

We're all in this together

Columbia's most rural elementary school is a family affair.

Story and Photographs
by Greg Peters

A still fog covers the Missouri countryside on a cool morning. The fog is thick; it's the kind that paints the surroundings milky white and makes it almost impossible to see even the familiar outline of the dark, leafless tree on the bend just down the road as one travels along the rolling hills of Route Z toward the interstate.

The sound of tires humming on the black pavement of the highway permeates the silence of the country morning. A car winds its way through the fog before finally materializing a few hundred yards from the school.

Not long after, a school bus comes into view on a tree-lined dirt road. First the headlights appear and then the outline of the yellow bus. It moves toward the front of the school and stops. Inside the school, the instructors are hurriedly preparing for class. First-year teacher Rob Allen has been planning his lessons since the janitor



Sixth graders Melissa Miller and Jessica Dugger help Principal Clay Austin raise the flag. Students are always a part of this morning ritual.