

NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

www.nysut.org | September/October 2017



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EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHAMPION:

an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.

— Rita F. Pierson, educator
1951–2013

NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS

800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110
518-213-6000 ■ 800-342-9810

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NYSUT United is a member publication of the AFT Communicators Network, 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

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT LATHAM, NY
ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICE
WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701

NYSUT United (ISSN 21587914) and www.nysut.org are official publications of New York State United Teachers. *NYSUT United* is published from September to June.

Advertising: For questions about advertising, email Lori DiVeglia at ldivegli@nysutmail.org or call 518-213-6000, ext. 6264 or 800-448-4ADS.

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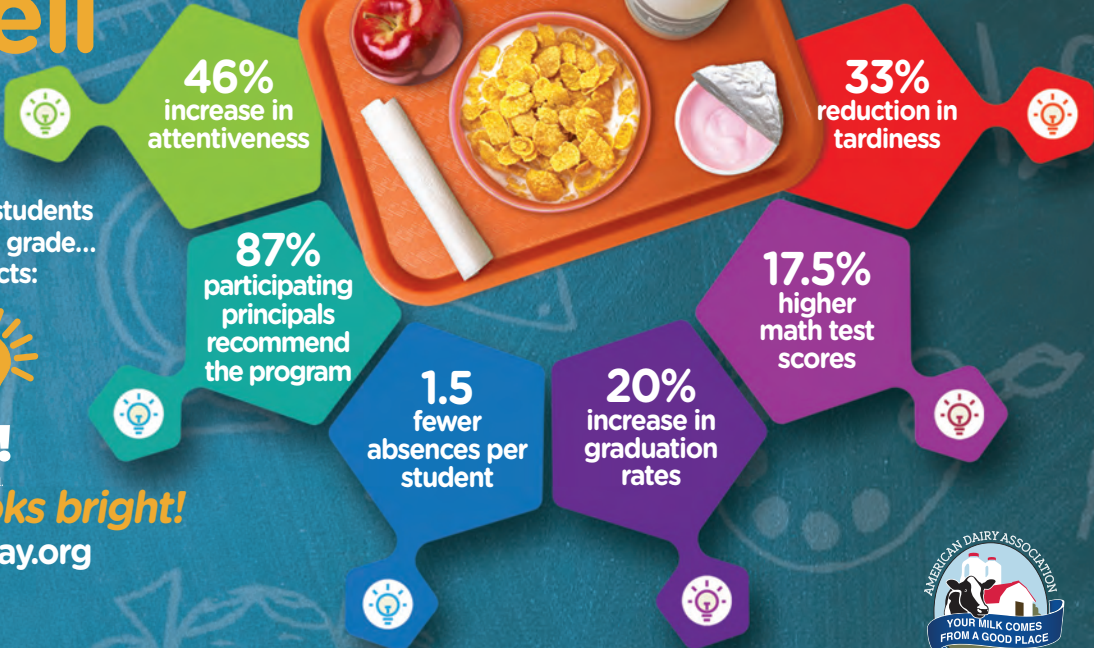


Breakfast After the Bell has graduated to the next level.

The first generation of Breakfast After the Bell students have navigated from kindergarten through 12th grade... and the benefits are piling up! Look at these facts:



His future looks bright!
breakfasteveryday.org



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POSTMASTER: New York Teacher, 52 Broadway, 12th floor, New York, NY 10004
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY
ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICE
WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701

New York Teacher/City Edition (ISSN 1074-0503) is an official publication of the United Federation of Teachers. United Federation of Teachers, 52 Broadway, New York, New York 10004. Published twice monthly in September and November. Monthly in October, March and April. Biweekly in December, January, February, May and June. With a special supplement in August.

