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## **WASHINGTON GREETERS**

### **Washington Junior High School**

#### **Naperville, Illinois**

Last May, Parent Involvement Team members met to talk about the recent violence that had occurred in schools around the United States. The discussion led to the idea of the Washington Greeter program. The program created a friendly way to deter anyone from entering the building that did not belong there. In addition, visitors received a warm welcome when entering the school.

Several meetings were held over the summer with a core group of volunteers to plan how the program would run for the upcoming school year. We put together a manual that contained critical information for the greeters. This information included a map of the school, emergency procedures, and daily announcements and happenings. We also communicated at length with the main office in the building so procedures established blended well with what was already happening in the school.

Communicating the new program to parents, staff, and students was the next big step for the coordinators of the program. Parents heard about the program several times in August and September at meetings and through the parent newsletter. Interested parents could volunteer a morning or afternoon to greet visitors who came to the school during the day. Staff and students learned about the program when they returned to school.

Custodians were critical when the program started because they needed to be available to adjust procedures. For example, deciding on what doors to lock and at what time was very important to the program. We realized early on that ten minutes one way or another could impact a great number of people. More procedural adjustments were made during the first couple of weeks.

The Washington Greeter program has been an extremely positive experience for the Washington community. More parents have been able to volunteer at the school, and the staff has been able to interact with parents more often.

*Mark P. Pasztor, Principal*

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