



Mariners Take Action

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Mariners Honor Those Who Serve

Seattle Mariners and Governor Gregoire team up to salute volunteers

By Rebecca Hale

For the last 12 years, Al Manz of Bremerton has been going to school. He's not an idealistic young high schooler about to graduate, but a man in his 70's who has dedicated his retirement to helping others.

During his 23-year career as a mechanical engineer for the U.S. Navy, Manz volunteered with Special Olympics and Search & Rescue. When he retired in 1999, he spent a few months as a volunteer tax preparer for military personnel at the Navy shipyard in Bremerton.

In 2000, Manz saw an ad in the local paper looking for volunteers to tutor elementary school students, and he found his calling.

Manz joined the Washington Reading Corps and started working with kids who needed help with reading and

math. For the last five years, he has been at Naval Avenue Elementary in Bremerton.

"Tutoring is the most satisfying volunteer work I have ever done. Many children come from broken homes and dysfunctional families and badly need help, support and encouragement from a stable source," said Manz.

According to the Washington Reading Corps, four out of 10 students have trouble reading. If a child can't read well by the end of the third grade, the odds are they'll never catch up and are at great risk of dropping out in middle or high school.

Joy of Volunteering

Over the years, Al Manz has given his time and talents to various causes and has found his work with students to be especially fulfilling.

"The quality of our teachers has never been better, but they don't have

the time to provide the individual attention that some students need. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child finally understand something and seeing a smile on their face."

Julie Wasserburger, the librarian at Naval Avenue Elementary, has worked with Manz since 2007.

"Al is one of Naval Avenue's most dedicated volunteers. He gives us his Tuesdays and Thursdays to help with reading and math and brings real world experiences to our students. He is such a positive role model for our students and they love 'Mr. Al'."

In 2009, Wasserburger nominated Manz for the Washington Governor's Volunteer Service Award. He was one of 53 people honored by the Governor that year.

Kent Fire Department employees talk to prospective volunteers at the annual Salute to Volunteers at Safeco Field.

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Honoring Those Who Serve

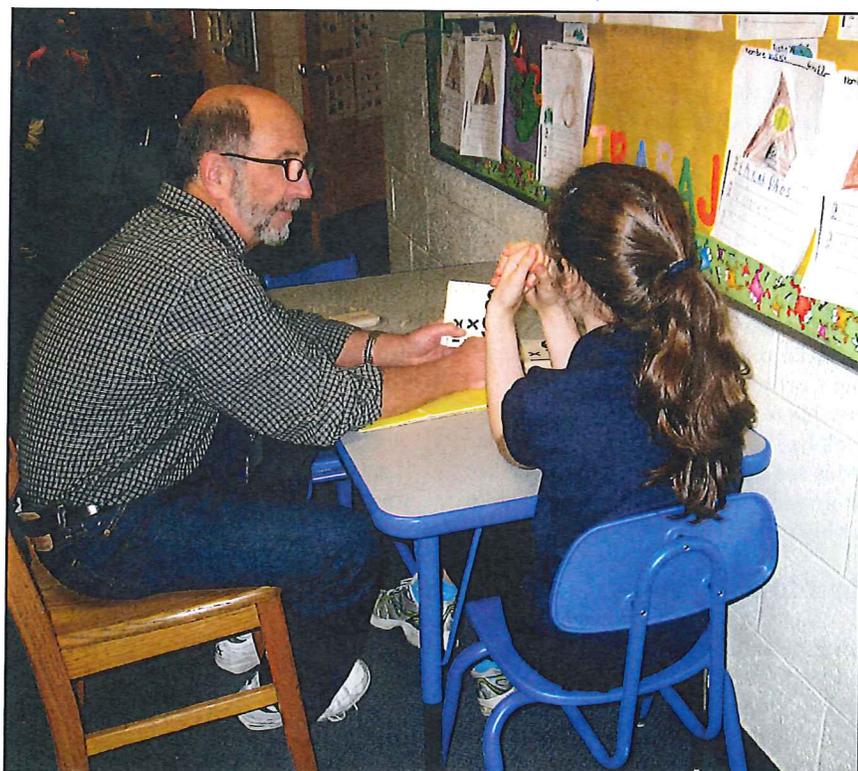
Each spring since 2005, the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards are presented as part of National Volunteer Week (this year, April 15-21). Founded in 1974, National Volunteer Week has grown exponentially in scope each year and has drawn the support and endorsement of all subsequent U.S. presidents and many governors, mayors and other respected elected officials.

