

NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

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**WE
FOUGHT,
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WON!**

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NYSUT UNITED [November/December 2019, Vol. 10, No. 2]

Director of Communications: Damien LaVera
Lead Editor/Copy Desk Chief: Clarisse Butler Banks
Assistant Editors/Writers: Liza Frenette, Ned Hoskin, Sylvia Saunders, Kara E. Smith, Matt Smith, Andrew Watson
Photo Editor: J. El-Wise Noisette
Lead Designer: Nicole Clayton
Art and Production: Dana Fournier
Advertising: Lori DiVeglia
Online Communications Coordinator: Bryan Thomas
Editorial Support: Julie Malec

NYSUT United is a member publication of the International Labor Communications Association, Metro New York Labor Communications Council, State Education Association Communicators.

Editorial and Production Department: 518-213-6000 and 800-342-9810 (toll-free)

Annual subscription: \$15. NYSUT members receive a copy of **NYSUT United** as part of their dues benefit. Households with multiple members will receive only one copy. If you do wish to receive more than one copy, please call 518-213-6000, ext. 6234.

Address changes: POSTMASTER: Member Records Department, 800 Troy-Schenectady

Road, Latham, NY 12110

UFT member address changes: POSTMASTER: New York Teacher, 52 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, NY 10004
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT LATHAM, NY
ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICE
WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701

NYSUT United (ISSN 21587914) and **nysut.org** are official publications of New York State United Teachers. **NYSUT United** publishes six issues from September to June.

Advertising: Email Lori DiVeglia at ldivegli@nysutmail.org or call 518-213-6000, ext. 6264 or 800-448-4ADS.

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NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS
800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110
518-213-6000 ■ 800-342-9810

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Dozens of 'Pipeline' candidates on the ballot in November

By Ned Hoskin
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

Continuing a trend that has been building for years, 53 candidates who came through NYSUT's Pipeline training are running for local offices in the Nov. 5 elections.

The Pipeline Program provides extensive training and support for working people who share the union's values and agenda and are willing to put in the effort required to mount a campaign.

Forty-one of the 53 are members of NYSUT local unions. Here are some examples of union members stepping up to lead in their communities.

Joe Cantafio, president of the West Seneca Teachers Association and a member of the NYSUT Board of Directors, is running for West Seneca Town Council.

A lifelong resident of the community, Cantafio teaches history and government and has coached football, wrestling and lacrosse. He said the union's support has been key.

"Now more than ever, West Seneca needs a proven leader, and NYSUT has prepared me for the task," Cantafio said. "Through the Pipeline training, the Member Organizing Institute, and leadership training, I am able to bring a proven record to our community."

Ralph Smith, a member of the Putnam Valley Federation of Teachers, is running for Putnam Valley Town Board after three decades as an educator and community resident. He's taught elementary and secondary levels, and he staunchly supported Putnam Valley launching its own school system.

Nicole Herkey is running for West Seneca Town Council. The 12-year literacy specialist in the Buffalo Public Schools is a member of the Buffalo Teachers Federation Executive Committee, a NYSUT and AFT delegate and a MOI graduate. She's lived in West Seneca for 22 years.

Angela Riley is a UUP member in Binghamton University's School of Pharmacy running for Binghamton City Council. She has been a PTA leader and a member of nearly a dozen community boards. Riley won a contested primary with the support of the Binghamton TA.

Michelle Roman, a member of the Holley Central School TA, previously won an upset in a special election to fill out the rest of the term for the outgoing mayor in Lockport and is



running for re-election. With labor support, she prioritizes issues important to unions and working families.

Early voting is here!

The General Election is Tuesday, Nov. 5, and your usual polling places will be open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For the first time in New York State, there will also be nine days of early voting between Oct. 26 and Nov. 3.

Early voting must be completed in person, but it will probably not take place at your usual neighborhood polling place. It will be at a central location in your county. To find the early voting sites in your area, visit voteearlyny.org.

Here's what it means:

- Early voting allows you to vote in person at a poll site in your county. You do not need a reason or excuse to vote early.
- Each county will determine the poll sites and the hours for early voting. On Election Day, Nov. 5, however, you must go to your usual assigned poll site to vote.
- Obviously, if you vote early, you are NOT eligible to vote by absentee ballot or at the polls on Election Day.

COMING UP

Nov. 1-2

NYSUT Civil and Human Rights Committee meets, Latham

Nov. 5

Election Day



Nov. 8-10

NYSUT Community College Conference, Cooperstown

Nov. 15-16

NYSUT Women's Committee meets, Latham

Nov. 18-22

American Education Week (Visit nea.org for ideas)

Nov. 19

NYS School-Related Professionals Recognition Day

Nov. 25

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Dec. 6-7

NYSUT Subject Area Committees meet, Latham

Dec. 7

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Dec. 13-14

NYSUT Subject Area Committees meet, Latham

Dec. 23-Jan. 1

NYSUT offices closed



FROM WAMC:
ANDY PALLOTTA

"For educators in their first year — or first few years — of teaching, the job can feel overwhelming and isolating. While inspiring, the work is challenging. And the professional development and certification requirements new teachers must fulfill to stay in the classroom can be complicated and daunting. If you're a fledgling educator, I've got a message for you — you're not alone. Your union is here for you."

— NYSUT President Andy Pallotta (Visit nextgen.nysut.org for more.)

ON THE COVER

Bus driver Charles Jones, president of the Bethlehem Central United Employees Association.

Photo by El-Wise Noisette

Stop-arm camera law already making a difference

By Ned Hoskin
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

The new NYSUT-backed law to authorize the use of cameras to enforce traffic safety around school buses is a major victory for students and bus drivers and monitors. While it will take time for individual districts to implement across the state, it's already working.

"I know at our place they got some new buses with cameras, not on the arm, but on the side," said Charlie Jones, a bus driver in the Bethlehem Central School District near Albany. He is president of the Bethlehem Central United Employees Association.

"Already this year, one of our drivers had a car pass her while she was stopped with the lights on. We were able to get the plate number and the car and we took it to the cops, and it worked."

He said town officials have embraced the concept that allows them to use the bus footage and vehicle identification to prosecute.

"In our town, the cops have always worked with us, they think it's great," Jones said.

Chris Horstman, a bus driver and president of the Ithaca City School District Employees Association, said some buses have had cameras that could capture license plates, but prior to the new law, that was rarely enough.

The district could send the license information to the state Department of Motor Vehicles in Albany, but "unless you could identify the person (driving), even with the plate, you couldn't proceed," he said.

Because the law was enacted in the summer, many districts had already ordered any new buses for this school year. Some districts may retrofit in-service buses this year, Horstman said, and next year, we may see more new buses equipped with cameras.

"It's not mandated, it's just another tool to help you," he said.

Some school systems planned ahead.

"In our district, they were talking about it even before the law passed,"

said Deb Paulin, a bus driver in the Buffalo area and president of the Alden Central Schools Employees Association who also serves on the NYSUT Board of Directors.

Because the law requires districts and municipalities and the vendors installing the equipment to share in the costs and the revenues, it can take a little time to get started, Paulin said, but there's no question it will help protect students.

"I'm looking forward to using the cameras," she said, "because people are driving like maniacs."

Spectrum News reported that Niagara Falls City Schools installed the cameras on two buses, and during a pilot run, one of the cameras picked up 20 violators.

'Membership matters' on Community College agenda

Coming to work on a college campus as an adjunct faculty member is never easy.

Campuses and administrators do not provide the structure and support that are available to full-time faculty and staff.

However, that is something your union can do.

Adjuncts make up more than two-thirds of the faculty at community colleges in the state. Working to communicate with, organize and engage these members — who often teach on multiple campuses and rarely



have office hours — is both a challenge and a priority for local unions.

That's why it will be one of the key topics for activists and union leaders headed to Cooperstown for the 41st annual NYSUT Community College Conference in November. The theme for the conference is "Union strong: Membership matters." Among the topics will be ways a local

can organize and engage adjunct faculty.

"Locals and members can best learn from each other how the union can provide resources for adjuncts," said Roberta Elins, president of the United College Employees at Fashion Institute of Technology, a NYSUT Board member and chair of the conference.

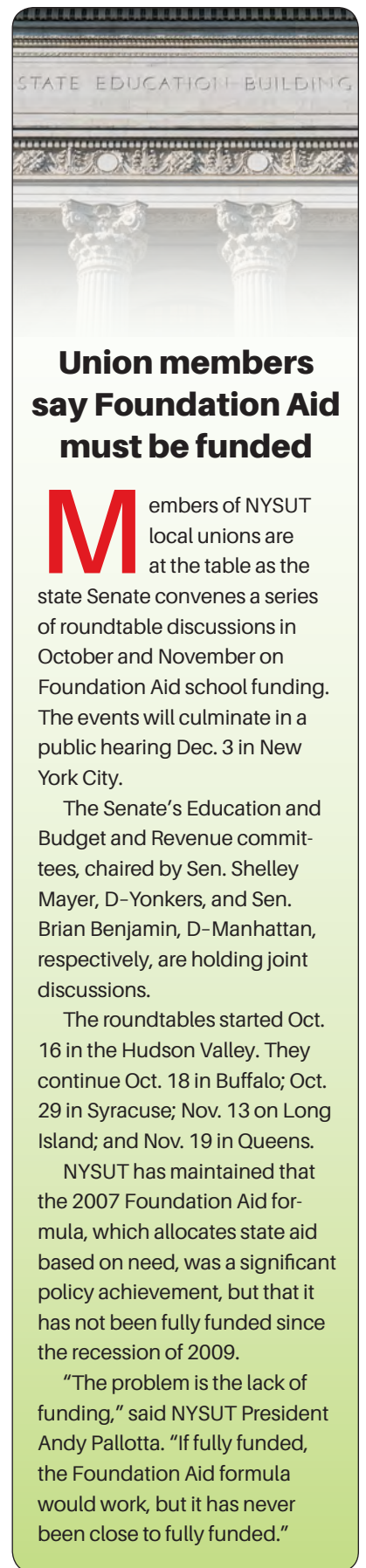
"This is an important annual opportunity for activists to come together to share insights and concerns regarding the issues and challenges that we face in the workplace every day, many of which are unique to the community college experience," she said.

