



Office of Communications
803 W. Broad Street, Suite 340
Falls Church, VA 22046
703-248-5699

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Students Take Pride In Being Husky Helpers

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School students are taking a shine to their new school. Teams of students are making it their mission to be good citizens and help keep it clean.

It's all part of the Husky Helpers Program, named in part for the school's mascot. While every student buses his or her own cafeteria tray, Husky Helpers move in after the lunch period to wipe down and sweep around tables before heading outside to play. At the end of the two week rotation, Husky Helpers receive a reward for their good deeds, and a new Husky Helpers team takes over.

School board member Ruth Brock witnessed the Husky Helpers in action during a recent visit to the school.

"Some slightly out of the box thinking was displayed there with students sitting by TA groups and eager Husky Helpers sitting at their own table and then proudly cleaning up afterwards," Brock said. "The kids with broom and dust pan on a stick seemed to be particularly pleased with themselves. I thought it was terrific."

Principal Rochelle Friedman says the Husky Helper program is a natural extension of the state's character education standard of learning (SOL).

"The goal of the program is to teach students respect for their school and respect for others," Principal Rochelle Friedman said. "Husky Helpers know that they demonstrate good character and citizenship by helping to keep their new school clean and ensuring the next students who go into the cafeteria have a clean place to sit."

As usual, school custodians take out the trash and thoroughly mop floors and wipe down tables at the end of the day. The Husky Helpers program is modeled after similar student initiatives in at least six Fairfax County elementary and middle schools, including Kilmer Middle School and Cooper Middle School.

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