

FIT FISH

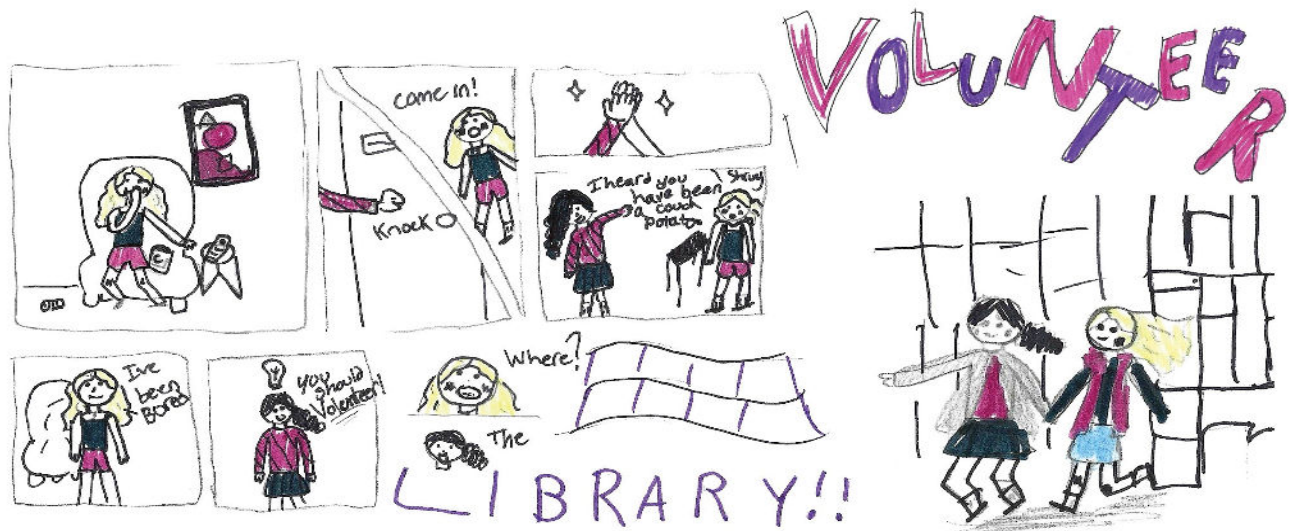


Illustration by Vivienne Murray

Parent volunteers like contributing

Helping people is something that Adaire parent volunteers enjoy, several parents said in recent interviews with *Fit Fish* reporters.

“It’s a good way to meet new people who are different from you, and to find out what you like,” said Allie Reilly, parent volunteer.

She also said it’s good for her mental health to spend time volunteering.

Research has shown that volunteering can support the mental and physical health of the volunteer by reducing stress and anxiety and helping to combat depression, according to the Mayo Clinic, a research hospital. In addition to giving time to people in need, volunteering can help you make new friends, get out of a rut, and give you something to do, according to KidsHealth.org, a website with health information.

“Volunteering can help build stronger social networks in a way that probably differs from simply

hanging out with friends,” said Dr. Eric Kim, whose research shows that volunteering can offer people a sense of purpose, according to an article on the American Heart Association’s website. Also, volunteering can help you have an easier time talking to people, according to KidsHealth.org.

Ms. Anjeza Beca, parent of sixth-grader Daniel Beca and founder of Gaia Touch Home Care agency, said volunteering can give you amazing opportunities. She said she likes helping out at school in the busiest times such as after winter break. A former teacher, she said she loves to help teachers.

“Volunteering for me means sharing,” she said.

Ms. Stephanie Iselin, parent of sixth-grader Columbus Iselin said she is part of the mentorship program at Urban Outfitters where she works as creative director. She said she enjoys meeting with

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Kids can help out too! See Page 3

Students help change seating policy

Editor's note: Earlier this school year, due to poor student behavior during lunchtime, the sixth graders were not allowed to choose their own seats in the cafeteria. The students expressed frustration at not being permitted to sit with friends from other classes.

After speaking with Principal Jenkins during an interview on the topic of empathy, they were advised to speak to Dean Price to see if they might find a solution to the problem. Several reporters composed an email to Dean Price and met with him to discuss the matter.

He told them the seating policy was in place because students were throwing food, disrupting other classes during transitions, and being disrespectful. He was open to ideas to improve student behavior so that the seating policy could be changed. Since this conversation, the sixth graders' behavior has improved, and they have been granted an open-seating policy during lunchtime. Below are several student reflections on the experience.

The seating issue was a large problem for at least a couple weeks. The students of sixth grade became frustrated, not able to sit with their friends due to the policy. We wanted to do something, and that started out with an email to Dean Price and ended with the policy changing.

When we were brainstorming about what to write and what to say to convince Mr. Price of our goal, the biggest issue was probably intimidation. He was seen by many students as someone more distant, or frightening, because of the power he has over our daily life at school. We were afraid to write the email, and we were afraid to interview him.

