

# Celebrating volunteers

during National Volunteer Month!

Behind every successful organization is a group of dedicated, talented, and passionate volunteers. And although all year long we want to thank and recognize those working hard to make our mission possible, we want to really celebrate these individuals during April, National Volunteer Month!

Created back in 1991, National Volunteer Month is a way to promote volunteerism in the United States and honor those who dedicate their time and talents to making the world a better place.

At Neighborhood House, our volunteers are truly critical to our ability to serve the community. Whether volunteering in our adult education program, in our food markets or produce distribution events, or with our youngest participants in our preschool program, each volunteer helps us provide more support to the community for less money.

We offer our heartfelt thank you to everyone who has volunteered with Neighborhood House. You make a significant difference for our organization and the families we serve. Thank you!

Are you interested in volunteering at Neighborhood House? We have individual and group opportunities, both with short- and long-term commitments. Visit [www.neighb.org/volunteer](http://www.neighb.org/volunteer) or contact Rah Bridwell at [rbridwell@neighb.org](mailto:rbridwell@neighb.org) to learn more.

In 2020,  
**1,528**  
volunteers donated  
**15,906**  
hours



of their time and  
talent to  
**Neighborhood  
House**

With the estimated value  
of a volunteer at  
**\$27.20 an hour,**  
**volunteers**  
**contributed a**  
**monetary value of**  
**\$432,643**



This is the equivalent of  
almost seven  
full-time and one  
part-time employees!



**Neighborhood House™**

179 Robie Street East  
St. Paul, MN 55107



*"When I'm in the  
classroom, I love finding  
that one kid. The child who  
may be struggling with low  
self-esteem, or having a  
difficult day, and helping  
them to discover something  
new about themselves."*

- Volunteer Sue

John Smith  
12345 Smith Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

March/April 2021

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## Helping the youngest students prepare for success

After a 30-year career in marketing and print production, Sue was looking for a way to give back and get involved in the community. She attended Neighborhood House's gala and quickly decided that the Parent and Early Childhood Education (PECE) program was the right fit. Just a few weeks later she was in the preschool classroom volunteering on Halloween, 2013.

Volunteers like Sue work alongside classroom teachers during educational activities like games, songs, stories, and crafts that all promote learning and development in preschool students. "If I were to sum up the duties of a PECE volunteer in a sentence or two, I would say their primary duty is to play!" explains PECE Program Manager Amanda.

Neighborhood House's preschool program is multi-cultural and multi-lingual, with students oftentimes coming from non-English speaking households. **Teachers and volunteers work to help students develop the social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language skills needed to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond.**

Early on in her volunteer experience, Sue discovered that she gravitated toward helping children who were shy or had special needs. "When I'm in the classroom, I love finding that one kid. The child who may be struggling with low self-esteem, or having a difficult day, and helping them to discover something new about themselves."

Amanda is grateful to have a dedicated volunteer like Sue who has been with the program for nearly 8 years. Consistency and routine are important for young children, and Sue has been a constant presence in the classroom. **"She's a fantastic volunteer. She's reliable, energetic, and supremely dedicated to the preschoolers having a positive experience in the program,"** Amanda says.

## Sue Elias Stutrud volunteer spotlight



And while donating her time and talents in the classroom, she's gained new understandings. By working side-by-side with teachers, she's been able to learn about student development and important milestones. "Since I don't have children, I am fascinated by how these kids learn and grow," shares Sue. **"If we can provide two hours of fun and learning for these children, then they will be on a life-long path of learning and reading."**

One of Sue's favorite moments during the school year is one you might not expect. "I always enjoy early in the school year when we use scissors for the first time. Some kids know how to use them and some don't," she says. "I love showing them how they work, because does anybody ever really remember when you learned how to use scissors? It's very special to teach that skill."

In response to the rising and falling rate of COVID-19 cases in the community, the PECE program has had to shift its delivery of education services from in-person classes to distance learning services. Now that cases have decreased and vaccines are being distributed, the classroom is open again—and Sue is relieved.

**"I think kids at this young age really benefit from in-person experiences because every day is a new experience when you're four years old. Being at home all the time makes for a small world,"** Sue explains. "I am happy to know kids can come to school at least part-time for now."

Because of the pandemic, Sue hasn't seen the preschoolers in over a year. But as vaccines continue to be distributed and cases continue to decrease, Sue plans to return to the classroom.

Even though she loves her volunteer experience, it has bittersweet moments. "I may never see the students again after each school year," Sue says. "But if somewhere down the road in their education, something I showed them clicks or helps them learn that math problem, it's all worth it."