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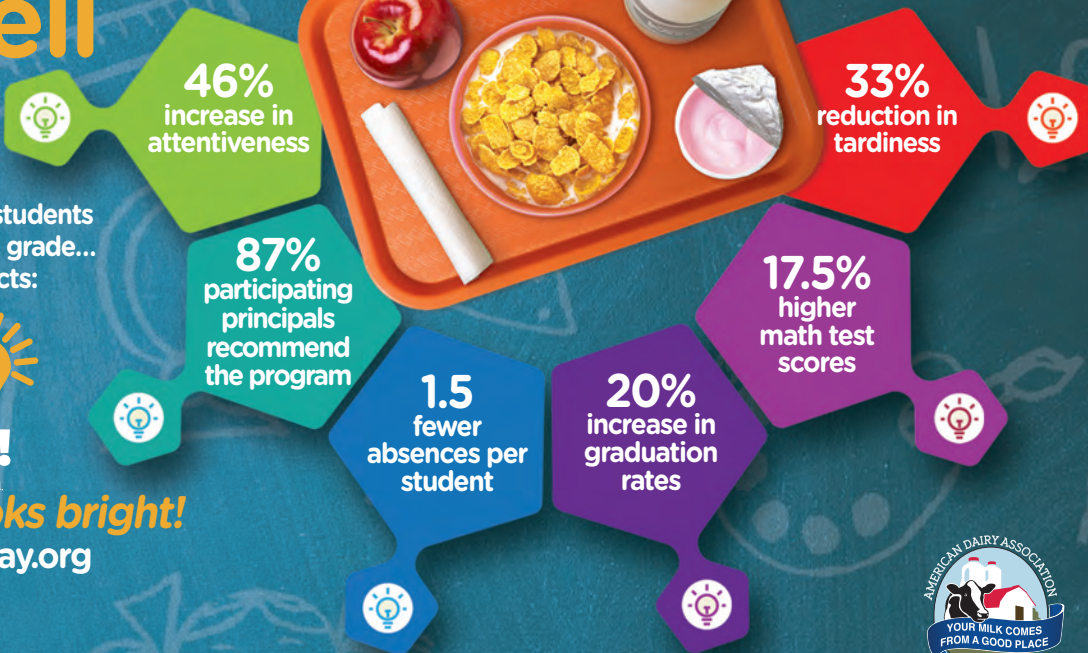


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Posters, brochures and fliers, oh my!

NYSUT's wide variety of more than two dozen history posters — including the newest Hispanic Heritage Month poster that honors civil rights

activist Sylvia Mendez — brochures for educators and parents, the popular *Buy American* guide, and bookmarks are available in our sleek new online Publications Ordering Catalog on nysut.org.

Best of all, limited quantities are FREE for NYSUT members and leaders. It's so easy: Browse the items by category, add items to your cart, log in and place your order electronically. Or, if you are in a hurry and like doing things yourself, publications can be downloaded in PDF format for printing from your own computer.

Place your order today at nysut.org/publications.

New seminars for SRPs



EL-WISE NOISETTE

From left, SRPs Annie McClintock and Cheryl Rockhill talk with NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango during ELT training this summer.

NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust offers three new seminars to its already extensive list of offerings geared toward School-Related Professionals: "5 Tips to Diffuse Difficult Behaviors in Today's Schools," "Cognitive Strategies and Engagement," and "Understanding Diversity: How Our Schools Are Changing."

Thanks to more than 30 SRP leaders who participated in a recent two-day "train-the-trainer" workshop, these important seminars are available to NYSUT SRP members statewide. For more about the train-the-trainer workshop, visit www.nysut.org/news/2017/june/nysut-expands-srp-training-options. To access a complete list of ELT seminars and courses, visit elt.nysut.org.

Teacher Tuesdays

Educators can take advantage of free learning sessions every Tuesday at an Apple store near you:

Encouraging creativity with GarageBand

This hands-on session is designed to show teachers how to create a project using GarageBand on iPad. You'll learn how to record, edit and mix, so you can engage students with what they're learning.



Discover how to create inspiring projects that let students express their creativity.

Collaborating with Keynote

Team up with other teachers and create an interactive project using Keynote and iPad. You'll discover how Keynote can help you and your students brainstorm ideas together, foster critical thinking and personalize learning.

Storytelling with iMovie

From building communication skills to encouraging collaboration, iMovie for iPad lets students create their own story and helps you teach in a visual way. Collaborate with other teachers as you learn, through a hands-on project, the basics of adding media, editing and more.

All three sessions are recommended for educators of students ages 5–18. To find out more about Teacher Tuesdays and other learning opportunities, visit apple.com/today.