South African teacher union leader visits NYSUT



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

Mugwena Maluleke, general secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers Union and vice president for Education International, visited NYSUT in October to tour schools in the Albany area and discuss organizing and social justice. Above, Maluleke visits a classroom with Albany Public School Teachers Association President Laura Franz, second from right. Right, Maluleke meets with NYSUT officers at the union's Latham headquarters. From left, Vice President Paul Pecorale, President Andy Pallotta and Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham.



Union members say Foundation Aid must be funded

Members of NYSUT local unions are at the table as the state Senate convenes a series of roundtable discussions in October and November on Foundation Aid school funding. The events will culminate in a public hearing Dec. 3 in New York City.

The Senate's Education and Budget and Revenue committees, chaired by Sen. Shelley Mayer, D-Yonkers, and Sen. Brian Benjamin, D-Manhattan, respectively, are holding joint discussions.

The roundtables started Oct. 16 in the Hudson Valley. They continue Oct. 18 in Buffalo; Oct. 29 in Syracuse; Nov. 13 on Long Island; and Nov. 19 in Queens.

NYSUT has maintained that the 2007 Foundation Aid formula, which allocates state aid based on need, was a significant policy achievement, but that it has not been fully funded since the recession of 2009.

"The problem is the lack of funding," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "If fully funded, the Foundation Aid formula would work, but it has never been close to fully funded."

Schumer calls for action on teacher shortage, student debt crisis

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

As the state's teacher shortage deepens, U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer joined with educators and union leaders in Rochester to urge expansion of student loan debt relief and recruitment and retention programs.

"We have to do this," Schumer said. "We're short of teachers as the school year begins ... and the shortage is getting worse."

The New York Democrat said Congress must force U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to spend all of the money allocated to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program the way the law was intended. "Secretary DeVos — who everyone knows is anti-public education — has spent only 1 percent of the PSLF funding," Schumer said. "One percent — that's incredible."

Under the bipartisan law enacted in 2007, borrowers are eligible for federal loan forgiveness after making 10 years of on-time payments. Schumer said DeVos and her department have unfairly denied loan forgiveness to thousands of eligible public servants, citing a variety of shameful, technical excuses.

Schumer introduced Brighton physics teacher Adam Eck, who along with his wife Courtney, also a teacher, were denied public service loan forgiveness because they had consolidated their loans.

"We just kept getting reasons — one after another — saying why we didn't qualify," Eck said. "I've been paying for over 23 years, and my wife and I still have over \$140,000 in student loans and probably won't be able to retire when we are eligible."

While it's been a difficult financial road, Eck said he doesn't regret the path he chose because he loves

teaching. "My friends say, 'Why don't you take your degrees in math and physics and go double your salary elsewhere?'" Eck said. "I don't want to because I love what I do. ... I can't quit what I'm so passionate about."

To help people like the Ecks, Schumer is calling for Congress to pass the What You Can Do For Your Country Act, which would expand and speed up the PSLF program for public servants.

In addition, Schumer is urging Congress to reject the administration's proposed elimination of the Title II state grant program, which

provides New York \$147 million in funding for teacher recruitment and retention.

Schumer highlighted NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching initiative, warning that while thousands of teachers are retiring, enrollment in teacher prep programs has plummeted. He also noted that an estimated 40 percent of teachers leave the profession in five years.

"Most of them leave, not because they don't love teaching, but because of economic and financial reasons," Schumer said.



Brighton TA's Adam Eck explains how he and his wife Courtney, also a teacher, still have more than \$140,000 in student loan debt. Looking on is U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer.

PROVIDED

Union-backed program aims to help members get out of debt



Student loans are intimidating and confusing. With dozens of loan types and more than 100 repayment solutions, just knowing if you're doing the right thing is difficult.

Fortunately for NYSUT members, their union is here to help them understand their options and get loan counseling that serves their best long-term interests.

NYSUT has partnered with Cambridge Credit Counseling, a

non-profit debt relief agency, with a mission to help members get out of debt fast and give them the support they need to stay debt-free forever.

Cambridge Credit Counseling offers NYSUT members several ways to get immediate student loan help:

- A series of in-person student debt workshops across the state, where members can meet with a student loan counselor to help understand Teacher Loan

Cancellation and Public Service Loan Forgiveness programs and get free access to student loan management tools;

- An online portal available at a significantly discounted rate, where members can input their student loan data and get a personalized plan; and
 - Access to Cambridge's student loan counselors to help members through the process.
- For more information, visit studentloans.NYSUT.org.

Ransomware attacks on the rise

By Kara Smith

ksmith@nysutmail.org

It cost the Syracuse City School District \$50,000. Rockville Centre schools shelled out \$80,000. Monroe-Woodbury, Orange County's largest district, was forced to cancel its first day of classes.

Ransomware attacks are on the rise. And school districts are prime targets, due to the rich trove of personal information they house, and budget constraints that can hamper their ability to fend off digital intruders.

This year alone hackers victimized at least four New York State school districts.

Syracuse City schools still haven't fully recovered from a July ransomware attack. Although restoring

payroll was a priority, members who attended summer professional development workshops are still awaiting reimbursement due to system lags.

"We can only log into our employee self-service portal to check paystubs, sick bank accruals and other information, while we're in the school building," said Bill Scott, president of the Syracuse Teachers Association.

"Before we could access it from home."

The prevalence of ransomware attacks is making many school staffers ask themselves: What can we do to help keep our system safe?

Knowledge is power

One of the best defenses is knowing how ransomware attacks occur.

"It's often a people problem rather than a tech problem," said NYSUT Chief Information Officer Donna O'Leary, who heads the union's Information Technology department.

A common cybercrime trick is visiting sites like LinkedIn to identify organization leaders, and using their names to farm an entire organization. "They email staff pretending to be that person and try to get others to respond, a process called phishing," she said noting that since the appeals come from a leader, and sound convincing, they sometimes are successful.

"By clicking on links or attachments in these messages a 'back door' can be opened that allows the attacker to place a ransomware on the local computer and beyond," said O'Leary.

Once ransomware is installed, the software ties up the computer system, forcing districts to either pay the ransom or figure out how to recover their data using decryption keys. Since the ransom is often less than the fix, many victims choose to pay.

"Awareness is key when it comes to cybersecurity," said NYSUT

President Andy Pallotta, whose office oversees the union's IT department.

"If you get an email that sounds off, make a quick phone call to the sender to make sure it's correct."

You or your IT Department should also be vigilant about updating your computer's software, Web browser and antivirus protection. And be wary of downloading informa-

tion off the Web, opening unfamiliar attachments or clicking on certain advertisements.

"Just visiting certain websites can put your system at risk for a ransomware attack," said O'Leary. "Nothing can replace vigilance."

"These days, the question is not if — but when — an attack will occur," said O'Leary.

At the federal level, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer recently announced his support for the DHS Cyber Hunt and Incident Response Teams Act, legislation that would create and fund specialized Department of Homeland Security teams to respond to, and prevent, ransomware attacks. The bill passed the House and Senate and awaits the president's signature.

To learn more about protecting yourself, and your district, from ransomware attacks, visit the Federal Trade Commission at [ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/ransomware](https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/ransomware).

Data Protection Reminders



Exercise caution before clicking on a link in an email or opening an attachment.



Lock workstations when leaving them unattended.



Establish strong passwords. Do not write them down and leave in an accessible location.



Use appropriate tools when handling data. Never send sensitive data through unencrypted email.



Do not establish accounts for students to access online resources without consulting with administration.

Source: [ricone.org](https://www.ricone.org)

Nine years without a contract

Despite that, Lawrence local perseveres

By Kara Smith
ksmith@nysutmail.org

When your cause is just, you persevere — no matter how long it takes. For the roughly 300 members of the Lawrence Teachers Association on Long Island, “persevering” has meant working without a contract for the past nine years.

Bogged down by a school board demanding draconian givebacks — including eliminating class size limits, requiring all secondary teachers to teach six classes instead of five, and having new hires make 20 percent less — the local has been forced to find new ways to get the board’s attention.

This fall the LTA launched a campaign of twice daily picketing outside the homes of the district’s seven school board members carrying placards that proclaim, in English and Spanish, “no contract for nine



Members of the Lawrence Teachers Association picket outside the home of a school board member. The local has been fighting draconian givebacks in its nine-year fight for a fair contract.

years, still working” and “invest in public education.”

Board members have been relatively quiet, although they did call the police. “One of the officers was a former student of one of our elementary teachers,” said Lori Skonberg, LTA president. “He gave her a hug.”

Member support remains strong

and enthusiastic. Picketing also took place during the district’s four back-to-school nights. “We’re planning to picket outside through November,” Skonberg said. “When the weather turns, we’ll move inside to picket board meetings, and other school events. We wear our union T-shirts daily.”

Since the beginning of the school year the board has refused to abide by the contract: “We currently have 31 grievances filed — 28 because the district knowingly exceeded our class size provision,” said Skonberg.

Although the Lawrence community is Long Island’s third wealthiest, the students who attend public school have a poverty rate of more than 70 percent. Of the more than 8,000 children living in the district, only about 2,800 attend public schools — 77 percent of those students are economically disadvantaged; 83 percent are students of color.

The district has slashed the physical education budget by more than two-thirds and has refused to invest in updated textbooks; fix leaky ceilings; or hire enough aides for special education students.

“It really shows where the board’s priorities lie,” Skonberg added.



Celebrando el legado Hispano

NYSUT wrapped up Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, with an event featuring music, authentic Spanish cuisine and a tribute to AFT Executive Vice President Evelyn DeJesus, inset.

