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Reading Corps coming to area schools

Members help kids to improve reading skills

By **KATE MARTIN**
Staff Writer

MOUNT VERNON — Schools in a four-county region — including some in Anacortes, Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley — will soon see a return of support staff from the Northwest Washington Reading Corps due to the reauthorization of money from the state Legislature.

The money is awarded every two years, said Quinn Slayton, project supervisor for the organization. This school year, \$173,000 will pay for 60 positions for the duration of the 2008-09 school year. The Reading Corps members come from the federal AmeriCorps and Volunteers in Service to America organizations, she said.

Nineteen schools in Skagit, Whatcom, Island and Snohomish counties will see workers from the organization, Slayton said.

Those who work for the organization must undergo a background

check, have a desire to help elementary-aged children, have an appreciation for diversity and be able to work as a team, along with many other qualifications listed on the Northwest Washington Reading Corps' Web site, www.northwestwrc.org.

So far, 45 people have been hired, Slayton said. They will perform a wide range of duties, including supporting reading programs, small-group and individual tutoring sessions, volunteer recruitment and community partnership formation.

"(The tutors) provide interven-

At a glance

■ For more information about the Northwest Washington Reading Corps, or to apply for an open position, call 360-416-7585 or visit www.northwestwrc.org.

tion for kids who need it," Slayton said. "They're usually working with kids who are a little below the grade-level expectations. ... Out of those, I think about 50 percent of them (last school year) went up one grade level

in their reading skills or they met their grade level."

Two of the 60 workers will go to Evergreen Elementary in Sedro-Woolley, Principal Matthew Mihelich said. One position is filled, and he hopes to hire the second one soon.

"We count on them for reading intervention, small-group tutoring and to increase the amount of volunteer participation," Mihelich said.

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