Since 2009, the Seattle Mariners have joined with the Washington Commission for National and Community Service and Governor Chris Gregoire to honor the men and women of the state of Washington who have distinguished themselves for volunteer service to the community.

According to Bill Basl, Executive Director of the Washington Commission for National and Community Service, "National Volunteer Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. It's also about taking time to recognize the incredible contributions

Above: Volunteers sit together in special sections each year on Salute to Volunteers Night at Safeco Field.

Below: Al Manz has been volunteering as a tutor for 12 years at Bremerton's Naval Avenue Elementary School.



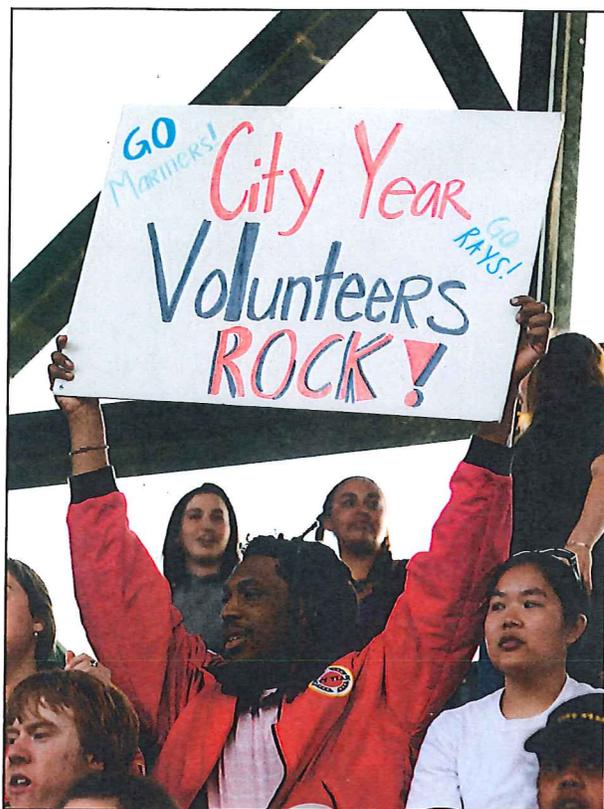
of volunteers and letting them know how much their efforts are appreciated."

A Culture of Service

Across the country, Americans are getting involved and leading positive change in a variety of ways, all of them vital—from educating communities about environmental stewardship to participating in disaster relief efforts, or helping a child become more confident in their own ability to read.

Created in 1998, the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is a partnership between the Employment Security's Washington Service Corps, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington Commission for National and Community Service.

The WRC helps improve students' reading by placing AmeriCorps members in high-need schools across



Washington to support research-based reading tutoring programs. The WRC places 260 full time AmeriCorps members who serve as trained literacy tutors in 76 elementary schools and 24 early learning sites throughout the state. In addition, members recruit and train thousands of volunteer tutors, and also help engage students in peer and cross-age tutoring opportunities.

The Mariners know the value of literacy. For several years, the team has worked with Page Ahead children's literacy program. In 2012, the Mariners are partnering with PACAAR, which will make a donation to Page Ahead for every run batted in by a Mariners player. The program will also include incentives to encourage kids to read during the school year and the summer, and recognition for those students who meet their reading goals.

Some simple things that parents can do to ensure their children become readers are first, and foremost, read to them. Second, have books available around the house and take them to the library as often as possible. Make reading fun and make sure it's done often.

If you are interested in volunteering, you'll find information at Serve Washington at www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa.

Rebecca Hale is the Mariners director of Public Information