Easing fear, anxiety

Share My Lesson and the National Education Association offer resources for teachers to help them address with students the recent racist and anti-Semitic events in Charlottesville, Va., and their aftermath.

Visit <https://sharemylesson.com/CharlottesvilleCurriculum> and www.nea.org/charlottesville for classroom lessons and resources.

Additionally, ColorinColorado.org, a website traditionally devoted to English language learners, has materials to support students who feel attacked. It can be applied to many scenarios where students are bullied: www.colorincolorado.org/article/8-tips-protect-ells-bullying-your-classroom-and-school.

The Anti-Defamation League has compiled resources as well: www.adl.org/blog/lessons-to-teach-and-learn-from-unite-the-right.

Educators are also sharing resources on social media using #CharlottesvilleCurriculum.



COMING UP

Sept. 11–12

NYS Board of Regents meets, Albany

Sept. 15–16

NYSUT Board of Directors meets, NYSUT headquarters, Latham



Oct. 14–29

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks take place at locations around the state. See page 23 for details.

Oct. 16–17

NYS Board of Regents meets, Albany

Oct. 20–22

SRP Leadership Conference, The Desmond, Albany

Oct. 22–26

AFL-CIO Convention, St. Louis, Mo.

Oct. 27–29

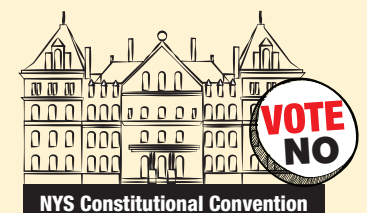
Community College Conference, Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs

Oct. 31

National Day of Action for Campus Equity

Nov. 7

Election Day. **Vote NO!** on state constitutional convention referendum.



This is what ORGANIZING looks like!



By NED HOSKIN

nhoskin@nysutmail.org

Dawn Thomas knocks on the door of a modest home in the Mohawk Valley.

The recent retiree and member of the Broadalbin-Perth Teachers Association is one among some five dozen NYSUT member organizers tasked with visiting other NYSUT members to talk about issues important to the union.

A man, the union member's husband, answers. Thomas asks if she can speak to his wife.

"I don't know if she wants to talk to you, she's busy," the man says.

Thomas reintroduces herself, and a female voice calls from within: "Come in! Come in!"

"She's on the couch," Thomas recalls, "and she's got a baby, like a preschooler, on her lap, taking a sliver out of his foot, and a baby crawling on the floor.

"I saw her and her family, and how life is, like it is for my family ... and she knows how important the union is in her life, and this whole constitutional convention thing. She knows that, even though she is taking a sliver out of the little guy's foot, she needs to make time for it. And she did.

"That's my favorite night, because that's what it should be about."

Thomas and the other organizers

are part of NYSUT's Education Summer program, the start of an intensive ongoing effort to make face-to-face connections with fellow union members. They spent six weeks this summer knocking on nearly a thousand doors — each.

"These member organizers are part of a new statewide network who are taking a lead role in the campaign to defend and promote our members' rights and fight for educational justice," says NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

The union's ultimate goal, he says, is to have a one-to-one conversation with every member.

The program continues into the fall and winter with a new crop of member organizers who will talk with more NYSUT members about the value of belonging to a union and to urge them to mobilize others.

Face-to-face contact is key, says Luis Grevely, a Schenectady Federation of Teachers member. It's more effective than emails or even phone calls. Even so, it can take a lot of work to get through to people and make that important connection, says Grevely, striding, GPS-enabled phone in hand, to his

next visit in the city's Mont Pleasant neighborhood. People aren't always trusting when there's a knock on the door, he says. He tries to convince them: "I'm not trying to sell you anything, I'm trying to help you! Help me, help you!"

Taking a brief break on a warm August afternoon when it seems no one is home, Gordon Kaedy, president of the Averill Park Teachers Association, says it's important for him, and for all the organizers, to make the effort to meet members, hear their concerns, talk about why the union matters and how it makes a real difference in

their lives.

