

# 'Coaches' help local families

By **MARTHA BIGHAM**  
Times-Bulletin Staff Writer

Whenever problems or areas of concern arise in elementary schools across Van Wert County, parents and teachers do not have to try to resolve conflicts or problems on their own.

Over the past four years, "school family coaches" have been instrumental in helping families meet the needs of their children and have served as intermediaries between school personnel and families in times of conflict or misunderstanding.

According to Ohio City-Liberty Elementary Principal Ron Rase, coaches aren't just tutors, because they handle so much more than that. "They are there to provide assistance to the whole family," he said.

"We're not like human services," said Stephanie Kayser, a current school family coach. "We are an optional, voluntary program that can help the family and the school. It is totally up to the parents if they want to receive our assistance or not."

When teachers at a school think one of their students might benefit from the family coaching program, they fill out a referral sheet for review by the principal, who then contacts the coaches. Children who might be referred to the coaching program may have needs in areas that involve truancy, tardiness, homework, hygiene, behavior problems or medical treatment.

Parents or guardians that agree to participate in the program allow family coaches to visit their home to assist in these areas as well as other areas. Coaches can also provide families with important and helpful information regarding child care, parenting and homemaking skills.

In addition, they can help families, when requested and it is appropriate, in securing basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter, can act as advocates in securing medical treatment or medical cards, family services or can introduce families to programs and activities in the community that would help meet the needs of children and the families.



*Stephanie Kayser - daughter of Carolyn Kayser*  
*Trina Langdon - daughter of Maxine Langdon*  
**Family school coaches, Stephanie Kayser (left) and Trina Langdon, discuss ideas and interventions that could help families using their services.** Martha Bigham/Times-Bulletin

Rase and Horace Mann Elementary Principal Peg Schilb chaired the program committee that originally developed the concept of the school family coach.

In putting together the program, teachers, principals and parents were asked for their input to help the committee decide what coaches could — and should — do to help families and schools.

garten through grade three, both coaches are finding that they have been able to work with other children who are in grades four through five.

"For the most part, people have been pretty open to our help," Langdon noted, adding that parents seem to really appreciate the fact that "the school is interested enough in the students to send someone to the home to help out."

Court/Youth Bureau.

Two coaches cover district schools throughout the county. Langdon works with families at Lincolnview East and North Elementary Schools, and also at three of the Van Wert City elementary schools — Franklin, Jefferson and Anthony Wayne. Kayser works directly with families that have children at Ohio City-Liberty Elementary, St. Mary's Catholic School, Washington Elementary and Horace Mann Elementary.