Name: _____ Date: _____

Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Circle group

In a big city, firefighters work shifts at the station and get paid. In many small towns, the fire department is made of volunteers. They are neighbors with ordinary jobs. Some are teachers, mechanics, or nurses. They agree to leave dinner or bed when an alarm sounds.

Being a volunteer takes more than good cheer. New members train for many weeks. They learn to use hoses, ladders, and breathing gear safely. They keep practicing all year. They also learn first aid. Many of the calls are for sick people, car crashes, or other trouble, not just fire.

Volunteer groups still have bills. Fire trucks, safety gear, and fuel cost a lot. The gear must be kept in good shape. Some money comes from local taxes. But many departments raise more on their own. That is where the pancake breakfast comes in. On a Saturday morning, volunteers flip pancakes at the firehouse. Neighbors line up, pay a small price for a plate, and chat with the people who may help them one day.

These events do more than fill the budget. Neighbors meet their firefighters. Some young people decide to join. Many departments have junior programs that teach teens safety and teamwork.

It works because of a promise on both sides. Volunteers give time and effort. The town gives support so they have the tools. Then a small town can get help fast, even at night.

Questions

1. Who makes up a volunteer fire department?

_____

_____

2. What do new volunteers learn in training?

_____

_____

3. Why do firefighters learn first aid?

_____

_____

4. How do many departments raise extra money?

_____

_____

5. Besides money, what is another good thing about the pancake breakfast?

_____

_____

6. What promise keeps a volunteer department working?

_____

_____

Words to know

volunteer: a person who chooses to work without being paid

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Triangle group

In a large city, firefighters work in shifts at the station and are paid for their time. In many small towns and rural areas, however, the fire department is made up of volunteers. They are neighbors with ordinary jobs, such as teachers, mechanics, and nurses, who agree to leave dinner or bed when an alarm sounds.

Becoming a volunteer takes more than enthusiasm. New members train for many weeks to learn how to use hoses, ladders, and breathing equipment safely, and they keep practicing throughout the year. They also learn first aid, because a large share of the calls a department answers are for medical problems, car crashes, or other emergencies rather than for flames.

Volunteer departments still have costs. Fire trucks, protective gear, and fuel are expensive, and the equipment must be maintained. Part of the money usually comes from local taxes, but many departments raise more themselves. This is where the pancake breakfast comes in. On a Saturday morning, volunteers flip pancakes in the firehouse while residents line up, pay a small price for a plate, and chat with the people who may someday come to their aid.

These events do more than fill the budget. They help neighbors meet their firefighters, and they sometimes encourage younger residents to join. Many departments rely on junior programs that teach teenagers safety skills and teamwork.

The arrangement depends on a promise on both sides. Volunteers give their time and effort, and the community provides support so they have the tools to do the job. When both sides keep that promise, a small town can have help that arrives quickly, even in the middle of the night.

Questions

1. What kind of people make up a volunteer fire department?

_____

_____

2. What do new volunteers learn during training?

_____

_____

3. Why do firefighters learn first aid?

_____

_____

4. How do many departments raise extra money?

_____

_____

5. Besides money, what is another benefit of the pancake breakfast?

_____

_____

6. What is the promise that keeps a volunteer department working?

_____

_____

Words to know

volunteer: a person who chooses to work without being paid
rural: having to do with the countryside rather than a city
equipment: the tools and gear needed to do a job
enthusiasm: strong excitement and interest in something
maintained: kept in good working condition

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Square group

In a large metropolis, firefighters work in shifts at the station and are compensated for their time. In many small towns and rural districts, however, the fire department consists entirely of volunteers. They are neighbors with ordinary occupations, such as teachers, mechanics, and nurses, who consent to abandon dinner or bed whenever an alarm sounds.

Becoming a volunteer requires considerably more than enthusiasm. New members undergo many weeks of training to learn how to operate hoses, ladders, and breathing apparatus safely, and they continue practicing throughout the year. They also study first aid, because a substantial proportion of the calls a department answers concern medical emergencies, automobile crashes, or other hazards rather than flames.

Volunteer departments nevertheless incur significant costs. Fire trucks, protective gear, and fuel are expensive, and the equipment must be carefully maintained. A portion of the money typically originates from local taxes, but numerous departments raise additional funds on their own. This is where the pancake breakfast becomes important. On a Saturday morning, volunteers flip pancakes in the firehouse while residents line up, pay a modest price for a plate, and converse with the people who may someday come to their rescue.

These events accomplish more than filling the budget. They allow neighbors to meet their firefighters, and they sometimes inspire younger residents to join. Many departments depend on junior programs that teach teenagers safety skills and teamwork.

The arrangement rests upon a promise from both sides. Volunteers contribute their time and effort, while the community provides the support that gives them the tools to do the job. When both sides honor that promise, a small town can count on help that arrives swiftly, even in the middle of the night.

Questions

1. What sort of people compose a volunteer fire department?

_____

_____

2. What do new volunteers study during their training?

_____

_____

3. Why do firefighters study first aid?

_____

_____

4. How do many departments raise additional funds?

_____

_____

5. Apart from money, what is another benefit of the pancake breakfast?

_____

_____

6. What promise keeps a volunteer department functioning?

_____

_____

Words to know

volunteer: a person who chooses to work without being paid
rural: having to do with the countryside rather than a city
equipment: the tools and gear needed to do a job
enthusiasm: strong excitement and interest in something
maintained: kept in good working condition

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Easier · 235 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4

1. Neighbors with ordinary jobs who agree to come when an alarm sounds.
2. How to use hoses, ladders, and breathing gear, plus first aid.
3. Many calls are for sick people and car crashes, not just fires.
4. With events such as pancake breakfasts.
5. Neighbors meet their firefighters, and some young people may decide to join.
6. Volunteers give their time, and the town gives support for tools and gear.

Triangle: Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

This passage · 276 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.5

1. Neighbors with ordinary jobs who agree to respond when an alarm sounds.
2. How to use hoses, ladders, and breathing equipment, plus first aid.
3. Many of the calls are for medical problems and crashes, not only fires.
4. By holding events such as pancake breakfasts.
5. Neighbors meet their firefighters, and some young people may be encouraged to join.
6. Volunteers give their time, and the community gives support for tools and equipment.

Square: Pancakes for the Volunteer Firehouse

Harder · 284 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 11.5

1. Neighbors with ordinary occupations who consent to respond whenever an alarm sounds.
2. How to operate hoses, ladders, and breathing apparatus, plus first aid.
3. Many calls concern medical emergencies and crashes rather than only fires.
4. By holding events such as pancake breakfasts.
5. Neighbors meet their firefighters, and some young residents may be inspired to join.
6. Volunteers contribute their time, and the community provides support for tools and equipment.