"We have 280 members," he says of his local. "It might take me two years to get to every member, but you have to spend that time. That's the most important part of building that relationship, so people at least know what you're doing on their behalf. They know you're working, they know you're trying."



Below: Gordon Kaedy, president of the Averill Park TA, says it's important for him to meet every one of his local's members.



NED HOSKIN



Retirees take action

NYSUT retiree council leaders have mounted a “No Constitutional Convention” postcard campaign to reach tens of thousands of NYSUT retirees likely to vote NO on the Nov. 7 state constitutional convention referendum.

The campaign offers five different sample messages detailing the risks of a convention, including the eye-opening fact that a convention could result in diminished pensions or a state income tax imposed on pensions, on pre-addressed and stamped postcards.

“This member-to-member postcard campaign is a highly effective tool for educating

and mobilizing our retired NYSUT members to take action by educating others and to turn out the retiree vote,” said NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale. “NYSUT retirees, standing more than 200,000 strong, can help sway this vote in the right direction.”

Retiree leaders expect to send out nearly 25,000 postcards before the Nov. 7 vote. Contact NYSUT Retiree Services, 800-342-9810, if you and your retiree council would like to participate.

Some retiree councils have mounted twice-weekly phone banks as well. They plan to continue through Election Day.

■ NYSUT members, like Margie Brumfeld, above left, Margaret Codrington-Bruce, above right, and Dawn Thomas, bottom left, are among the dozens of member organizers (see photos elsewhere on these pages) who went door to door to visit their union colleagues and talk with them about the value of being in a union.



NED HOSKIN



TAKE ACTION

Here’s where to find resources and tools about why it’s important to vote NO on the constitutional convention referendum:

- Check out NoNewYorkConvention.org. The website’s resources can help NYSUT members and like-minded activists turn the tide against the Nov. 7 referendum.
- A toolkit for NYSUT members to help spread the word about the dangers of a constitutional convention are available at nysut.org/concon. Member login is required.
- NYSUT is part of a diverse coalition of more than 200 organizations from across the political spectrum united to defeat the constitutional convention. To see the list, visit nysut.org.



Some NYSUT locals are going above and beyond. They have contributed their portion of VOTE-COPE donations — members’ voluntary contributions to NYSUT’s political action fund — back to the statewide union, specifically to fight the proposed constitutional convention. They know what’s at stake.

To honor the locals that are making such a noteworthy financial commitment, NYSUT has established a Con Constitutional Convention Hall of Fame.

Inductees, so far, are:

- Hastings Teachers Association
- Newburgh Retired Teachers Chapter
- Iroquois Faculty Association
- Lewiston Porter United Teachers
- Orchard Park Teachers Association
- East Aurora Faculty Association
- Starpoint Teachers Association
- Alexander United Teachers Union

Nyack librarians beat back anti-union law firm

By Matt Smith
msmith@nysutmail.org

The new school year kicks off with a noteworthy gain for New York's labor movement.

Library workers in Nyack have voted to organize and affiliate with NYSUT.

"The challenges that confront labor are many," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "We will never stop fighting to improve the lives of working people, and despite being under attack, we continue to succeed as a result of our determination and

commitment to what's right."

Nyack library workers fought off a vicious anti-labor campaign waged by the Nyack Library Board of Directors, which hired Jackson Lewis, the notorious union-busting law firm, to try and defeat the organizing effort.

Using deception and fear, Jackson Lewis besieged library workers with anti-union missives "warning" of the "risks" of unionizing.

With support from concerned community members, staff was able to beat back the firm's relentless attack. Pivotal to the librarians' victory was a midsummer board meeting



PROVIDED

in which library workers and residents appeared in force to demand Jackson Lewis' firing.

"My co-workers and I have decided to form a union, which is our right," said Myra Starr, a long-time South Nyack resident and a bookkeeper at the library. "It's just appalling, especially in a place like Nyack, that my employer thinks it's acceptable to use my own tax money to fight us."

On July 24, workers voted overwhelmingly to unionize, and in

■ Nyack librarians gather to attend a library board meeting to tell trustees to stay out of their union vote.

August, the unit received certification from the National Labor Relations Board. The Nyack Staff Library Association will have some 50 members. Since the vote to unionize, neither the library nor Jackson Lewis has taken any action to challenge the outcome.