DeJesus received an award from the Capital Region Labor Council for Latin American Advancement in honor of her work. Attendees were treated to performances by Los Triquis sin Fronteras, a Mexican dance group. At left, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham poses with a few of the group’s younger members.

The event also featured free books by Hispanic and Latino authors, including several selections in Spanish and English. The books were made possible through the union’s First Books initiative.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

Turning a moment into a movement

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

It takes more than brawn to make lasting change in a community. It takes planning and passion, and an esprit de corps that could very well be in your own local union.

“The union is a vehicle for change,” said Michelle Couture of the National Education Association — New Hampshire.

Couture noted that union members wanting to build community outreach are often overwhelmed by the “enormous amount of problems” that can be found where they live and work. She works to help members position their local union to provide help.

In a presentation at NYSUT’s annual Local Action Project, Couture and co-presenter Bill Shiebler, American Federation of Teachers, encouraged unions to narrow their interests. NEA and AFT are both national affiliates of NYSUT.

Participants expressed concerns about a range of problems.

From North Syracuse EA: hate and poverty.

From Port Washington TA: women’s reproductive rights and sexism.

From Lowville TA: climate change and dairy farmers in crisis.

Affordable child care, gun violence, and flooding were other concerns shared.

Shiebler gave out pointers to locals seeking to make their mark on a social justice issue:

■ **Judge the issue.**

Is it widely felt? Is it the right size for the union to take on? Does it build the union and its leaders?

■ **Identify potential partners.**

Can the union work with state, regional or community groups already addressing these social justice concerns? The Lion’s Club, the League of Women Voters, Knights of Columbus, Farm Bureau, and the National Organization for Women are a few examples of existing organizations locals may be able to partner with.

“Prioritize which partners to collaborate with,” said Shiebler, deputy

director of human rights and community relations.

He said local unions should examine the roots of potential partner organizations and find out if they have resources, including the ability to mobilize. Determine if they share the same values. If it looks like a good match, then consider sharing resources.

■ **Team up.**

Working with another, nearby local union can also strengthen social justice outreach.

■ **Localize the issue.**

World hunger can mean local food insecurity which can mean some students go without breakfast.

■ **Create an action plan.**



Providing focus and accountability helps union members understand their roles, and gives organizers the ability to say “no” to projects that do not fit the overall action plan.

NYSUT has several resources available to locals and members looking to broaden their social justice reach. For more information, visit nysut.org/socialjustice.



Jim Murray, Fonda Fultonville TA, and Bill Chase enjoy the NYSUT ‘book tasting’ event.

ANDREW WATSON

Celebrate inclusivity in education, literature

Educators and Capital District community members came together for a night of “conversation, celebration and inspiration” at a NYSUT LGBTQ Committee “book tasting.” The event, an opportunity to expose readers to different genres and get them excited about reading, featured a panel about how to make LGBTQ faculty and students feel safe and welcomed in school. Participants also received a free book.

Panelists stressed the importance of inclusivity. Trans student Aryn Bucci-Mooney said just seeing a triangle symbol on a teacher or counselor’s door, indicating that it is a safe space, “makes a huge difference” in helping LGBTQ students feel comfortable.

School librarians Alicia Abdul and Kristin Majkut, Albany Public School Teachers Association, make sure to include diverse authors and speakers. “The more we hear other voices, the better it is for everyone,” said Abdul.

The books at the event were purchased through a grant from former NYSUT Executive Vice President Catalina Fortino, which is earmarked to promote LGBTQ inclusivity across the state. Visit nysut.org to read more about the event.

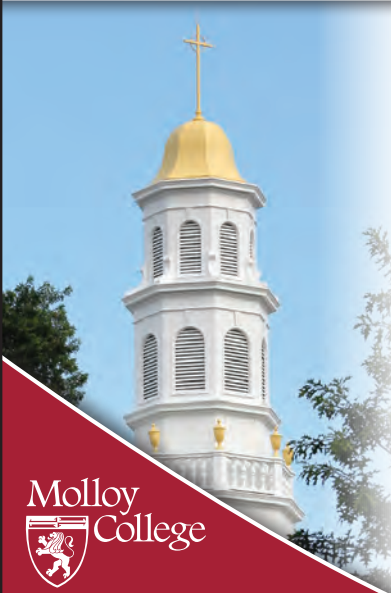
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Getting to know ... Harriet Culbreth

Harriet Ann Culbreth is a paraprofessional at the John James Audubon School No. 33 in Rochester. She was interviewed by her local president Angie Rivera of the Rochester Association of Paraprofessionals. Rivera is also a member of the NYSUT SRP Advisory Committee.

Tell me about your job and why you love what you do.

My job as a paraprofessional is to perform a variety of tasks that assist in the implementation of educational programs beneficial to our students. I supervise students in various settings. I have assisted with behavior management. I collect data. I prepare materials for instruction and support students one-to-one when needed.

I love the work I do because I am never working with students. I am never

bored because no two days are alike. I love when I see them grow academically and physically all year long.

How do you make a difference?

I make a difference every day when I strive to help students reach their potential. I help my students build their confidence, and show them how to be lifelong learners and how to advocate for themselves. I listen to them and encourage them to be the best they can be. Every child has great potential and I have high expectations for them. I show them respect and I let them know I care.

Tell me about your union involvement and how you got involved?

Both my parents were union

members. I grew up with the understanding of the value of the union-fighting for better wages, benefits and protecting our rights. As an active member I ran for the building rep position in my building. I am no longer the building rep, but I do support all union events. I am co-chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. Every opportunity I have, I speak about how important it is to be in the union and how much they help us.

Tell me about your community engagement, hobbies.

I volunteer and manage two community gardens. My husband and I are big into agriculture and we promote healthy eating. I am involved with the Harriet Tubman Ministry at my church. I enjoy music!



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I love festivals, singing and playing the guitar. I have a passion for gardening. Every year I participate in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk and the Labor Day parade.

Understanding cultural abilities

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

Write an innocuous word in the middle of a circle, then draw lines around it like the rays of the sun. On each of those lines, have students list a word they associate with the center word.

"Block" could elicit the words "city," "toy," "road," "schedule" or "cell." Some students are familiar with walking a city block; others played with blocks as toys. Cell block can mean a student may have an incarcerated parent or loved one.

"Choose a word to brainstorm. Find a word to get insight into kids," said Sandie Carner-Shafran, who led a NYSUT workshop for School-Related

Professionals on becoming familiar with students' cultural abilities and associations to enhance classroom learning.

The workshop was one of dozens held during the annual SRP Leadership Conference in Saratoga Springs last month.

"Focus on what students know instead of what they don't know," said Carner-Shafran, who represents SRPs on NYSUT's Board of Directors.

Frances Rutigliano, co-president of the Clarkstown Teaching Assistants Association, said her school has students from India, Guatemala and Ecuador. She learned that in some cultures there is not as much respect for women, so she spent time talking with the class as a whole about respect for culture and for gender. In

another culture, girls are more submissive, so Rutigliano devoted time to working with students on building self esteem and setting boundaries.

"Talk to the whole group. Don't single out students," she said.

The SRPs examined their own explicit and implicit (unconscious) biases, and were shown how advertising, societal interpretation, and exposure can develop ingrained biases.

Biases extend beyond ethnicity. Social class, disability, LGBTQ, divorced parents, and gender can all generate bias.

SRPs were encouraged to put up posters in classrooms that look like students in class; celebrate a mix of holidays; share different food; and have relatives come into class for cultural events.



Share and win

Have something awesome planned for SRP Recognition Day? We want to hear all about it. Email your photos and information about your celebration and be entered to win a two-for-one for the 2020 SRP Leadership Conference Oct. 23-25 in Saratoga Springs. Winners will also have their event featured in an upcoming issue of *NYSUT United*.

To enter, email Leslie Fottrell at lfottrel@nysutmail.org by Dec. 10.

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ELT courses offer chance to learn from the best

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

Special education math teacher Joanna Krul is always looking for ways to make abstract concepts more concrete.

Her secret weapon: NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust.

As she starts her fifth year of teaching at Hewlett High School, Krul credits a long list of ELT courses, and Long Island instructor Randi Azar, with inspiring her to try a number of innovative lessons — and getting great results.

"Typically students in my self-contained class have struggled with math for a long time," said Krul, a member of the Hewlett Woodmere Faculty Association. "My goal is to get students engaged and actually enjoy doing math."

ELT's "Mediated Learning" course proved to be a catalyst, Krul said. "With all the nice weather we've had, I came up with a hands-on lesson that would get students outside — moving and creating." The objective was

to find the height of a tree using similar triangles.

"For a not-so-math-savvy person, similar triangles have corresponding side lengths in proportion," Krul explained. On the Geometry Regents, students need to be able to find a missing side of a triangle, given a similar triangle with the corresponding sides.

Using additional strategies from "Activating a Motivated and Engaged Brain" and "MAGIC" ELT courses, Krul created a project-based lesson where students would have to find the height of a tree given that the tree's shadow is so many feet long and at the same time a five-foot tall person's shadow is a certain length.

Students loved the hands-on team activity. "It was the culmination of so many things I learned from ELT," Krul said. "It was amazing!"

Turning abstract ideas into concrete activities enables students to experience a difficult concept so they can better understand it, Azar said. "The excitement of engagement helps to store the learning into long-term memory."

In addition to sparking creative lessons, Krul said the ELT courses have helped her to earn thousands more each year since her local union contract provides



High school math students use shadows to determine the height of a tree. The hands-on project engaged even the most reluctant students.

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compensation for her post-master's level learning. "I'll be at +75 credits when I finish two courses this fall," she said, noting all but one course was through ELT.

ELT courses are considerably less expensive than typical graduate courses, Krul noted. "They're always high-quality, taught by dynamic, experienced teachers," she said. The classes are also a great way to connect with area educators.

"I'm so grateful for ELT classes and Randi in particular," Krul said.

