

Davidson Elementary dads love helping out and being involved with their kids

Dads on Campus

The Watch D.O.G.S. program gives dads all over the district the chance to make a big impact on young students

Written by Marysabel Cardozo | Photography by Sara Isola

Founded in the late '90s, Watch D.O.G.S. (dads of great students) has become a part of schools nationwide, including many in Katy ISD. The program aims to include dads and father figures as volunteers in schools in order to encourage male role models to participate in their child's education.



“We wanted our fathers to know they were welcome at MRJH,” says Doreen Martinez, Morton Ranch Junior High’s assistant principal and Watch D.O.G.S. coordinator. “We also wanted them to get a better understanding of what junior high school is like today.”

D.O.G.S. on Duty

Once dads have officially become a Watch D.O.G., they are scheduled to take shifts for a full day at school, usually on Fridays. You might see them greeting students in the drop-off line early in the morning, supervising recess, or helping teachers rally the kids at lunchtime. “There is no better way to get involved than to take a day off from work and spend it at your child’s school,” says Doug Pohla, Watch D.O.G.S. assitant at Cimarron Elementary.

For Michael Herrera, work sometimes gets in the way of quality time with his sons. “I was motivated to get involved to not only spend more time with my boys, but I also see this as a chance to be a good male influence on impressionable kids. Both my own, and other students I have the chance to interact with.” Dylan Parker, a Cimarron Watch D.O.G., joined to make sure he’s a part of his children’s lives since his own dad was not.



for a full day gives them the chance to observe their child’s education. Mark Vandervoort, Watch D.O.G. for Morton Ranch Junior High, says he enjoys seeing how today’s learning has taken advantage of modern technology. He also enjoys being able to talk to his daughter’s teachers. “The time on campus helps parents learn what our students and teachers deal with on a daily basis.”

Making a Difference

A major impact that has been seen on campuses as a result of the program is a change in the atmosphere. According to Craig Heath, coordinator of Cimarron Elementary’s Watch D.O.G.S. program, not only do the students seem to behave

better with male role models present, but they also smile bigger and are always happy to see the Watch D.O.G.S. “I have seen firsthand how having a male figure on campus really gives the kids that do not have a father at home someone to look up to, at least for that day. That is really powerful,” Heath says.

Parker urges others to join the worthwhile program. “If you want to make a positive impact on your child’s life, push away from that

computer, television, or lawn mower, and invest in your child or another student.” KM

A Deeper Appreciation

In addition to being a wonderful bonding experience, the program has led to a deeper appreciation of teachers by the men who participate in Watch D.O.G.S. Volunteering

MARYSABEL CARDOZO is a junior at the University of Texas at Austin, majoring in journalism. She continues to stay connected to the community.

Become a Watch D.O.G.

- Must be a father, grandfather, uncle, or legal guardian of a Katy ISD student.
- Contact your school to see if they have a Watch D.O.G. program and ask for the lead D.O.G.’s contact info.
- Schedule a time to help out in the drop-off line, lunch area, bus line, and more.



For more information on how to become a Watch D.O.G, contact individual campuses.