The union will now elect a bargaining team and prepare for its first negotiations.

Many CUNY adjuncts begin semester with job security

By Matt Smith
msmith@nysutmail.org

More than 1,000 adjunct faculty members at the City University of New York begin the fall semester with three-year appointments, bringing job security to educators who previously were employed only on a semester-to-semester basis.

The new provision — which, for the first time, provides adjuncts guaranteed income and prevents them from being dismissed without just cause — is a result of a contract ratified last year by the 27,000-member Professional Staff Congress, which represents CUNY faculty and staff.

The battle to secure the multi-year adjunct appointments was one of the union's most difficult during its bitter six-year contract fight with CUNY's administration. While PSC President Barbara Bowen characterized the effort as a "monumental struggle,"

she also said the win represents a "major change" that will finally begin to professionalize the treatment of adjuncts who, for far too long, have been exploited by CUNY's system of contingent employment.

To be considered by a department for a three-year appointment, adjuncts must have taught at least six credit hours per semester in the same department for 10 recent consecutive semesters.

Besides the guarantee of assignments, income and protection from termination without cause, adjuncts who receive the appointments also will be eligible for the same health benefits as full-time faculty.

The union said the provision would have a positive impact on the education of CUNY students since departments will be able to plan curriculum in advance and students will have the benefit of knowing their instructor will be working in the department for more than one semester.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION MEETING, NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS VACANCY, ELECTION DISTRICT 8

A vacancy exists on the NYSUT Board of Directors for the position of Director for Election District 8, which was created by the resignation of Andrew Voigt effective Aug. 7, 2017.

In accordance with the NYSUT Constitution, Article IX, §§4(a) and 4(b): "Directors representing Election Districts shall be elected on an roll call vote by a majority of ballots cast by the representatives from their respective constituencies... [and in]... the event of a vacancy in the position of Election District Director, the President shall call a special election to elect a successor who shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term."

The delegates and alternates of ED 8 are hereby notified that this vacancy will be filled by a Special Election to be held as follows:

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2017

Time: 6 – 8 p.m.

Place: Graziano's Restaurant
409 North Peterboro St.
Canastota, NY 13032

Pursuant to the NYSUT Constitution, Article IX, §4(b) and the approved NYSUT Campaign and Election Procedures, NYSUT members who were reported as elected delegates to the 2017 Representative Assembly representing the members of ED 8 will be eligible to vote in this Special Election. A reported alternate delegate may vote only in the absence of the delegate.

Nominations to fill this vacancy will be accepted in accordance with the Campaign and Election Procedures approved by the NYSUT

Board of Directors for Special Elections. In order to qualify as a candidate for this Special Election, a Nominating Petition must be fully completed and then signed by at least two (2) members from ED 8.

The completed and signed Nominating Petition must then be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee by the close of business (5 p.m.) on Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. Any member in good standing from a NYSUT local within ED 8 may be a candidate. Only in-service members in good standing from ED 8 may sign a candidate's Nominating Petition. Nominating Petitions are available by contacting the NYSUT Elections Committee at elections@nysutmail.org or by contacting the NYSUT Office of the President at 518-213-6000, ext. 6662.

At the Special Election Meeting, each candidate shall be given an opportunity to address the meeting for a period not to exceed three (3) minutes. The Special Election Meeting will remain in session until a successor director is elected.

The number of votes to which a local is entitled will be distributed as evenly as possible among the delegates from the local present and voting.

The candidate elected will serve as successor Election District Director immediately upon being elected at the Oct. 4, 2017 Special Election Meeting and continue to serve as the Successor Director to the conclusion of the 2020 Representative Assembly.

All elected delegates or their alternates reported for the 2017 NYSUT RA from ED 8 are requested to be present for this election.

NYSUT: Return teacher evals to local control

By **Sylvia Saunders**
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

No more tinkering or fixing. It's time to scrap the state's Annual Professional Performance Review law entirely — and return control to local school districts and teachers unions to develop their own evaluation plans.

"Using student test scores derived from a broken testing system to measure teachers is not only grossly unfair, it's inaccurate," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "This must change now."

