

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Shara Sanders

### When did your family become part of the St. Martin's community?

We joined the St. Martin's community in the fall of 2013 when our daughter Jillian started Kindergarten; she is now a rising 8th grader. We live in the Oak Grove/Tucker/Decatur area and had learned about SMES from former parent Susan Reese. Susan and I are members of the Junior League of DeKalb County, and I knew Susan's children, Colin and Ansley, from volunteering with the youth group at Oak Grove United Methodist Church. We heard such great things about SMES from Susan and visited the school on several occasions. The two things that clinched it for us were the Open House visit to the EC science lab, and attending the PTO Fall Festival in 2012, where we experienced the apple cider pressing demonstration.

### Why do you volunteer?

I attended Presbyterian College whose school motto is "Dum Vivimus Servimus" – While We Live, We Serve. I have taken that to heart and have tried to use my time, talent and treasure to serve the school and community as best I can. In everything I do, my goal is to make the world a better place for Jillian. I also volunteer because I love meeting new people, helping SMES teachers and staff, learning new things and facing new challenges.

### What makes St. Martin's special to you and your family?

One of my favorite volunteer tasks was working on the SMES core values. Hearing from other parents and teachers, administrators and staff about what makes SMES special was inspiring. The seven core values, faith, kindness, friendships, uniqueness, possibilities, milestones and growing up, truly sum up why SMES is special to us.

### Is there a silver lining to being part of the SMES community during the pandemic?

After the initial fear and stress over the unknown, we were very blessed to be able to pause, spend time together as a family, and re-set our priorities. Daily walks with our dog Thor, virtually connecting with friends, cleaning out the garage and basement, planting herbs and flowers and discovering new ways to serve the community are all silver linings. One of the most significant things I did during the pandemic was volunteering as a poll worker during the 2020-2021 elections. It was a highly stressful yet educational and fulfilling experience, one I would never have had if the pandemic had not happened. It was also inspiring to see how the SMES parent community has come together to support each other, the teachers and the school during the pandemic. I'm still in shock over the support that the 2021 Virtual Fling – Bloom generated. Thank you! ✨

**Joined St. Martin's community:**  
2013

### Volunteer Areas:

- Room Representative
- Book Fair Volunteer
- Spring Flowers Volunteer
- Veteran's Day Volunteer and Chair
- Hospitality Co-Chair
- PTO Co-President 2016-2017
- Fling – Acquisitions Chair 2013
- Fling – Chair 2015
- Fling – Co-Chair 2017, 2019, 2021

