

## A conversation with Newton School Volunteer, Deb Banton

I get more out of tutoring as a Newton School Volunteer than I give. It gives me an opportunity to grow and have something new to work on. It's really marvelous and thrilling. I love tutoring, and working with a child one-on-one.

It's a very exciting time to be involved in tutoring because of curriculum changes. This year I'm working with a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student and have a strong connection with the child. I really have a positive attitude when we work together and teach not only math, but the importance of persistence and hard work. "It may not be easy, but we can do it" is something I often say.

When I began as a Newton School Volunteer three years ago, I expected the math to be dry, but the games and activities are fun. My student loves the game Four-in-a-Row. We also work on critical thinking and basic math facts.

The student's improvement is very rewarding. Recently my student got 15 correct answers out of 50 questions on 2 tests in a row. The last time she got 45 out of 50 right!

I believe children need to know math. If they understand it, it empowers them for life. In my previous job I managed many people. I saw hard working employees, who I couldn't hire for more advanced jobs because of their limited understanding of mathematics. If they had a little help earlier in their lives they could have had different lives.

I'm surprised at how much support I get from the Math Coach and Program Coordinator. I didn't think I would need it and now I don't know if I would have lasted without it. The workshops are huge; they give me an opportunity to talk to other tutors and be part of a community. A tutor who is a full time aide in another system said that she doesn't get this much support in her paid job. Now I have more respect for teachers and understand some of the challenges they experience.