As the new school year begins and we enter the third year of a four-year moratorium on the use of state grades 3–8 tests in teacher evaluation, NYSUT wants policymakers to develop a new state system that allows school districts and local unions to decide how to evaluate teachers.

The new system should:

- return teacher evaluations

to local control;

- eliminate the requirement for student performance to be a mandatory part of teacher evaluations; and
- strengthen professional practice.

The goals are at the heart of a series of resolutions approved unanimously this spring by delegates to NYSUT's Representative Assembly.

The resolutions note the current APPR law has created significant anxiety and controversy at the local level, over-emphasizing state standardized tests and sparking the largest opt-out movement in the nation. They also point out that the current data-driven law has been invalidated by both the courts and national researchers.

"NYSUT's legal team has already won court and arbitration battles exposing the fatal flaws of APPR and confirming the need to change this obnoxious evaluation system," one resolution states. "No other profession is subject to such a demeaning process of evaluation."



Join the fight to get rid of the current APPR

Go to NYSUT's Member Action Center, mac.nysut.org, and sign a petition pledging to join educators and parents in the fight to end the current APPR.

NYSUT's campaign will first get the word out to the Regents and the State Education Department, which are working this fall to devise recommendations for a new system. The federal government no longer requires the use of state standardized tests in teacher evaluations, so this gives states considerably more leeway to devise their own systems.

State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia has promised to take a slow and deliberative approach on APPR, with a workgroup including

teams of teachers and administrators.

She likened the process to diffusing a bomb: "This is going to be very careful work. Like in the movies when you see a bomb is there and somebody has a clipper and they're trying to decide whether to go red or green," she said.

NYSUT urges the Regents to develop a legislative proposal for the 2018 session to get rid of the current APPR and bring back a locally negotiated teacher evaluation system that focuses on strengthening professional practice.

NYSUT wants the Regents and Legislature to allow districts to develop an evaluation system that meets their needs.

"We're not against evaluations," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, the union's liaison with the Regents and SED. "But the time has come to reduce test anxiety for students and create a meaningful evaluation process that actually supports teachers and students."

Film tells cautionary tale about privatizing education

"**B**ackpack Full of Cash," a powerful new documentary film, offers an in-depth look into the very real perils of privatizing and defunding public education, and sounds a warning for New Yorkers. The film will be shown at 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 8 by the New York State Writers Institute at UAlbany's Page Hall. The screening is free and open to all.

Producers Vera Arnonow and Sarah Mondale, a former NYSUT member who also directed the 90-minute film, will lead a panel discussion following the screening.

NYSUT plans to sponsor additional screenings across the state this fall. Watch nysut.org for details.

The film, narrated by actor Matt Damon, focuses primarily on cities that have experienced large-scale expansion of charter schools — Philadelphia, Nashville and New Orleans — the "hotspots," Mondale calls them.

"The film is a great discussion starter. It's a cautionary tale of where privatization of public education can

lead. People have reason to worry," she said. Mondale, a teacher whose parents were public school teachers in Minnesota, started work on "Backpack Full of Cash" after she saw the pro-charter propaganda film "Waiting for Superman."

"It made me mad," she said.

After securing much-needed donations and funding — "We all went into debt making this," Mondale said — "Backpack Full of Cash" is now making the rounds in states across the country.

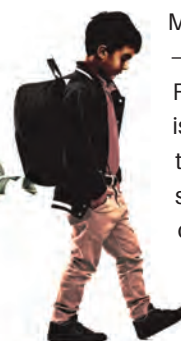
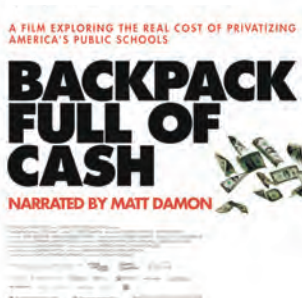
Mondale

was a member of the White Plains Teachers Association and taught French in middle school. She left the classroom earlier this year in order to meet the growing demand for screenings — about 500 requests at last count.

"It is so timely because of [U.S. Education Secretary] Betsy DeVos" and her privatization agenda, Mondale said.