Azar, who retired after 33 years of teaching in Lawrence and is now starting her 17th year as a substitute teacher, loves to hear from her ELT participants about how courses have helped improve their teaching techniques.

"Our courses are constantly updated and responsive to what members need," Azar said. "That's my dream to hear how well things are working in the classroom."



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Special education math teacher Joanna Krul, left, has taken several NYSUT Education & Learning Trust courses with longtime instructor Randi Azar.

ELT
nysut Education & Learning Trust

Free seminars for new members

NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust offers courses for undergraduate, graduate and in-service credit. Offerings can help you meet certification requirements, obtain new certificate titles and earn Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) hours.

As part of the union's Next Generation NYSUT initiative, educators who are new NYSUT members are eligible for a free 5-hour online seminar. New member School-Related Professionals are also eligible for a free online SRP seminar. NYSUT members in their first five years on the job can save 50 percent off an 8-hour stand-alone seminar.

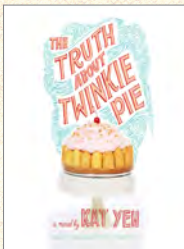
All NYSUT members receive discounts on ELT courses. For more, go to elt.nysut.org.

The Truth about Twinkie Pie

By Kat Yeh

Recommended

by: Alice A. Robinson, West Babylon TA, school librarian



Recommended for: middle school (ages 12 and older)

Why I chose this book: Family relationships are sometimes fractured and sibling rivalry abounds. The lovable characters in this book will keep readers engaged in a story about families. Gigi, the main character, has relocated from South Carolina to Long Island, NY, in order to attend a better school. Her school crushes and mysterious upbringing make this book very captivating.

How teachers can use it: Rich discussions and debates can be held in the classroom on many topics: urban vs. suburban life; rich vs. poor; private school vs. public school; personal relationships; school funding; and mutual understanding and forgiving.

What I like best: I particularly admire how protective junior high school drop-out DiDi is of her 12-year old sister and how she wants the best for her. She even put her dreams on hold to be a mother figure to brilliant Gigi. Despite not having their mom around, DiDi spun stories about her to keep her memory at the forefront of their lives. There is a surprising twist at the end of the book, which gives credence to the popular expression "confession is good for the soul." Some truths are better off being revealed.

About the author: Before becoming an author Kat Yeh worked in advertising and sports marketing. Visit katyeh.com for more.

"Check it Out" features books recommended to teachers and parents by school librarians and other educators. Have a recommendation? Send suggestions, along with your name and local union, to lfrenett@nysutmail.org.

Summit highlights need for recruitment, retention

By Sylvia Saunders
ssauder@nysutmail.org

An urgent call for a more diverse teaching workforce was front and center at NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching summit in Yonkers, as students, educators, community activists and state policymakers explored ways to make that happen.

"New York State's student demographics are changing but our education workforce is not keeping up," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. While 43 percent of students statewide are Hispanic/Latino or African-American, just 16 percent of the teachers are.

Yonkers Federation of Teachers President Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, who co-hosted the summit with DiBrango, said the union is working to expand the district's "Grow Your Own" program to convince promising Yonkers students to become educators and come back home for their career. She asked how many teachers in the audience were

Yonkers natives and many hands went up. "We're making progress but we still have a long way to go," Rosado-Ciriello said. In Yonkers, 77 percent of the students are Hispanic/Latino or African-American, while only 26 percent of the teachers are.

DiBrango said the union's initiative is aimed at elevating the profession and encouraging students and career-changers from all backgrounds to take a look at teaching.

She noted enrollment in New York's teacher preparation programs has declined 53 percent since 2009.

"That's scary," DiBrango said. "We need teachers in the pipeline."

The statewide union is also focusing on beefing up support for educators early in their career. "We want to work on retention just as much as recruiting," DiBrango said. "Those first five years are tough."

The summit, which was the sixth in a series of events around the state, was a who's who gathering of elected officials. Those voicing their support for the initiative included Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins; Senate Education

Committee Chair Shelley Mayer; Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano; and other local elected officials.

After working in small group breakout discussions on how to elevate the profession and break down barriers for entry, Yonkers student Jazmilya Jimenez said the summit definitely made her think more seriously about becoming a teacher. She suggested expansion of programs where high school students tutor and mentor elementary students.

Aalyssa Martinez, a junior at Gorton High School, said the event was inspiring and suggested extending the idea to offer sessions on becoming a special education teacher, or other subject areas.

As she reported out on her table's discussion, Martinez looked out in the audience and gave a big shout out to her former sixth grade teacher. "Miss Murray was one of my faves," she said.

After the program, the two got together for a big hug.

"It makes you feel so good when students come back and tell you what a difference you made," said Brigid (Murray) Arpa. "There's really nothing better."

The next summit is scheduled for Nov. 21 on Long Island.



Yonkers FT's Brigid Arpa and former student Aalyssa Martinez reunite at NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching summit. Martinez says she will never forget her sixth grade teacher and how encouraging she has always been.

Students take the lead: Rethinking parent-teacher conferences

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

In a move to boost family engagement and student responsibility, the Troy Teachers Association is one of several local unions around the state experimenting with student-led conferences. Rather than the traditional parent-teacher conference, the student takes center stage — with the teacher providing support as needed.

It feels more like a “show and tell” presentation than a student progress meeting.

“It’s a big change,” said Ann Marie Jabour, a teacher at Troy’s School 2. “After 30 years of teaching, letting go of the control can be difficult — but the power in the student-led conference is incredible.”

“It’s nice to hear directly from your child, to see what school is like from her point of view,” said Queen Daniels, a fifth-grade parent and teaching assistant at the school. “I especially like how she sets clear goals and we talk about what she needs to work on.”

With training from NYSUT’s Research and Educational Services Department and a family engagement grant from the National Education Association, Troy teachers piloted the project on a voluntary basis starting with just a few students in each class. This year teachers will be doing it with their whole class.

“We learned it’s important that teachers are given enough time to prepare and practice with the kids,” Jabour said. It’s also helpful to have a uniform conference agenda and reflection sheet, plus a clear



Teacher Gabby Panganiban, a member of the Troy TA; fifth grader Queen Daniels and her mother, also named Queen, show what a student-led parent-teacher conference looks like. Troy is among a growing number of districts attempting unique approaches to improve family engagement.

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sense of what kind of student work samples should be included.

While formats can vary based on grade level and local needs, Troy’s student-led conferences look like this: Students follow a set agenda, sharing work samples and appropriate test information. They talk about their favorite subjects and areas where they may be weak. They also discuss any behavior or attitude issues — both positive and negative.

Students show family members items such as “exit tickets” which sum up what they learned in class or “sprints,” where they work to improve fluency with math activities like multiplication. In the end, the students wrap up with goal-setting and specifically detail what family members might be able to do at home to help them. Parents are given a chance to ask questions.

“I’ve been quite impressed with how students have handled themselves,” Jabour said. “They added important information (about their

learning) during their conference.

That helped us know we’re headed in the right direction.”

“The parents have been really receptive,” said Troy TA’s Shannon Comparetta. “You see a sense of pride from the child and a feeling that the student is taking ownership for their learning.”

Teachers agreed it can be a learning experience watching students interact with family members.

Comparetta noted the student-led format worked out well for a Spanish-speaking family, where the child essentially served as a translator.

“This program has been a wonderful and enlightening experience for our students and their families,” said Seth Cohen, the past Troy TA president who worked with NYSUT to get the program to School 2. “It not only showcases the student’s academic skills but gives them a chance to build some soft skills of communication. Our district’s motto is ‘Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Leaders’ and

this program is a fundamental testament to putting that into action.”

The student-led conferences are among several high-impact family engagement strategies linked to student learning that are being encouraged under the NYSUT program.

Massena Federation of Teachers, for example, has started family home visits to build strong family-school connections, and the Solway TA has implemented a family-friendly approach to setting learning goals and data sharing. Saranac Lake Central Schools TA is launching student-led conferences this school year.

“The goal is to give local unions and members the tools they need to improve student learning and build collaborative relationships among educators, families and community members,” said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. “We want to encourage partnerships where power and responsibility are shared.”

'Addiction is a disease, not a disgrace'

Union working to end the stigma

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

In the past several years, members of the Wappingers Congress of Teachers have tried to grapple with the loss of two educators — as well as students and graduates — to addiction.

"When you see that email: 'We regret to inform you ...' you are distraught. You are left speechless," said Pasquale Delli Carpini, union president. "Oh my God."

Some are upset they didn't notice the signs — or that they weren't sure what to do when they noticed their peers arriving late for school or being irritable.

"Shocking" is how Diane DiChiara, a special education English teacher,

described feeling about the death of a fellow teacher to addiction. She shook her head in dismay.

"You have to look in their eyes and see how distraught they are," Delli Carpini said of his colleagues.

In response to members' concerns, the WCT decided to reverse the hush-hush of shame that often accompanies life-threatening problems of alcoholism and addiction and speak out about what the diseases mean, how they affect families and what resources are available. In September, the local union, together with school administrators and the Council on Addiction Prevention and Education of Dutchess County, co-hosted a half-day conversation-changing assembly on the drug addiction epidemic.

The air was charged with facts and

emotion during speeches, a documentary and a series of workshops for 1,200 educators, administrators, union leaders, and state and community representatives.

"It's all about the stigma. We wanted to reduce the stigma, so people aren't afraid to get help," said DiChiara. That includes allowing educators to take the time they may need to enter treatment without fear of losing their job.

"It's become a dreaded disease," said Delli Carpini. "This is the kind of disease that knows no boundaries. It really can hit anyone."

"Addiction is a disease, not a disgrace," said a brave Sue DeCosta, who leaned on her husband Mike as they spoke to educators. Just nine days before, they lost

their 29-year-old son, Michael, a Wappingers graduate, to the disease after years of struggle. "It is a medical condition masquerading as a physical choice. It wrecks families."

