

Two Hours by Me Volunteer Program Foster Elementary School Arvada, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

For the past four years, Foster Elementary School has created, implemented, and improved an interactive volunteer program called Two Hours by Me. The goal of the program is to promote and encourage family volunteers to work shoulder to shoulder to increase student success. The simple formula is two hours of volunteer time for the students = student success.

Two Hours by Me is an interactive program coordinated and organized by all stakeholders who seek to impact students' success (teachers, school staff, and family members). Under the guidance of a volunteer coordinator and using a creative and self-sustaining approach to school support, Foster families can actively involve themselves in the education of their children on their own time. Through interacting with school staff, families gain the opportunity to get to know, support, and learn more about our educational system.

Inside the school is a volunteer tree. At the tree, school staff share their needs and the volunteers complete the requests according to time and availability. Another way Foster engages families is from home. School staff have created craft kits where the teachers leave a sample of what needs to be done and all of the materials to help develop activities for different classroom themes. The family volunteers can pick up the bag, complete the work at home, and return it all ready to be used in class. A fundamental aspect of this tool is communication. Using the Remind application, Foster staff have been bringing all volunteers into a consistent web of two-way communication. Volunteers stay informed of various



opportunities to help at school from home or during school events.



Families who participate in Two Hours by Me have expressed that they feel valued at the school and motivated to be leaders with new ideas and projects at school. Foster's family liaison encourages other schools to try this approach to increasing volunteering and advocacy. However, she adds: "This project takes time to get rolling, but the persistence is worth it."