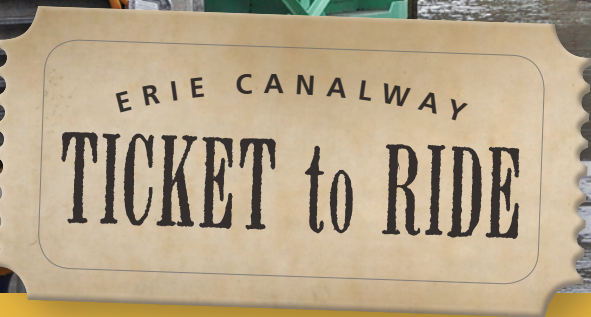
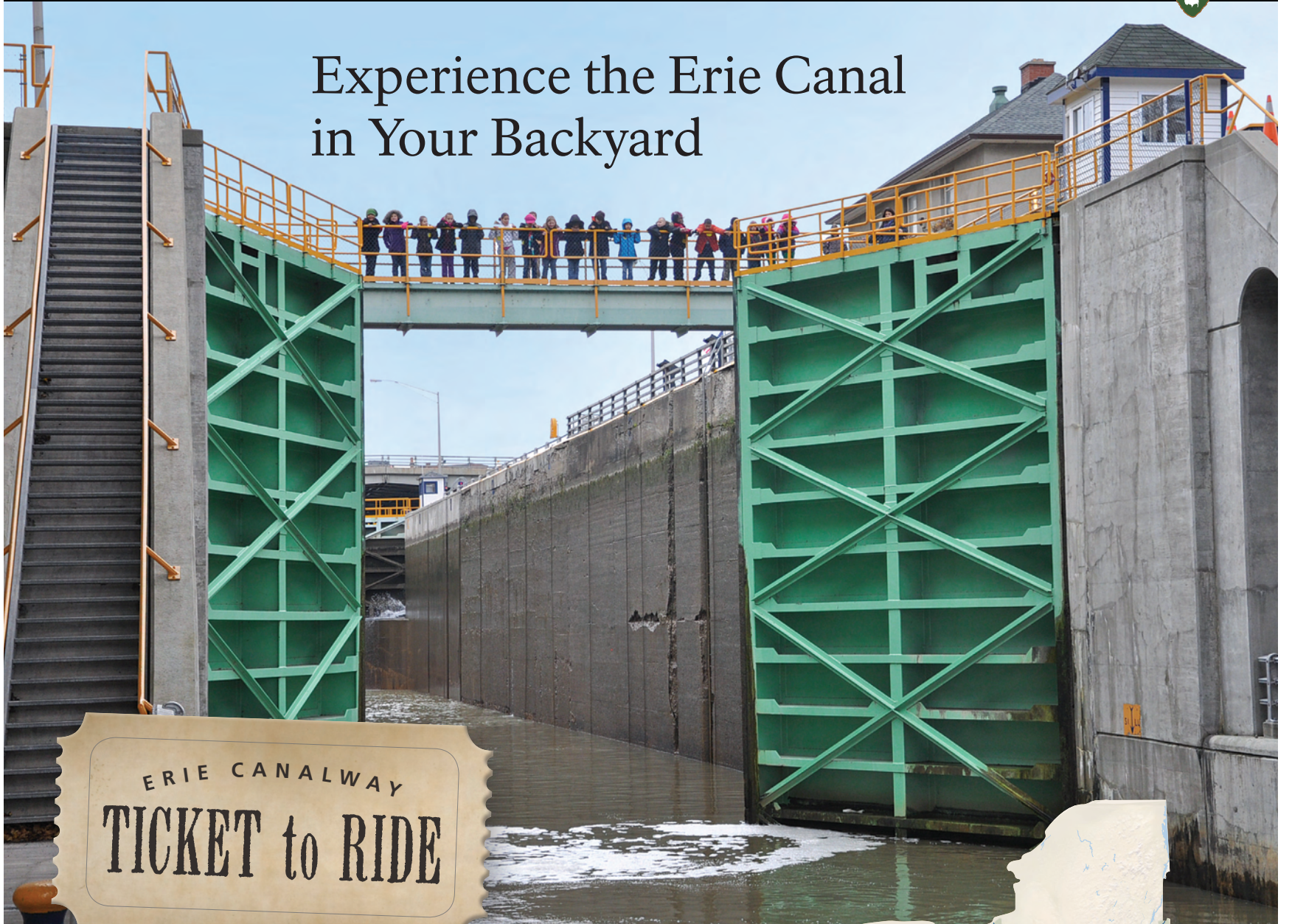
An accomplished filmmaker, Mondale directed and co-produced the award-winning PBS series, "School," a PBS prime-time film "Marcel Proust" and the Emmy award-winning "Asylum" and "Megamall."

