

Transcription of Podcast Episode 373: Jerry Schmidt, Read With Me Volunteer

SPEAKERS

Jerry Schmidt, Bob Firing

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:00

Good morning Shadow Hills, this is Bob Firing, and I know it's been a while since we've done any podcasts. We've been kind of on a hiatus for the summer, but we're getting ready for the season and more are going to be coming. The school is about to start, and that leads me to want to talk about a program that I have been involved with for a couple of years, called Read With Me. Read With Me is an organization where English speaking adults like ourselves, work with kids from Spanish backgrounds in the elementary schools helping them learn to read. And I was approached last week, in the pool, by someone who told me how much he enjoyed it. And so I thought that it would be good to hear what it's all about from a volunteer standpoint. So the volunteer is, Jerry Schmidt. And Jerry, thank you for joining us today.

Jerry Schmidt 01:12

Thank you for inviting me.

Bob Firing 01:13

So let's back up a bit. And how long have you been here at Shadow Hills?

Jerry Schmidt 01:19

Cindy, and I moved here in May of 2020. Right during the heart of the pandemic.

Bob Firing 01:26

So you were closed down from everything.

Jerry Schmidt 01:28

We were, we were, yes.

Bob Firing 01:30

For quite a while.

Jerry Schmidt 01:31

Yes. Didn't meet too many people for the first year or two.

Bob Firing 01:34

And, had you had any experience in education before getting involved with this?

Jerry Schmidt 01:40

None really. I have come from a family of educators, but I my career paths didn't take me down that way. But, so I have had very little experience other than going to parent teacher conferences for many years.

Bob Firing 01:53

Yeah, yeah. Okay. So, walk the audience through how you got involved and what happened when you went to the school.

Jerry Schmidt 02:01

Well, I heard about Read with me through I think, a podcast that you might have done, and decided that it would be a nice opportunity to give back. I spent a lot a lot of time in my career in philanthropy, and so I thought it'd be a good way to give back to the community. And came to an orientation session, learned about the time commitment and premise of the program, and decided that, yeah, I think it would be a good opportunity for me to help out with some kids who might need help with their reading skills. And didn't take too much time out of each week, so I decided to jump in.

Bob Firing 02:39

Okay, so you are able to volunteer for as many days as you want, and you choose whether you want to go in the morning or the afternoon. But what did you choose?

Jerry Schmidt 02:53

Well, I chose morning. And so, I started with reading with kids that Oliphant Elementary, not too far from here, in February of this year. So, I chose a morning time slot I got there for nine o'clock, actually was 10 o'clock. 10 o'clock, one hour session with six kids that were assigned to me during that time period.

Bob Firing 03:20

One day a week?

Jerry Schmidt 03:21

One day a week.

Bob Firing 03:23

That's good.

Jerry Schmidt 03:24

I knew we could do more, but at that time, I was involved in some other things. Just thought that one day a week, would fit nicely into my schedule.

Bob Firing 03:32

Okay, so tell us about the experience of working with the kids.

Jerry Schmidt 03:36

Oh, it was great. I think I probably got more out of it than the kids did. I had, like I said, I had six students who were assigned to me. So it was the same six kids every week. And, sat down with each of them for about 10 minute time period, because I was only there an hour. And so and their reading time was up against lunch. So we didn't want to get in the way of lunch. So I sat down with each of them and found out that each of them were at different reading levels. And that the teacher gave me the parameters of books that they could read from their library. And so we would each week, find a book and sometimes we would be able to finish the book in 10 minutes. Other times with some of the better readers. they chose chapter books. So we would read for 10 minutes and I would note down which chapter they ended on or which page they ended on, and we pick it up the next week.

Bob Firing 04:36

And all the kids in the same grade?

Jerry Schmidt 04:38

Yes, it was second grade. And so the kids were, like I said some were just learning to read. Others were a little more advanced and I could tell they had a little more time reading maybe at home or from their first grade experience.

Bob Firing 04:57

So you basically were volunteering from February until May.

Jerry Schmidt 05:02

Till May, exactly.

Bob Firing 05:03

And did you see a lot of progress?

Jerry Schmidt 05:05

I did, I did. So of the six kids, three of them were probably at the lower end of their reading level, their comprehension level. That's the other thing that the school does is, the kids, when they finish a book, then they go into their little Chrome Book computer at their desk, and they do a little test. It's a comprehension test. So, and then the teacher can see what progress they made that way. So there were three that were on a pretty low end of the reading scale, but by the end of the year, they actually made it onto the chart on the front of the room of reaching their reading goal, which all six of the ones that I was reading with made the goal out of 16 out of 23 or 24 kids in the class. So, I definitely saw progress.

Bob Firing 05:55

Yeah. Okay. Well, thank you for sharing your experience. Hopefully, this will motivate some other residents to volunteer. There is a great need for this in the valley. Specifically, I have been recruiting volunteers for Richard Oliphant, which is right next door here. But the farther east you go, the more the need is. And so if this resonates with you, please get in touch with me. You can either email I have here



is podcast@scshca.com. And I also put something on Next Door, and you can contact me through the email there. So thank you for your attention. Jerry, thank you for coming in.

Jerry Schmidt 06:45

You're welcome.

Bob Firing 06:45

And here's to a great new school year.

Jerry Schmidt 06:48

Exactly.

Bob Firing 06:49

Thank you, bye-bye.