

Northeast Portland's Ken Rumbaugh named statewide Volunteer of the Year



By [Larry Bingham, The Oregonian](#)

[Gov. John Kitzhaber](#) has named [Sabin School](#) activist Ken Rumbaugh as the statewide adult [Volunteer of the Year](#).

Rumbaugh, 41, served on the school site council that started the International Baccalaureate accreditation and has been co-chair of the Sabin School auction more than once. Under his leadership as school PTA president, the organization grew from a handful of parents to more than 200 people and the budget jumped from \$2,000 to more than \$100,000.

As co-creator and administrator of www.sabinparents.org, he helped establish an online forum that turned out to be instrumental in the [PPS Boundary Advisory Committee process](#). He is the current Sabin PTA communications chair and his involvement in the Sabin/ACCESS Art Project helps explain why student artwork has long been a fixture at the Northeast 15th Avenue and Fremont Street Starbucks.

Rumbaugh, who also served as an [AmeriCorps](#) member at the [Sabin SUN Community School program](#), took a few minutes Monday to answer some quick questions about his award, his community and why volunteering matters.

Q: Why did you get involved in volunteering?

A: Volunteering has always been a selfish endeavor for me. I've never really considered it as anything but a way to stay present in every aspect of my daughter's life. Even before she was born, I decided that it would simply never be an option to ever find myself saying, "I wish I had more time to be involved in my daughter's life."

Q: What do you personally get out of volunteering?

A: When I started out on this path at Sabin School I never considered it would be so rewarding for me personally. There is no greater reward than standing on the Sabin School playground at 3 p.m. each school day and watching all of the students and families hang out, and continuing to build community. While my motivation was once being involved in my daughter's life, my inspiration now comes from all these dedicated parents and volunteers that are doing so much to make her school, and our neighborhood, a better place.

Q: How do you avoid "volunteer fatigue"?

A: My involvement in the Sabin School and in the community has evolved enough in my years that I have never felt the "burnout" or "volunteer fatigue" that everybody warned against when she was much younger, and I was a newbie school parent. Avoiding volunteer fatigue would not have been possible without the many efforts of my fellow Sabin School parents that are now so involved.

Q: What do you do when you're not volunteering?

A: When I'm not volunteering, I spend my days as a [graphic artist & photographer](#), and enjoy spending my weekends watching my daughter play soccer.

Q: What does this award mean to you?

A: I feel the [Governor's Volunteer of the Year](#) is one that no individual can ever own exclusively. I feel so incredibly fortunate to be a part of a wonderful collection of volunteers at the Sabin School! This fabulous neighborhood is no longer a secret to those living in Northeast Portland . . . My hope is that the recognition might cast a larger spotlight on all the folks doing amazing work in our school! The award is a tremendous honor. An honor second only to the honor I feel in being a part of this community of people.

Rumbaugh will be [honored Nov. 4 at an awards luncheon](#) in Salem.

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