We pushed through, though, and found someone willing to speak to him, which turned out not to be as difficult as we thought it would. With this information, we were able to come to a solution that was better for everyone with ways to stop bad behavior while giving people seating they want. —Loren Grant

As one of three people who interviewed and emailed the dean of Alexander Adaire Middle School, Mr. Price, the work that other students and I put in together was worth it. When anybody puts their mind to doing something, they can do it.

It took a leap of courage just to write an email to Mr. Price because we never had used our voices to solve a problem that we thought needed to be solved.



Illustration by Dera Mazza, seventh grade

But when that email was sent, it not only opened doors for us to interview and talk to Mr. Price, but it also let us sit with our friends at lunch! I think that when a small number of people come together to solve a problem, it not only benefits those people but can benefit others as well. I encourage you to try to solve a problem that is bothering you. You will get a whole lot out of it but so will others.

—Elliott Rong

I think the new seating chart in the lunchroom was a good idea. There are more spots to sit with more tables. You can sit with your friends from other classes because lunchtime is one of the only times you can interact with them. There are different groups

(Please see **Lunchroom** on Page 4)

Alexander Adaire Fit Fish

A publication of Alexander Adaire Elementary School in the School District of Philadelphia. Sixth-grade reporters include Joplin Andrews-Nua, Lena Avellino, Daniel Beca, Joseph Beck, Calla Brand, Skylar Calarco, Theodore Coudriet, Cecilia Crowe, James "Barney" Cullen, Wesley Durian, Mina Edwards, Sophia Fleming, Isabella Giacobbe, Loren Grant, Naya Haddad, Gemma Hadden, Columbus Iselin, Alistair McConnell, Cecelia McGuigan, Kaiden Miller, Vivienne Murray, Stella Musto, Pike Nicholas, Franklin Reilly, Roman Remick, Elliott Rong, Aubree Serrano, Elliot Shall, Claire Stewart, Charlize Thiede, Benjamin Wachter, Juniper Wells, Michael Weney, and Makenna Wood.

The *Fit Fish's* faculty advisor is Ms. Olavage. Ms. Jenkins is the school principal.

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Kids say how they would volunteer

Fit Fish reporters reflect on how they would like to make a difference through volunteering.

I would volunteer for planting trees because whenever I go to a park in Philly, I always see dead trees and plants, and the wildlife can't go anywhere to nest or live. I have volunteered in the past for Girl Scouts. We went to a senior home and sang Christmas carols, gave out cookies, and played card games with the seniors. It made me feel good because some of the people there were really old and didn't have any other family or friends. They were happy to see us.

—Lena Avellino

If I could volunteer for any cause or organization, it would be for a reptile sanctuary. I would do this because I have had a lifelong passion for all snakes and lizards and feel like if we deserve a second chance, they do too. This is super important to me because reptiles are one of the most rehomed pets. Owners often buy the rarest and hardest to care for snake or lizard and underestimate the specialized, long-term, and expensive care they require.

I would highly encourage you to try to study and love reptiles, and please donate to rehomed reptile foundations.

I have volunteered for neighborhood cleanups and have recently signed up to volunteer for an animal shelter.

—Benjamin Wachter



Illustration by Juniper Wells

I would volunteer for an animal shelter. I love animals and seeing people helping animals fills my heart, and all those animals who need a home and are sick. It's just so sad to see them hurting and I want to do everything in my power to help them. That is why I would volunteer for an animal shelter.

I have never volunteered for an animal shelter, but it fills my heart to see people taking care of these injured or sickly animals, especially street animals and homeless animals. It feels so good to see people giving these animals happy home.

—Theodore Coudriet

Volunteering offers many benefits

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the women she mentors because she's helping them advance in their careers or get better in their jobs. As a kid, she said, she participated in volunteering through bake sales and fundraisers. Children should volunteer because it is fulfilling, she said.

Ms. Stephanie said that volunteering at a young age helps you become a well-rounded person, and that giving back to your community feels good.

Mrs. Casey Beck, parent of sixth-grader Joey Beck and a freelance writer and event planner, said, "Volunteering can be fun as much as it is meaningful."

Mrs. Beck also said, by volunteering at Adaire, she helps the teachers and in turn, it helps her kids.

Mrs. Allie Reilly, parent of sixth-grader Franklin Reilly and assistant librarian for the Free Library of Philadelphia, said volunteering as a kid helped her

mental health by making her feel fulfilled and even started to foster her love for community building.

Mrs. Reilly volunteers at the Adaire library and is the school advisory council facilitator. Mrs. Reilly also said that every school should have a library, and every child should have the chance to explore ideas.

According to Mrs. Reilly, kids who want to volunteer should go for it. "Start small but think big," she said.

Ms. Leigh Calarco, parent of sixth-grader Skylar Calarco, is a local Realtor who volunteers for various causes like Friends of Adaire, a parent and teacher organization that helps raise funds for Adaire Elementary School.

"It is good to give to people in need," she said, adding she enjoys helping the school in any way possible to enrich her kids' education.