Removing the stigma and shame can correct common misperceptions, she said. She noted that although she and her husband are active, involved parents who gave their four children many tools, they had not made it safe for Michael to talk about his addiction.

When they first realized there was a problem, she said they had "no idea of the beast we just encountered."

In the hushed auditorium, clutching her prepared speech, DeCosta asked educators and school health professionals to understand the disease enough to suspend judgment of students who are struggling with addiction.

"No one is prepared to raise a child who becomes an addict," she said.

The language attached to the disease fuels more stigma, explained Elaine Trumpetto, executive director of CAPE of Dutchess County. Addicts are described as either "clean" or "dirty." Her organization has contracted with the Wappingers district for decades to provide information for educators and students on prevention, education, counseling and recovery services.

The addition of two districtwide programs geared specifically to employees — in 2018 and this year — was about taking action after two educators died from addiction.

Mike and Sue DeCosta lost their 29-year-old son, Michael, to drug addiction this year. They share their story to help end the stigma and correct common misperceptions.

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Shortly after the September assembly ended, teachers were already filling out surveys to help union organizers meet their needs for the next professional learning opportunity.

DiChiara said that with the union-led workshops, and training from the Employee Assistance Program for administrators, “We have changed our behaviors” in addressing addiction.

Change the narrative

Speaker John Shinholster of the Virginia McShin Foundation said schools should create an environment where a student grappling with addiction could feel free to openly talk to a teacher or school health care professional, “like you send a kid with a cold to the (school) nurse.

“Are we ready to be supportive? Are we ready to love them?” he asked.

The stigma surrounding other diseases like breast cancer and prostate cancer has been greatly reduced, he noted, by fundraising walks and open conversations. The same can be done for addiction.

Several speakers spoke about addiction as a disease that changes the pathways in the brain and makes it difficult for people to stop using the drugs. Stopping drugs and getting treatment can help reroute those pathways.

“We need to educate people about the impact (of drugs) on the brain — it changes the brain chemistry ... it’s now defined as a chronic brain disorder,” said Rena Finsmith, a special education social studies teacher, in a conversation before the assembly.

The impact on the family is also staggering — emotionally, mentally, financially and physically.

Wappingers educators screened “The Anonymous People,” a documentary on addiction and recovery, and heard from the filmmaker and an actor.



“The Anonymous People” is a feature documentary film about the 23.5 million Americans living in long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction. This September, the Wappingers Congress of Teachers screened the film for its members and hosted a panel discussion on addiction. The film is available to rent or purchase via several streaming services, including Amazon, iTunes, Google Play and Vimeo.

“This is our black plague,” said Kristen Johnston, an Emmy award-winning actress and advocate in recovery. Many speakers in the film and on stage talked about how society often imprisons addicts rather than provide recovery treatment.

The illness does not have a cure — but it has a solution.

“Addiction lives in darkness,” filmmaker Greg Williams told the group.

NYSUT and its local unions can help light the way to change that.

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta and Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham attended the emotional assembly.

“With the foundation you’ve laid, we will bring this around the state,” pledged a somber Pallotta.

Through NYSUT’s social justice work, the statewide union is making a 46-minute version of the film

available at no cost to every NYSUT local union across the state to screen.

“This may help our local leaders to start the conversation and continue to shine a light on the disease of

addiction,” Abraham said.

For more information, local leaders can contact Paul Webster, NYSUT director of community outreach, at pwebster@nysutmail.org.

RESOURCES

- NYSUT Social Services is a free, confidential union benefit offered to all NYSUT members, retired and in-service. We can help you utilize your Employee Assistance Program benefit or provide information and referrals for professional assistance in your community, including treatment options for addictive behaviors. Call 800-342-9810, ext. 6206 or email socsvcs@nysutmail.org.
- The American Federation of Teachers this year launched an online program, “Combating the Opioid Crisis,” for educators. Visit aftlearning.org/group/61.
- The New York State HOPEline provides referrals to treatment and prevention providers. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, call 877-8-HOPENY or text HOPENY (467369).
- The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services offers several resources including a #CombatAddiction program in conjunction with the State Education Department. Resources include tips for educators and families. For more info, visit combataddiction.ny.gov.

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Broome County social studies teacher named 2020 Teacher of the Year

By Matt Smith
msmith@nysutmail.org

Hugging the back roads in her signature bright blue Jeep, Maine-Endwell High School social studies teacher Rachel Murat was on a mission: her out-of-town guests were going to experience the true taste of her beloved Southern Tier community.

And so, naturally, that meant chicken spiedies.

"If I don't take you here," said Murat, as she pulled her Wrangler into the local spiedies joint, "I risk losing my 'Endwell card.' I can't let that happen."

Small chance.

Murat — named the 2020 New York State Teacher of the Year by the State Education Department — is an omnipresent figure around town. In fact, schools Superintendent Jason Van Fossen thinks of Murat as the district's "ambassador" to the community, adding what sets her apart is her impact on students outside her classroom's four walls.

In 2009, Murat and her students created the Maine-Endwell Assisting Local Spartans food pantry, which feeds as many as 150 kids and 100 families on a weekly basis. The impact has been far-reaching. Besides ensuring students come to school fed and ready to learn, the district has been able to better serve families in need by seeing kids in their home environment and addressing concerns that otherwise might have been missed.

"We have a culture here of community involvement, and Rachel



NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, left, congratulates 2020 New York State Teacher of the Year Rachel Murat, center, and finalists, from left, John Braun, Jeanne Lance, Laura Macey and Mary Howard.

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provides a great example of how we reach beyond the borders of the classroom to help students and those in need," said Patricia Sergent, president, Maine Endwell Teachers Association. "She is a stellar example of what we should be doing as educators."

Van Fossen said Murat is typically the first person to say: "How do we round up the troops to provide support to the community" in times of trouble, like when 100-year floods ravaged the area in 2005 and 2011.

"Rachel is a shining example of how we all should seek to impact our communities to build a better New York and world," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

"This is where my heart is. It's where I've grown up as an educator. It's where I've grown up as an adult," said Murat. "I've never felt supported anywhere the way I've felt supported here. By showing my love for this community, it helps (students) understand they can actually love this community instead of wanting

to fly the coop when they get out of high school. It's important to build the community up instead of tearing it down. If there's a problem, you need to be part of the solution."

Murat also created a Digital Citizenship program in the district, which teaches kids how to build and positively represent themselves online — something she says is especially important today as colleges and employers scour the social media pages of prospective students and employees. And, she serves as coordinator of the district's Mentoring Program, helping students better navigate the transition from middle to high school.

"Rachel's ability to wear different hats is what makes her an incredible educator," said April MacNamee, a social studies teacher at Maine-Endwell High School and a former student teacher under Murat. "Rachel is an innovator ... a community builder. She is an entrepreneur believe it or not. And she's a role model."

Senior Gabriella Calleo agrees.

"She really tries to incorporate everybody in the classroom, and makes sure everyone's opinions are voiced and heard. It opens up your learning experience and makes you want to learn more."

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango said Murat is an inspiration to new and prospective teachers. "Rachel's experience is a model for how fulfilling education can be for both teachers and their students."

"My students are not just kids in a classroom, they are human beings," said Murat. "If we are going to raise a generation of human beings that are kind, compassionate and empathetic, we need to model that and need them to understand sense of community, and that they can give back and make this a better place."

Congratulations

Also recognized by the State Education Department as 2020 Teacher of the Year finalists were NYSUT members:

John Braun, United Teachers of Northport, a science teacher at East Northport Middle School, Northport-East Northport Union Free School District.

Mary Howard, Grand Island TA, a sixth-grade teacher at Veronica E. Connor Middle School, Grand Island Central School District.

Jeanne Lance, Watervliet TA, a fourth-grade teacher at Watervliet Elementary School, Watervliet City School District.

Laura Macey, Schenectady Federation of Teachers, a culinary arts teacher at Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy, Schenectady City Schools.

NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund here to help



Since 2005, NYSUT has been supporting unionists reeling from the shock of the loss of family, home and property by distributing more than 4,200 grants through the union's Disaster Relief Fund.

The fund has helped union members whose lives and finances have been uprooted by fires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, ice storms and other traumas.

For some, the grant was the only money they received to help them find their way back from losses ranging from deep damage to total ruin of their homes. The fund itself is built by volunteer donations from NYSUT members, who have contributed more than \$2.6 million since the fund was established.

When two NYSUT members were killed a year ago in one of the deadliest transportation disasters in the U.S., the fund donated to help cover their children's future education costs.

The Disaster Relief Fund was there for members when Hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and when Hurricane Florence contributed to massive flooding in the Southern Tier.

"Our union is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with its members," said NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham, who oversees NYSUT's Disaster Relief Fund.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to the fund, donate online at nysut.org/disasterrelief or send a check payable to "NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund" to: NYSUT Headquarters, Attn: Disaster Relief, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110. NYSUT assumes 100 percent of the administrative costs.

A salute to those who serve

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

As a Schenectady high school senior in 1965, Vince Bianchi was issued a Vietnam War draft card with the low lottery number of 45. It is a number he said he has never forgotten.

Because he was going to college to become a teacher, he was granted a deferment. Others were not as fortunate.

"I had football buddies — guys I threw passes to — who didn't make it a year," he said, studying the ground on a sunny day in early autumn.

When Bianchi graduated from college, he secured a teaching job at Niskayuna High School. Again, he went to the draft board.

"I was fortunate enough to get a teaching deferment," he said.

Bianchi is still behind the safe walls of the high school, where he spent 33 years as a teacher and active member of the Niskayuna Teachers Association, and now works as a part-time student activities coordinator.

His colleague, retired Niskayuna history teacher Peter Warren, graduated high school in 1971 and had many friends who served in Vietnam. Both men expressed lingering anger at how the conflict was a class war, and created stark differences in fate.

