



Twin Valley School District
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YOUNG AND THE “YOUNG AT HEART” CONNECT AT HONEY BROOK ELEMENTARY CENTER
“Adoptive” Grandparents Visit on a Regular Basis

Elverson, PA – A volunteer program at the Honey Brook Elementary Center (HBEC) is bringing generations together to share in the love of reading. Twice a month, a cadre of volunteers from the Tel Hai Retirement Community in Honey Brook visits the school to provide for both intergenerational contacts as well as have an additional avenue for literacy enhancement for the students at the school.

Alison Lane, HBEC guidance counselor was contacted in the spring of 2008 by Ms. Sharon Canull, office manager at Tel Hai who informed her that the residents in the community wanted to donate school supplies for the 2008-2009 school year.

“Tel Hai provided us with a huge donation of supplies, backpacks, and even money to be used for our kids,” said Lane. “It was amazing; we are still drawing from what they donated.”

It was during this time that both women discussed future partnerships between the school and the community. Daphne Dampman-Hurst, coordinator of volunteer services at Tel Hai became involved, as well as Linda Bell, HBEC reading specialist and Susan Lloyd, HBEC principal and at a meeting over the summer it was decided that volunteers would come to the school twice a month with students taking turns reading to the “grandparents.” The school’s multiage 1-2 classrooms as well as traditional one and two were targeted for the program as these are the grades where children are learning to read. A grandparent is assigned to a room so that relationships can be formed.

“The children really love it and the grandparents are so wonderful,” said Lane. “Our teachers are supportive as well and have been great in accommodating the grandparent’s schedules.”

In addition to the in-room visitations, the school is additionally involved with a Pen Pal program with seniors at Tel Hai that may, through lack of time or physical limitations, cannot be involved with the visitation program. The Pen Pal program is offered to students in Multiage 3-4 as well as traditional third grade.

“Writing letters is such a lost art,” said Bell who coordinated this particular aspect of the program. “It’s a great way to encourage letter writing.”

All of the grandparents will be invited as special guests to the school’s Annual Grandparent’s Day in May. This is especially touching in light of some students who do not or cannot have a grandparent present on this special day.

“Working with Tel Hai is really fantastic,” said Lloyd. “The staff and volunteers could not be nicer and more supportive of our literacy efforts. This is one of the best programs that I have ever been involved with.”

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Twin Valley School District is an equal opportunity public education institution that is committed to excellence in education. In partnership with parents and the community, the District aspires to prepare students for challenges in an ever-changing world.

PHOTOS: Tel Hai “grandparents” Bobbie Morrison, Jane Goldress, Jo Kircher, Dorothy Campbell, Eleanor Kirkner, Mildred Heinrich, Joyce Chandler, and Joy Settles gather at Honey Brook Elementary Center for a visit with their “grandchildren.”