—By *Fit Fish* staff

Survey: Adaire students are active

A recent survey of sixth and seventh graders at Adaire showed that most students participate in a group activity. Out of 59 responses, 54 kids reported they are involved in a group activity.

Of those who participate in a group activity, 39 said they're involved in a sport.

Students reported spending anywhere from 45 minutes per week to 26.5 hours per week in their activities. Fifty-one of 59 students said they've made friends or strengthened relationships through their group activities.

Out of all of the responses, only two people answered that they wouldn't recommend their activity to others.

Research reported on the ScienceDaily website has found that group activities are good for your health. Being social and having a sense of belonging can help you manage stress and make you feel less alone, according to the Mayo Clinic, a healthcare and research center. Also, you may be more likely to participate in exercise activities if the people doing it with you make it more fun, say researchers at the National Institutes of Health.

"Some of my classmates were on my soccer team, (and) we kind of bonded over the fact that we were on the same team and go to the same school. I enjoy it because there's a whole community around it," said Franklin Reilly, a sixth grader. "Especially in Fish-town, there are a lot of soccer teams and it's fun to play a sport that's pretty popular around here."

"I play volleyball with Fast Break Philly and Starlings, I swim at the YMCA, and I act at plays inside and outside of school," said sixth-grader Vivienne Murray. "In volleyball, I meet a lot of people and we all have in common that we love volleyball. It's easy to build a friendship when you have something in common. I like how it's a team effort and we all get to when we pass it, it depends who it goes to. So everybody is a part of it."

"I know a lot of the girls on my softball team from school, but they're in different grades so I never really talked to them before, but it's fun because now I see them in school and at softball," said Lena Avellino. "The game is fun but also if you're in the dugout you can hang out with your team and talk."

—By *Fit Fish* staff

Lunchroom policy

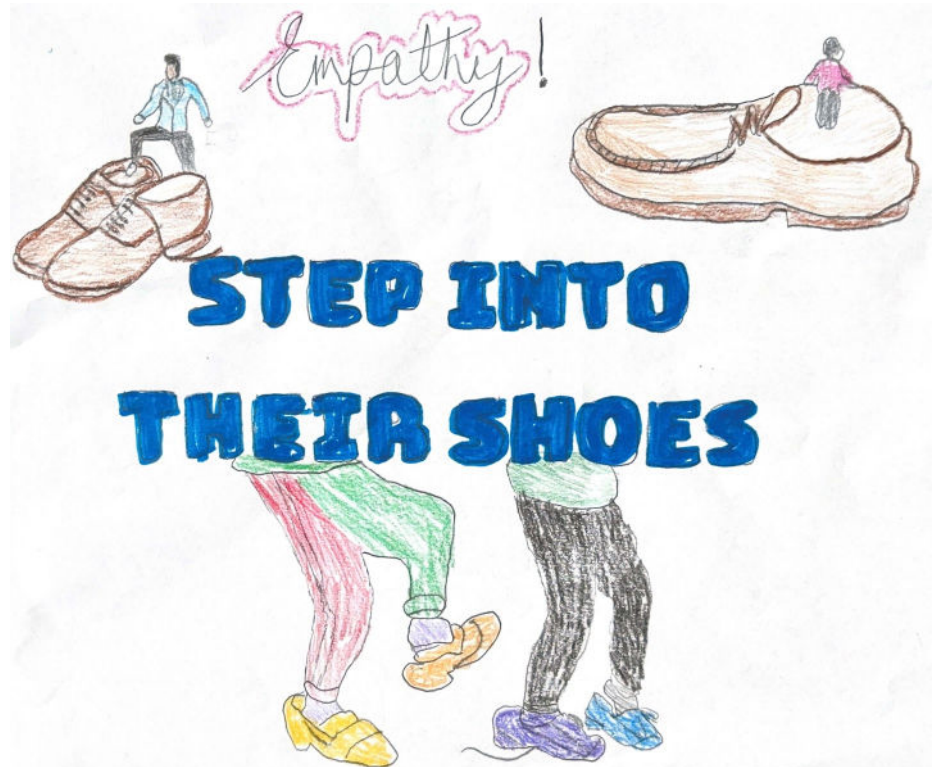
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across classes. If seating is limited to only three tables per class, groups that don't like each other will be forced to squeeze into one table. I think that the three tables in the middle should be out too, so that there will be even more space.

At lunch, sometimes random people come to my table and make it crowded since there aren't any other tables. I can't sit down or get up with so many people. I also think that there should be different people passing around the trash can. Other kids and I must walk over to throw out trash.

Also, fifth graders have been coming over to the tables and it's really annoying. So yeah, I think the change is good. But there are many other flaws to lunch.

—Isabella Giacobbe



Seventh graders in Ms. Stoudt's class explored empathy as part of a special Healthy NewsWorks lesson. Students created public service announcements to encourage others to show empathy. This illustration is by Emmeline Crosby, a seventh grader.