As an educator for 36 years, Warren taught students about the controversial Vietnam War— where three Niskayuna high school graduates were among 58,200 soldiers killed. He had veterans of different wars come in to talk with students about war, foreign policy, insurgency and counter insurgency.

One day, he realized he wanted

to connect those lessons with the landscape in front of them.

"I had former students who were going off to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. The flags and the yellow ribbons following 9/11 had faded. It was business as usual in America," Warren said. "But my students were in harm's way serving their country."

He began a project to honor them by setting up photos of military alumni in the front of the school. Names were read over the public address system. But soon, the school ran out of space to continue the display.

"We have (more than) a dozen students who go into the service every year," Warren said. He came up with the idea of using a computerized scrolling system to be on permanent display.

A search was on for the name and military service branch of all students and alumni. Today, the electronic veterans honor roll recognizes 359 veterans and takes one hour to run through. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marines are all represented.

Nov. 11 is Veterans Day

For classroom resources including lesson plans, visit sharemylesson.com/collections/veterans-day.



The program also honors students who left school to fight in wars and did not graduate, but were later bestowed honorary diplomas through "Operation Recognition."

Outside the school, a tall American flag snaps in the autumn wind, rising above a veteran's memorial created in 2005. Each year the school community has a Memorial Day observance and honors the three graduates killed in action in Vietnam: Robert Cragin, Vernon Hovey and Richard Starkey.

Back indoors, a stilled American flag is positioned next to the monitor of names.

At Niskayuna High School, every day is Veterans Day.

"I'm in awe of the people who serve our country," said Bianchi.



Niskayuna Teachers Association members Vince Bianchi, right, and Peter Warren established a year-round tribute to alumni veterans from their Capital Region district.

EL-WISE NOISETTE

Helping keep schools clean and green

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

NYSUT health and safety activists are no strangers to the fact that schools can host health dangers from mold to improperly stored hazardous chemicals.

Thanks to a partnership between NYSUT and Clean, Green & Healthy Schools, a program of the state Department of Health, members will be able to access resources to improve their school environments.

The program's focused action plans assist members in identifying and dealing with troubling health and safety problems that may seem overwhelming to take on, and also provide steps to take preventive action in major areas of school environmental health.

"This provides a checklist, assessments and a road map for how to start functioning around these issues," said Veronica Foley, NYSUT health and safety specialist. Her goal is to get the CGHS program guide into the hands of union members serving on

school health and safety committees across New York.

While each school is required by law to have such a committee, Foley said they often do not meet with any regularity, and members sometimes do not know where to begin in order to address problems.

"We need to use what we already have," she said.

Indoor air quality, pest management, energy conservation, healthy water supplies, chemical hazards, mold and construction are some of the primary health and safety areas that affect school health — which in turn affects student health, absenteeism, and educator health and retention.

Green cleaning is a foundation of a clean environment, and NYSUT long advocated for the passage of the state's "green cleaning" bill that requires all schools to use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products.

There are many other complex environmental issues at schools. The DOH program helps health and safety

committees look at the host of elements involved in healthy schools.

Adults aren't the only ones raising alarms about school health and safety. Students are also becoming more outspoken about their concerns with the buildings and grounds of schools where they spend so much time in class and in after-school activities.

Michele Herdt, CGHS program director presented an overview of the program to NYSUT's Health and Safety Committee at its inaugural meeting of the 2019-20 school year. Schools that participate in the CGHS program will be provided resources, including information on grants.

Clean, Green & Healthy Schools

Did you know teachers and staff should not be responsible for transporting any type of hazardous material, including chemicals? That's just one tip available via the CGHS program website at health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/healthy_schools.



Post-9/11 outreach

An Oct. 28 event will be held at the United Federation of Teachers from 6-8 p.m. to alert teachers, students, faculty and staff to the health problems emerging as a result of being sent back to classrooms just one week after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City.

UFT President Michael Mulgrew and Department of Education officials are announcing a public outreach to contact former students and the 2,500 staff members who worked in the 29 schools located in the toxic zone. Borough of Manhattan Community College faculty and staff, represented by the Professional Staff Congress, and their students were also affected by the damaging fallout.

The World Trade Center Health program, administered by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, provides no-cost 9/11 related medical care to eligible victims.

To register for the Oct. 28 event being co-sponsored by the UFT and the New York City Department of Education, visit uft.org/wtc-forum-oct28.

Free trauma toolkit

First Book, Inc., in partnership with the Maryland State Education Association, has created a free, online Trauma Toolkit for educators. It was developed to support learning and development of students who are going through or have been through childhood and adolescent trauma.

Available at neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/trauma_toolkit.pdf, the toolkit was created by culling work from books, published papers and member feedback to examine how trauma affects learning.

The toolkit is designed to work in conjunction with First Book's *Healthy feelings and relationships* books and free reading guides, geared to social and emotional learning for pre-K-7th graders. Visit fbmarketplace.org/healthy-feelings-relationships.

Emergency training saves lives

While the first instinct in a catastrophe may be to run for safety, MaryJo Ginese learned that she could instead head for cover, check out the area of damage, and then possibly return and drag a person to safety.

"Maybe I could save somebody," said Ginese, a member of NYSUT's Health Care Professionals Council and vice president of special education at the United Federation of Teachers.

Ginese was recently trained at the UFT in Stop the Bleed, a national

awareness campaign and call-to-action set up to encourage bystanders to become trained to help in an emergency and during events with mass casualties.

"So many people die while waiting for trained personnel to show up," said Nancy Barth-Miller, a UFT nurse and member of the council. "You can serve as a lifesaver."

For more information on Stop the Bleed and to find a list of available classes, visit bleedingcontrol.org.



ANDREW WATSON

NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale and Health Care Professionals Council member Nancy Barth-Miller, UFT, learn about the Stop the Bleed program. Visit nysut.org for more info on the council's initiatives.

“Quotable”



Aisha Cook

I stand in solidarity with Chicago Teachers' Union. You know what it takes to educate children. Don't stop until you get it! #PutItInWriting @nysut @AFTunion (@alwaysaishacook)

Insulators_Local2

#WhenWednesday — When unions became a key force behind working people organizing, they helped bring about good wages, health care, paid sick leave and other rights to ensure working people can do their jobs and take care of their families. #unionstrong #unionproud (@InsulatorsL)

Lori McCambley

A big thank you to every para who has ever kept the halls safe at MPMS! They have one of the hardest jobs in the building. They form good relationships with some of our most challenging students and put their hearts on the line every day! #SFTParasRock (@lori81060)

jjdonkey

Framing the #CTUstrike as being about greed and money is intentionally disingenuous. Our schools deserve reasonable class sizes, social workers and nurses. This is about keeping our children safe and healthy in the place they spend the most time. (@jjdonkey)



QUESTIONS FOR...

Joan Portello

Associate professor, United University Professions — SUNY College of Optometry

1. You supervise grad students at the University Eye Center and see how changes in our habits and environment affect vision. Should educators and parents be concerned about increased screen time by adolescents and teens?

The short answer is “yes.” Using small screens at arm’s length or shorter for extended periods of time, or viewing screens at longer distances for long periods of time, increase the focusing and converging demands upon the eye, and our visual system.

Electronic devices can cause eyestrain and visual discomfort for many of us, including young children. People blink less and their eyes become less lubricated, causing long term structural damage.

Optometrists are able to look at the oil glands and cells that aid cellular regeneration. In many young people, (these) glands are diminished or eliminated. We believe this is caused by screen time. Fortunately, if caught early enough, some relief is possible.

2. How can undetected vision problems lead to issues in school?

Problems of eye tracking, ocular motility and binocular dysfunction can have effects on reading and our ability to learn and absorb information. The simple issues can cascade into a whole range of academic and social problems that could perhaps be circumvented. When dealing with young people, a comprehensive visual exam is always essential.

3. October was School Vision Health Month in New York. Do you work with school-based vision centers?

Vision and eye health in children have been related to academic performance and confidence building. The college is often asked to support eye screenings at schools and community centers to help provide an earlier identification of potential vision issues. SUNY College of Optometry and the University Eye Center invested in creating a new Center for Pediatric Eye Care which will open in early 2020 and focus on expanding our ability to care for the youngest patients.

4. What are some of the community service initiatives you participate in that improve access to health care?

Health care and eye care are about access and affordability. Eyes can reveal underlying health problems. For clinic patients who need financial assistance, help is available through various sources. Located in New York City, the UEC conducts more than 85 eye screenings across the boroughs through our community outreach program. The college also hosts an annual Health and Wellness Expo;

this year 1,000 people received free screenings for vision, dental care and podiatry.

5. You’re also active in your union. How did you come to serve as vice president of your UUP chapter?

I come from a family of union members. My father encouraged me to join a union because it benefits workers to keep checks and balances between employers and employees.

As an executive group we actively encourage new faculty to become part of the union. For one, they are benefitting from the progress our union has made from tenaciously pursuing and obtaining health insurance, pension plans and workplace benefits.

Second, the union is a resource that provides a buffer, advice and representation when a member has an issue with our employer.

I have been a member for 31 years! I encourage new faculty to be part of the team that binds us together.



VACATION RENTALS

QUALITY EUROPEAN VACATION rentals — Paris: www.rentals-paris.com; Lisbon: www.rentals-lisbon.com; Seville: www.rentals-seville.com. coopergl@gmail.com; 516-874-0474.

SAINT AUGUSTINE BEACH — Three-bedroom, two-bath condominium. NYSUT discount. rj@jobers.com. 716-830-4635.

BELLEAIR BEACH, FLORIDA — Two-bedroom, two-bathroom condominium located on the Gulf of Mexico. One month minimum rental. Contact tmarialco@hotmail.com.

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NORTH PORT, FLORIDA — Turnkey condo. \$164,900. Pat 716-572-7137.

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INSTRUCTION

VOLUNTEER — OPERATION SPLASH (Freeport). A nonprofit environmental group is looking for retired teachers to mentor school-aged education programs. Small stipend. Interested? Email operationsplash@optonline.net.

