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Team Read needs volunteers to help kids hit the books

By Sara Schilling, Herald staff writer

KENNEWICK — Gayle Napier spends a small amount of time each week volunteering for the Team Read tutoring program in the Kennewick School District.

But she says she gets a huge payoff.

"It's just so rewarding because you can see the improvement (that's made) when children get one-on-one help," Napier said. The program -- which pairs teen and adult tutors with elementary students who need help in reading -- is looking for more volunteers.

A training session is Sept. 23. The program starts Oct. 12 and runs into the spring.

"The more tutors we have, the more students we can help. And we always have a waiting list," said Lori Aronson, program director.

Team Read has been in Kennewick schools for nine years. Tutors work with students in first through third grades who need extra help in reading. They go over vocabulary words and read books together.

Tutors typically spend an hour a week with their students, spread out over two half-hour sessions.

Last year, Team Read volunteers tutored 241 students. Many of the kids were reading at grade level by the end of the year, Aronson said.

The tutors put in more than 3,900 volunteer hours. They're paired with the same student throughout the year, or until the student has caught up enough to exit the program.

That way "(kids) really get to build a good relationship with their tutors," Aronson said.

Some tutors -- like Napier -- are adults who've put their own kids through school and want to give back. Others are students themselves. This year, about 45 teens from Kennewick, Kamiakin and Southridge high schools will serve as Team Read tutors and earn school credit at the same time.

Aronson said she's hoping to have at least 75 adult volunteers.

Volunteers must attend a training session and pass a background check to participate. Team Read is in five elementary schools in Kennewick: Amistad, Eastgate, Westgate, Hawthorne and Edison.

For information on how to sign up, call 509-222-7324 or visit www.teamreadtutoring.com.

Read more: http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2009/09/08/1059981/team-read-needs-volunteers-to.html?story_link=email_msg#ixzz0wLIXPvp8