

Urbana School District 116

Jean F. Burkholder
Administrative Service Center
www.usd116.org

News Release

Contact Name: Mark Schultz
217-384-3650
mschultz@usd116.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prairie Elementary School Students Write to Pen Pals *Senior RSVP Program Begins October 24, 2007*

Students in third and fourth grade at Prairie Elementary School in Urbana will hone their writing skills while communicating with senior citizens. This year's "Senior RSVP" program kicks off October 24, 2007, at 9:45 a.m., at Prairie Elementary.

"My students are matched with a local senior citizen. They meet in the fall and then write once a month during the school year. We conclude with a party in May," says Jacqueline Martin, fourth-grade teacher at Prairie. "I can't answer for the seniors, but I know the students love their pen pals and can't wait to hear 'you've got mail!'", Martin adds.

This is the third year of the program. "Writing letters is an authentic way for children to learn how to write paragraphs and the letter-writing format. Students also benefit by learning about their senior citizen pen pal. We also use excerpts from the seniors' letters as a model showing how good paragraphs can be written. Students become better writers as they practice the writing process from rough draft through a completed letter. Students will also work on computer skills as they learn how to type some of their letters and even create a greeting card," Martin explains.

Students will meet their pen pals at Prairie Elementary on October 24th and then begin writing letters to them.

Media interested in attending the "Senior RSVP" event at Prairie Elementary School in Urbana should contact Mark Schultz at 384-3650 or Principal Yavonnda Smith at 384-3657.

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Urbana School District • 205 North Race St. • P.O. Box 3039 • Urbana, IL 61803-3039