TRAVEL

TRAVEL TRENDS SPECIALS! Contact us about our group trips/tours. February & Easter school breaks for 2020. Examples: "Wonders of Portugal"; "French Riviera." Attention retirees!! Travel the South of France on AMA Waterways with 20% off for October 2020. Limited availability. Call now for all available trips. 631-724-3311 or info@traveltrendsny.com. Visit our website: www.traveltrendsny.com.

Peter McMahon

Respected educator and union leader Pete McMahon died Oct. 13; he was 75.

McMahon was a science teacher for nearly 40 years at Red Hook High School. He began his union career as a building representative, and was on the negotiating committee for the Red Hook Faculty Association from 1971 until his retirement. He was the local's vice president and served as Red Hook FA president for nearly 20 years.

A stalwart fighter on behalf of union political issues, McMahon served as a longtime VOTE-COPE coordinator for the Mid-Hudson region, and on NYSUT's statewide VOTE-COPE and Political Action committees. In 2015, he was honored with the NYSUT Retiree of the Year Award for his decades of union activism and commitment.

Irwin H. Polishook

A founding officer and long-time president of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, Irwin Polishook died Sept. 13; he was 84.

A scholar of colonial America, Polishook taught history at Hunter and Lehman Colleges. When PSC/CUNY was formed in 1972, he served as vice president; he became president in 1976.

A leading voice for unions in higher education, he served as chairman of the American Federation of Teachers Higher Education Program and Policy Council. He also served on the NYSUT Board of Directors and Executive Committee, on the Steering Committee of the NYC Municipal Labor Committee and held offices in the American Association of University Professors.

Lucille Swaim

A lifelong unionist and skilled negotiator, Lucille Swaim died July 1 at the age of 87. Swaim had a place at the table for every single contract negotiation in the United Federation of Teachers history from 1962 until her retirement in 2015.

"Lucille was a quiet hero," said UFT President Michael Mulgrew. "She put her heart, soul and intellect into helping generations of educators and UFT members. She helped build this union."

A professor of economics in the 1950s, she was an integral part of the teacher unionization movement, working with various teachers unions across the country.

In 2011, Swaim received "Not for Ourselves Alone": The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award, NYSUT's highest honor for female leaders.

Margaret "Peggy" Capell

Aug. 29, 2019

Wappingers Congress of Teachers

Gloria Counts | Aug. 29, 2019

Graham School Federation of Teachers

Warren E. Hoffmann

June 25, 2019

Middle Country Teachers Association

John T. Huntington

May 22, 2019

Teachers Retired in Florida

Gerald A. Wahlenmayer

Sept. 17, 2019

Orchard Park Teachers Association

Obituary submissions must include decedent's full name, union affiliation, date of death, and contact information for the person submitting the notice. Fax notices to 518-213-6415; send to Julie Malec, NYSUT United, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; or email jmalec@nysutmail.org.

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DID YOU KNOW?

NYSUT Retiree Services consultants are resources for retired members, retiree councils and in-service locals on NYSUT retiree matters.

Tracy Beatty, RC 1, 2, 3, 44
716-634-7132

Louise Ortman, RC 4, 46
716-664-7425

Peter Randazzo, RC 5, 6
585-454-5550

Anne Marie Voutsinas, RC 7, 8
315-431-4040

Ruth Shippee, RC 9, 10
518-783-7977

Mark Padgett, RC 11, 45
607-786-5742

Jennifer Shaad-Derby, RC 12, 13
518-783-7977

Ellen Pincus, RC 14, 15-16
914-592-4411

Claire Zatorski, RC 17, 18, 19
516-496-2035

Joan Perrini, RC 20, 21, 22, 23
631-273-8822

Judy D. Kalb, RC 43
561-994-4929, ext. 129

Members of RC 7 were among scores of union groups that marched in the Labor Day Parade at the NYS Fair in Syracuse.



PROVIDED



PROVIDED

Margie Brumfield, RC 5, moderated a Pre-Retirement panel discussion at the 2019 AFT TEACH conference in Washington, D.C.



PROVIDED

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

RC 5 & 6, Oct. 1
RSC: Peter Randazzo

RC 13, Oct. 3
RSC: Jennifer Shaad-Derby

RC 14-16, Oct. 16
RSC: Ellen Pincus

RC 17-23, Oct. 29
RSCs: Joan Perrini, Claire Zatorski

MEETING NOTICE

Contiguous At-Large meeting
ED 51-53, Oct. 24-25

NYSUT Vice President Paul Pecorale meets with RC 43 delegates in Albany. From left, Marsha Friedman, Bill Cea and RC 43 President Deb Peterson.

Retirees take action to attract future teachers

By Kara Smith
ksmith@nysutmail.org

Pat Puleo may have retired from teaching, but the former Yonkers Federation of Teachers president hasn't lost touch with her YFT in-service brothers and sisters. In October, she was on hand for the Yonkers Take a Look at Teaching Summit, held in conjunction with NYSUT and the YFT, headed by President Samantha Rosado-Ciriello. "It was a wonderful experience — there were so many different community groups attending," said Puleo.

She participated in a small group discussion table that included New York State Regent Roger Tilles, who voiced strong support for the union's involvement in teacher recruitment, particularly with regard to boosting diversity within the teaching ranks.

"Although Yonkers has greater teacher diversity than most districts, we have to continually work to maintain that," said Puleo.

A suggestion brainstormed at her table that she believes has strong potential, is enlisting retired teachers to mentor high school seniors who are interested in the teaching field. "We

could meet with them and explain what teaching is like and provide guidance," said Puleo, noting that Yonkers used to have a high school geared toward students interested in the teaching profession. "We already have retiree mentors for new teachers; this could be an offshoot."

Since many student attendees said

they appreciated having the opportunity to learn more about the teaching profession, having a retiree mentor — someone who has the time to help out and years of teaching experience — is a natural fit.

Florence McCue, ED 51-53 at-large director and Marty Sommer, RC 16, NYSUT PAC committee chair, also participated in the event.

NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching initiative is aimed at elevating the profession and encouraging students and career-changers from all backgrounds to consider teaching. The Yonkers summit was the sixth in a series of events held around the state.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

Yonkers retirees Florence McCue and Pat Puleo, both members of the NYSUT Board, are dedicated to helping attract future teachers to the profession. Here they pose with NYSUT EVP Jolene DiBrango, second from left, and YFT President Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, right.



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² Your application is subject to review and approval by MetLife based upon its underwriting rules.

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The MetLife Term Life Insurance Plan is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 7.61% of gross premiums for this program. The MetLife Disability Insurance Plan is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5% of gross premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. The Insurer pools the premiums of Member Benefits participants who are insured for the purposes of determining premium rates and accounting. Coverage outside of this plan may have rates and terms that are not the same as those obtainable through Member Benefits. The Insurer or Member Benefits may hold premium reserves that may be used to offset rate increases and/or fund such other expenses related to the plan as determined appropriate by Member Benefits. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title: NYSUT United
2. Publication Number: 008-749
3. Filing Date: September 30, 2019
4. Issue Frequency: One issue per month: September, November, January, March, May and June
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$15.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):
New York State United Teachers
800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
Contact Person: Becky vonWedel
Telephone (include area code): 518-213-6000
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):
New York State United Teachers
800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address):
New York State United Teachers
800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
Editor (Name and complete mailing address):
Clarisse Butler Banks
800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)
Full Name: New York State United Teachers Complete Mailing Address: 800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
Andrew Pallotta, President 800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None
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12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)
PS Form 3526, July 2014 [Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 4)] PSN: 7530-01-000-9931 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com.

13. Publication Title: NYSUT United
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September/October 2019

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		414,638	410,994
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	413,988	410,344
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®		
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)		
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		413,988	410,344
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541		
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541		
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)		
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	211	211
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		211	211
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		414,199	410,555
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		439	439
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		414,638	410,994
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		99.8%	99.8%

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

16. Electronic Copy Circulation

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies			
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)			
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)			
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)			

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Lyncourt Teachers Association



PROVIDED

The 55-member Lyncourt Teachers Association kicked off a new initiative to show support for the community and show union pride in action. Once per month the local hosts a #UnionSpiritDay where members (100 percent of whom have recommitted to the union) donate and wear their LTA T-shirts. The fundraisers allow the local, led by co-presidents Chenelle Horton and Margaret Delvecchio, and its members to show union solidarity and support for students, parents and the community. Funds collected during September were donated to the eighth-grade class.

North Syracuse Education Association

Hosting an annual retiree reception helps new retirees stay connected. That's one tip the 1,719-member North Syracuse Education Association learned as part of its work with NYSUT's Local Action Project.

At least four times a year, the local hosts Change for Charity, where it collects money for specific charities in the community such as ambulance and fire departments, Meals on Wheels and child welfare programs.

In another effort, members coordinate with school social workers and collect food for families in need for the holiday meal and for the winter break. The program was started by the North Syracuse Teaching Assistants, a local led by Mindy Bristol under the NSEA umbrella. All of the donated items are stored in the NSEA's union building; when other organizations use the building they make a donation and that money is also used for the food drive. Seventy families were provided for last year.

"It's stunning to see how much food is in that room," said Carol Goehner, NSEA second vice president. The local is led by John Kuryla.

Webutuck Teachers Association

The Webutuck Teachers Association has implemented new outreach programs for its union and for the community. The local launched a messenger program for one-on-one outreach to members. Each union messenger has about eight people they are in direct contact with for any union news or events; the 78-member local now has 100 percent membership.

In February, WTA helped students and families in this Dutchess County rural, high-poverty district by setting up a shopping experience for students with gently used toys, clothes, bike helmets and high chairs in the public Millerton library for Take Your Child to the Library Day. The local, led by Tammy Nethercott, is a 2019 graduate of NYSUT's Local Action Project.

At their fundraiser and community events, union members wear WTA T-shirts, put up banners and make sure to use their logo. "We were already doing things, but no one knew the WTA was doing it," said member Sarah Martin.

