

# Support Magic Hat

- Grace Perry

The Magic Hat thrift store represents everything great about the Marblehead Public School system. On March 1st, 2014, Headlight went to Magic Hat to volunteer. Five staff members volunteered in hour shifts in order to give back to Marblehead High School. For years, the Magic Hat has been able to provide its shoppers and volunteers with a wonderful and friendly atmosphere, where the shopping is great and giving back to one's community is fun. Mia Klein, a dedicated volunteer and representative for the Village School put it perfectly, "When you're a volunteer, it's like a party is going on because you don't realize your volunteering. You're just having a good time."

For its shoppers, Magic Hat is filled with great quality items, from glassware to sweaters, that are all priced reasonably. Shoppers can enjoy frequent sales and special days of shopping, such as free book day where customers enjoy complimentary free books. Volunteers are always taken care of as well. Each volunteer receives a 25% discount after each shift and is entered into a free raffle. Volunteers are encouraged to represent a specific Marblehead Public School and list all of their information in a book provided. Every hour of service given correlates to a certain amount of money given to the school the volunteer represents. For example, if a student at Marblehead High School gives five hours to the Magic Hat, those five hours correspond to a profit that is then given to fund Marblehead High School. Currently MHS's PTO is looking for clubs to choose one Saturday to volunteer their time. The PTO hopes to get students involved and to reach their goal of 200 volunteer hours to purchase a new hydration station. Magic Hat has donated \$400,000 from its initial start in 2005 to fund all types of wonderful things for the Marblehead Public School system. Some projects that have been funded from Magic Hat include Rebel Shakespeare, Study Island, field trips and kindles for the high school. Klein notes: "I do this because the people are wonderful to work with, the stuff is amazing. The items donated to Magic Hat are of great quality and not many people know that. If the items donated are not of great quality they are re-donated to a good cause. Magic Hat is our greatest fundraiser for all of our public schools. The funding that comes out of here is extraordinary." Most, if not all volunteers, enjoy their time spent at Magic Hat. They feel like they are truly giving back to their community, and they are. "Volunteers have lots of different options in the store – sort clothes, tag clothes, straighten, put out priced items, mark things half off on the racks, and such," said Co-Manager Kathy Christopher. "We will never ask someone to do a job that they are not comfortable doing or just don't like. We want everyone to have fun and come back." But one does not have to just volunteer to make a difference in the Magic Hat organization; the people who shop and donate are also giving back to their community, just as much.

Klein notes, "You just feel like you are a part of it all, it doesn't feel like you are volunteering. It just has a great atmosphere and time flies by. Volunteers have a good rapport with one another. We smile, we laugh and we chat. You are also encouraged to do what it is you would like to do as volunteer. You don't have to do a certain job. It is up to you what you would like to do to make a difference. It's just fun."

Sandy Dominguez, a frequent volunteer at Magic Hat, enjoys giving back to her community. “I really just enjoy the bargains and the feeling of volunteerism. My time spent here allows me to give back to the schools my daughter has attended. I typically find some great items here, such as a these really cute shorts I plan on wearing in the summer.” Dominguez volunteers behind the scenes and processes, tags and hangs clothing along with other volunteers donating their time. She believes Saturday is the busiest day of the week for Magic Hat because of how many people have the time to stop by and check it out when they are out of work. Dominguez states, “A lot of people think Magic Hat just has used clothing, but really we have a lot of new stuff, too. All of great quality. That’s the number one.”

Magic Hat thrift store is located in the Marblehead Veterans Middle School. Its hours are Wednesday through Friday 10 a.m. -2 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If one is interested in getting involved, Christopher notes: “Each school has a volunteer coordinator. Individual schools are responsible for a week – so about every six weeks your school is on deck. The volunteer coordinator will send out an email using Sign Up Genius asking people to sign up for a time slot. Just because it is not your school’s week, you can still come in any time we are open, volunteer, and your school will get credit.” Donations are accepted during store hours and a list of the following items are accepted to be donated.

All Headlight staff members had a fantastic experience while at Magic Hat and we encourage all readers to get involved. More information is available on their website, <http://magichatthriftshop.com>.

**Donations Accepted:**

New or gently used clothing, footwear, household items, small furniture, CDs and DVDs, sports equipment, holiday themed items, jewelry, lamps, games and puzzles, artwork, handbags and books.