

# PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Employees of the various businesses and community groups are the volunteer PALS who, working in partnership with the school staff, contribute to significant positive changes in the students, as well as as measurable academic improvements.

## Some of their volunteer activities include:

- mentoring through the Big Brothers Big Sisters In-School Mentoring Program
- coaching after-school sports
- participating as reading or math buddies
- overseeing extracurricular activities
- serving breakfast
- accompanying students to events
- organizing after-school clubs
- encouraging social skills
- demonstrating healthy life choices
- acting as role models
- helping behind the scenes
- providing cultural enrichment
- offering career guidance/job-specific expertise
- engaging high school students in work experiences
- delivering career-focused lectures
- assisting with post-secondary student placements



For more information, and to find out how YOU can make a difference in the future of our young people, please contact:

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... or contact your local  
school district Community  
Engagement Coordinator.

# BENEFITS TO STUDENTS/SCHOOLS

PALS partnerships (the schools and their partners) have had a positive impact on virtually every facet of school life for our children – academic achievement, enrolment, school spirit, student behaviour and social skills, student motivation, sports activity, cultural awareness, and pride in being part of the school community.

## BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERS

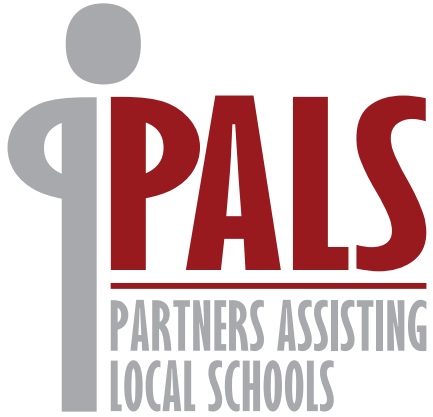
For community and business leaders, a PALS partnership can be one of the most efficient and effective ways to contribute to real community change. These partnerships are making a significant and direct impact on the inner city poverty around them, and they have engaged the community to be part of that change.

- Volunteers return to work feeling like they have made a difference.
- Volunteers enjoy sharing in children’s lives and celebrating their successes.

**The PALS initiative is proving that a dedicated school staff and parent group, together with community volunteers and financial support, can make a significant impact on the future of our children.**



PALS was initiated in 2000 by Mr. James K. Irving, Chairman of J.D. Irving, Limited, and School District 8 in Saint John, NB (currently the Saint John Education Centre of the Anglophone South School District). In the first 10 years of operation, one school and one partner grew to more than 30 schools and 140 partners and this positive growth continues.



**Providing a Bright Future for the Young People of New Brunswick**



“ Making a difference in the life of a child can have a powerful impact, not only on that young person, but also on the future of our community. We are proud to be working side by side with our neighbours to open doors to new possibilities for our children. ”

James K. Irving  
J.D. Irving, Limited  
PALS for Prince Charles School

**PALS** facilitates mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and local businesses, service agencies and/or community groups.

By working together, a school and its partners make a positive impact on the life of a child and the future of the community.

# PALS (PARTNERS ASSISTING LOCAL SCHOOLS)

is an initiative developed in Saint John, NB to help address the needs and implications associated with students living in poverty.

Poverty reduction remains the central focus of the PALS initiative in Saint John. However, schools both in Saint John and in other jurisdictions have developed PALS partnerships for a variety of reasons, a testament to its adoptability and adaptability as a model.

Working with the school staff and administration the partnerships help develop strategies that align with the School Improvement Plans of the partner schools. On a continual basis the partnerships’ strategies are developed, implemented and evaluated for their effectiveness in complementing these plans.

Partnership initiatives vary from school to school providing many innovative opportunities. These opportunities support literacy and numeracy and offer exciting experiences that enrich children’s lives.

## THIS IS WHERE YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR EMPLOYEES COME IN

The PALS initiative is looking for interested businesses and their employees to partner with neighbourhood schools to “make a difference” in the lives of our youth.



# ESTABLISHING YOUR PARTNERSHIP

**Each partnership will be unique.**

- Each school has its individual needs.
- Each business has something different to offer.
- Not all partnerships will look the same.

**In some cases, more than one business/agency will partner with a school.**

**Each partner operates in a world/culture somewhat foreign to the other.** Open communication and clearly expressed goals are the keys to success.

## DEVELOPING A PLAN OF ACTION

**Meet to determine needs, discuss school demographics, brainstorm, and set goals.**

- What are the goals of our partnership – why are we partnering?
- What will our involvement look like?
- What resources (human and financial) will we need to meet our goals?
- How will we communicate?
- How will we measure our successes?
- How will we celebrate along the way?

**Commitment must come from the top of each partner’s organization.** Support must come from the employees/staff to maintain the interest – keep them involved!

**Determine the length and extent of commitment.**

- A suggested commitment of 3 years, preferably 5, is the norm.
- Goals should be revisited yearly – it should always be a work in progress.

**Communicate this commitment to all members of the organizations.** All those involved must understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

**Identify a champion at each site.** It is crucial to have this point person through whom communication is funneled and who maintains the momentum. It is advisable to plan for possible changes in personnel to ensure smooth transitions.

**Start small!** Build on your successes!

# HUMAN RESOURCES

**Volunteers can be the backbone of any education-business partnership.** Providing extra people support to the students and staff, whether directly with the children or behind the scenes, is invaluable.



**Employers** may contribute people resources by freeing up employees to volunteer (generally for up to 1 hour) during their work week.

**Recruitment** must be on a voluntary basis and employees can be recruited through:

- information meetings such as a lunch & learn
- posters inviting participation

**Screening** – All adults who work in schools must have Criminal Record/Vulnerable Sector clearance and must receive training in a provincial policy regarding the safety of children. This training will be arranged by the school.

**Orientation** will take place to provide an overview of the policies and procedures concerning safety, confidentiality, etc. while working at the school.

**Recognition and feedback** are essential to maintain interest and engagement.

**Celebrating successes helps solidify your partnership!**

Some suggestions are:

- periodic newsletters to share information about ongoing initiatives
- yearly get-togethers to provide a chance to meet informally
- annual meetings to recap the year’s events and plan for the future

# FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Some companies/agencies may not be able to spare employee time during the work week, but may still like to be involved. Assisting a school financially may be an option.

Many schools do not have the means to provide additional enriching educational experiences for their students.

**Financially, partners may help by:**

- augmenting or creating opportunities to ensure all children are able to access events or activities associated with going to school.
- assisting school parent groups in their efforts to provide such extras as library enhancements, development of playgrounds, team uniforms, etc.
- creating opportunities for schools to provide field trip experiences beyond what the school budget accommodates.



**Please note:**

- Funding for such projects does not replace public funding for schools.
- Donations made to a school will flow through an account established by the school district.
- Tax receipts (if requested) can be issued by the Province of New Brunswick.