate in Day of Caring activities. And thanks to those of you who gave us the opportunity to work with you in schools.

I have heard many words of appreciation from school-based staff for the extra hands. But I think the effort had an even bigger impact on the helpers than it did on those being helped.

I received the following email message from Betty Glantz, our HR receptionist at ERAC who spent the day before school shelving library books at Shorewood Elementary:

I know that a lot of people committed to being a part of this "Day of Caring". I, for one, am so glad that I did. Corny as it may sound, it leaves you with a good feeling. Not only are you helping the community that you live in, you are seeing people out there helping in ways that if you would not have come out of your box, you would not have even known it was going on. When you work side by side with others who have the same goal, even if you have never worked with them before, simply because of what you are accomplishing, a comrade is created.

It was an honor and a privilege to be part of this “volunteer for a better community 2008”. It was also a true honor to work for and with Highline School District employees.

It is truly amazing what we can accomplish when we are working together for the same goal. Whether it is getting facilities ready for the first day of school or getting students ready for college, we can make things happen when we're all rowing in the same direction.

I am committed to working closely with you, and I am excited about what we will do together this year in service of our students.