Schenectady Federation of Teachers

The Schenectady Federation of Teachers, led by Juliet Benaquisto, challenged members to share Twitter love for SRPs — and they delivered. Educators played "Para tag" and shared stories and photos (below) about SRPs who make their life better using the hashtag #SFTParasRock. The paraprofessional chapter, led by Patricia Zentko, is fighting for members to earn a living wage and in September entered into mediation with the district.

KUDOS!



It's an honor

Alison Silvestri, Hicksville Congress of Teachers, was selected as a Town of Oyster Bay "Women of Distinction Award" honoree for 2019. The award recognizes extraordinary women in the community for their contributions and achievements.

Jenna Stack, North Bellmore Teachers Association, and **Kerry McGarvey**, United Federation of Teachers, were accepted into the Apple Distinguished Educators Class of 2019. Out of thousands of applicants from around the world, only 550 educators were selected for the prestigious program.

In print

Rebecca Freimann, Clarkstown TA, has written *Family Tree: Rooted in Survival*. The book tells the true story of three family branches and their struggles to survive the horrors of the Holocaust. The independently published book is available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

"Kudos!" recognizes the accomplishments of NYSUT members. Have good news you'd like to share? Email united@nysutmail.org; include "Kudos!" in the subject line.

#SFTParasRock



Share news about your local's union or community events at united@nysutmail.org; include LIA in the subject line.

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There is still plenty of time to make your holiday purchases or travel plans utilizing the numerous benefits available from Member Benefits. Through our endorsed relationships, NYSUT members can save on Bose electronics; books and entertainment options; movie and theater tickets; concerts and sporting events; and much more.

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If you are looking for travel options, Orlando Employee Discounts offers NYSUT members up to a 30 percent savings on tickets to Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World and many other Orlando-area attractions; up to 60 percent off at select Orlando hotels; and a variety of hotel and theme park ticket travel packages.

If international travel is on your wish list, Grand Circle Travel and Overseas Adventure Travel offer NYSUT members deals on river cruises and other unforgettable excursions in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Antarctica and many other areas throughout the world. These trips offer the unique opportunity to become fully immersed in the culture of the region being visited.

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Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 to learn more about these endorsed programs along with many other savings opportunities available to NYSUT members.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



Stay tuned

The trustees, directors and staff of Member Benefits have heard your requests to offer more choices along with more local benefits you can use to save on everyday purchases.

We are pleased to inform you that Member Benefits is currently in the process of providing NYSUT members with access to more robust discount opportunities available on a local, regional and national basis. You will be hearing more about this in the upcoming weeks.

IT'S WHAT WE DO

Lisa Wood
Bethlehem Central TA

It's the time of year for slicing open sunset-colored butternut squash, peeling back the green sheaths of multi-colored corn stalks, and putting gardens to bed for winter's rest. Tending to these chores with middle schoolers is part of how teacher Lisa Wood expands the world of life science for students.



For more than a decade, she has volunteered to work with students at Bethlehem Middle School twice a week afterschool in a garden club. Slim string beans, carrots, leafy lettuce, tomatoes and radishes, along with potatoes and squash, are among the bounty growing here.

Lessons that come from the school's two gardens involve sustainability, recycling, life cycles, germination, reproduction of organisms, pollination and knowing where food comes from. Wood, a member of the Bethlehem Central Teachers Association, works in the garden with assistant principal Mark Warford, who runs the club. Retired teacher Ed Gill helps out as well.

Whether it's tilling the soil, planting the seeds, weeding, watering or harvesting, Wood says the students "do everything." They also take apart and reassemble drip lines used to water the plants in the big garden. Vegetables in the little garden are watered by hand. In the summer, parents, educators and students volunteer to help with watering and caring for the garden.

The work begins in March when students start growing seeds inside using grow lights. At the end of the growing season, they pull out plants and haul compost (some of it made in school, and some ordered from a local, organic farmer).

Volunteerism is also mixed in the soil. Some of the produce grown here is donated to a local food pantry. Students sell other produce at a local farmer's market, and use the proceeds to support the garden. They have been able to purchase a shed to store tools and a new mini greenhouse to expand the growing season.

Once a year the nascent gardeners contribute their goods to the school for Salad Day. All the school's students are treated to salads made from vegetables grown in the garden for their lunch.

This year, students are also starting a bird watch in conjunction with Cornell University and Project FeederWatch (feederwatch.org) to help scientists discover changes in bird populations. Bird houses have been set up in the garden and students will use binoculars and guidebooks to track and report their finds.

To read more about Wood and the garden club, visit nysut.org/itswhatwedo.

On the job and in the community, NYSUT members make a difference.



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- Our Contact Us page, which has answers to many of your most-asked questions;
- The Pension Payment Calendar, which is updated each calendar year;
- Our Forms page, where you can print forms including Direct Deposit and W-4P forms;
- Our Publications page, where you can download a variety of booklets and pamphlets, such as *What if I Work After Retirement?* and *A Guide*

In every issue, State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, administrative head of the State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) and trustee of the Common Retirement Fund, provides information on the System, which delivers retirement benefits to many NYSUT School-Related Professionals and other support staff. If you are an ERS member with a question of general interest, email united@nysutmail.org.

For immediate assistance, call the ERS Contact Center toll-free at 866-805-0990 or 518-474-7736 in the Capital District.

for Retirees; and

- Our Tax Services page, which can help with a variety of tax-related questions and issues, including obtaining a copy of your previous year's 1099-R tax statement or using our federal tax estimate calculator.

You can also subscribe to our blog, New York Retirement News (nyretirementnews.com), like us on Facebook (facebook.com/nyslrs), follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/nyslrs), and sign up for E-News, our email newsletter (osc.state.ny.us/retire/e-news/sign-up/index.php), for the latest ERS news and information.

You can also use our automated phone service, 24 hours a day, by calling 866-805-0990 (518-474-7736 in the Albany, New York area). You will be asked to verify your identity for security purposes. Once verified, you'll be able to get certain information about your account — such as Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) eligibility, your tax withholding status, and direct deposit instructions — without waiting to speak to a representative.

NYSUT ERS consultants

Most NYSUT School-Related Professionals* belong to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS). NYSUT ERS consultants are available to help SRP members navigate the retirement system. Consultants can answer questions, provide forms and help members contact the ERS. Contact any one of our consultants for assistance.

Trudi Davis • 914-592-4411
troers@nysutmail.org

Patti Lennon • 516-496-2035, ext. 324
nroers@nysutmail.org

*Note: Certified teaching assistants belong to the state Teachers' Retirement System (TRS).

Protecting yourself from fraud

Q: I recently got a phone call from someone claiming to be from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System. I got suspicious when they asked me to submit a payment over the phone, so I hung up. Was this a legitimate call?



come from legitimate government agencies. The activity is called "spoofing." Staying informed is your best defense. For current scam alerts, visit the NYS Division of Consumer Protection at dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection/ and click on "consumer alerts/recalls."

A: Your intuition was correct. NYSTRS will never request a payment over the phone. Payment requests will always be provided to you in writing. And, in the rare instance where they do call you to discuss owed money, NYSTRS will always follow the call up with a written confirmation of the details.

The NYS Division of Consumer Protection issued new consumer warnings about scammers who manipulate phone numbers in caller ID systems to make it look like calls

Q: What other steps can I take to protect my personal information?

A: Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

- As a general rule, don't include personal and/or sensitive information in emails. An exception would be when using a secure email system like the MyNYSTRS online portal. Also, don't open attachments in emails sent from people or groups you don't know. They could contain malicious files that install malware on your device.
- Never share your usernames or passwords and use passwords that are hard to guess. Using lower and uppercase letters, numbers and symbols boosts security. Lastly, when shopping online, only trust websites with the prefix "https." If the "s" at the end is missing, the site isn't using a secure protocol to encrypt data.

NYSUT TRS consultants

TRS members with questions may call your teacher-members on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board of Directors:

David Keefe • 516-741-1241
(Retiree Representative)

Sheila Sullivan Buck • 585-454-5550
sbuck@nysutmail.org

Beth Chetney • 315-431-4040
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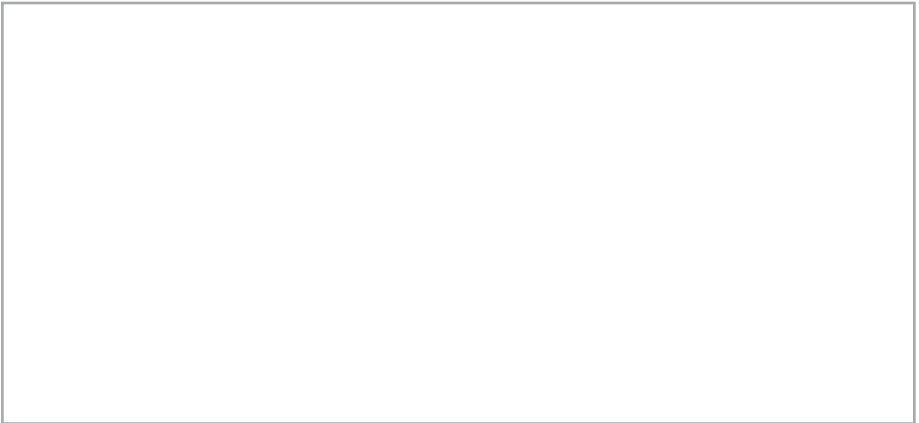
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5

Reasons You Should Get to Know Member Benefits

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses dozens of quality programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families. **To the right**, you'll find five of our most popular benefits that union members just like you participate in on a regular basis.

The Power of the Union

Unlike with purchasing products available to the general public, Member Benefits staff is ready to assist with any issues or concerns you may have with our endorsed programs. We call this the "**Power of the Union.**"

Learn more about our "**Fab Five**" along with dozens of other endorsed programs by visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling **800-626-8101**.

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