



WAUSAU DAILY HERALD FILE PHOTO

Volunteer Sabrina Rosenow hands out popcorn orders to students at Lincoln Elementary School in Wausau in September. Lincoln is one of four schools participating in the pilot phase of a revamped volunteer program.

# Elementary schools see rise in parent volunteers

## Online sign-up program cited for increase in attendance

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The number of volunteers in an online program in Wausau elementary schools has more than doubled in five months.

As of Monday, 206 people had enrolled in the pilot phase of the program, up from 100 people in September.

The Wausau School District revamped its volunteer program this year to encourage more parents to participate than in previous years, and to encourage applicants who do not have a direct connection to the district. Changes include online registration and background checks for those who will work with students.

Elementary schools are

### How to sign up

To become a volunteer in the Wausau School District, log on to [www.wausau.k12.wi.us/departments/volnet/index.htm](http://www.wausau.k12.wi.us/departments/volnet/index.htm) or call 261-0584. District elementary schools also have paper copies of volunteer applications.

in constant need of volunteers who can spend time with students in various capacities, from supervising groups of children to reading one-on-one with a student, said Marion Vehlow, Grant Elementary School PTO president.

The program is beneficial because children can have more positive interaction with adults than they usually receive without volunteers, said Roxane Hagedorn, dis-

trict volunteer coordinator. And volunteers develop a strong appreciation for schools because of the time they spend in classrooms, Hagedorn said.

Rachel Hockin, 34, of Wausau, used the district's online volunteer program to sign up for multiple events in September.

Hockin has helped students read, co-chaired the school's sock hop dance and helped create a yearbook for Grant Elementary School, where her oldest son, Logan Rosenow, 9, attends classes.

"I want to be a part of my son's school — I think it's important and it gets me, as a parent, a chance to meet other parents as well," Hockin said of volunteering.

Vehlow has seen an increase in the number of volunteers at Grant, too.

When the PTO set up a holiday gift store inside the school for teachers and parents in December, she had 20 volunteers. In 2008, she only had six people sign up for the same event.

"The word is out there that you can go online and volunteer," she said.

Vehlow said about 15 PTO events throughout the school year, such as the school carnival, dances and field trips, require volunteers.

"If we don't have volunteers, then we really can't put events on for students," Vehlow said.

Hagedorn hopes to have volunteer opportunities at all elementary schools online at the start of the next school year. Four elementary schools are in the pilot program called Our Network for Education.