

Dear Friend,

I am so excited to share with you an opportunity that is opening up in the first part of 2016.

As you know, our church has for a number of years looked for ways to be helpful to the students, staff and families of Rosemary School. This Kindergarten – 4th grade school, just down the street from the church, is full of challenges—academic and social. Close to 90% of its 515 students qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program. Nearly 75% of the students speak or are learning English as a second language. A large majority of the students are performing below grade level expectations.

In the past, Campbell UMC has offered the school donations of school supplies, snacks and backpacks. More recently, a group of young adults from the church has taken on the project of starting a school garden, in collaboration with the school's families.

Now we are working on another sustained partnership between the church and the school.

Beginning in January 2016, we hope to offer tutoring and reading assistance to Rosemary School students, two afternoons a week. On Monday and Tuesday afternoons, every week, a group of volunteers from the church will each sit, one-on-one, with a student from kindergarten through third grade, and then with another child from fourth grade, for a total of about 45 minutes. While the students are practicing reading and language skills with their volunteer tutor, Brook Hendershot—who is fluent in Spanish—will be working with their parents, to help them with the skills they need to continue assisting their child at home with reading. By offering something for both students (who speak English) and parents (who are mostly Spanish-speaking), we are hoping to multiply the benefit of this brief after-school session.

These sessions will be held at the school.

They will take place between 2:00 and 3:00 pm, every Monday and Tuesday.

Our first ten-week session will begin on January 19, 2016, and end on March 29.

There will be training for all volunteers.

The biggest challenge in putting this program together, of course, is finding a consistent and committed group of volunteers. The principal at Rosemary, Brian Schmaedick, has told us that he would put 400 students into this program if he could.

We need 8-10 volunteers for every Monday and 8-10 volunteers for every Tuesday in order to begin this initial session.

I am writing to you about this for a couple of reasons: First, I believe you have the skills and heart and patience it will take to make a difference in the life of one of these children. I also think this is the kind of ministry opportunity that might be a rich and rewarding experience for you.

Will you think and pray about whether this might be a door opening to you in the next few months? Brook and I would both be happy to answer your questions or to hear your “Yes—count me in!” response. You can reach Brook at brookhendershot@yahoo.com, and me at pastorkathi@campbellunited.org.

We're praying right alongside of you, as you help us know more clearly if this is a ministry we at Campbell UMC can be committed to.

With blessings and love,

Kathi McShane