For more information, visit www.backpackfullofcash.com.





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A beloved guidance counselor is accused of being part of a fraud to improve graduation rates.

The district, without proof, demands her resignation.

could
THIS
ever
HAPPEN to
YOU?

As a member of a NYSUT local union, you are entitled to free legal representation should you ever face discipline or discharge. More than 40 NYSUT attorneys stand ready to fight for any in-service member and their local, and our retirees. Here's how one member was helped. The story you are about to read is real. Any identifying information has been changed to protect the NYSUT member's identity.

The background

Jane Doe is a guidance counselor at a high school with one of the poorest student populations in New York State. One hundred percent of the children — every single one — qualifies for the free school lunch program. It pulls at her heart to see what so many of the kids experience — “couch-surfing” from place to place, spotty nutrition, missing parents, drugs, abuse — all of the pathologies of severe poverty.

Ms. Doe goes above and beyond to give students encouragement and opportunities. She picks them up if they are missing from school. She buys them small items they need. She does whatever she can to help; she is the rock and support for many.

For one gifted basketball player, Ms. Doe made a highlight film he used to earn a basketball scholarship. She made sure one of her students did not drop out of school when she became pregnant, and later was god-mother to the baby. One would think Ms. Doe should be recognized, applauded, maybe even promoted for her efforts.

The accusation

One day, bureaucrats in the district's central office notice a small uptick in the high school graduation rate. They look into the paperwork further and find that signatures from teachers were allegedly forged on several documents used in the summer school program so a student can secure enough credits to graduate. As guidance counselor, Ms. Doe receives the documents, signed by the summer school coordinator, the teacher (as far as she could tell), and the principal. After receiving the documents, Ms. Doe signs them and approves the credits.

With 20-20 hindsight, the district officials claim she should never have signed the forms and approved the summer credit. They charge Ms. Doe with negligently and fraudulently doing her job, say she must be in on the “fraud” and want her resignation. Ms. Doe protests, telling them she did not know that the signatures on the documents were not those of the teachers, that she can hardly be expected to investigate every signature on every document given to her, and that she is so busy she can not be expected to guarantee the accuracy of

every entry on every piece of paper she sees.

The district ignores common sense and proceeds with a 3020-a case to fire her. After filing the charges, the district asks her to a meeting to discuss the matter. She goes with her father and uncle, who is a lawyer, and is insulted and treated like a criminal. The district wants her to reveal her “co-conspirators.” She does not know what they are talking about; she can offer nothing. The district will not accept anything less than her resignation to settle the case.

For all her past dedication, all her concern for her students, all her efforts to help them succeed, this is what it comes down to — the district is going to fire her like she is a bad employee, and worse, a bad person.

Due process

Ms. Doe is entitled to a full evidentiary hearing because she has union representation, and access to a free attorney from NYSUT's legal department who specializes in these kinds of cases. NYSUT is not about to let the district get away with this. The union will show that Ms. Doe should be commended, not condemned, and that the district is shameful in proceeding with this case.

The facts are indeed brought out at the hearing: Ms. Doe is merely at the end of a distribution chain and receives the forms after they are signed by everyone else. The hearing officer herself repeatedly raises questions about what the district is trying to show. And then witness after witness — former students, parents of former students, former and present supervisors — testify about the extraordinary guidance counselor and person Ms. Doe really is. One former student testifies that Ms. Doe “always pushed me” to achieve; another says “she's always been there for me;” another says if it wasn't for Ms. Doe, she never would have graduated.

The hearing officer dismisses all the charges against Ms. Doe. The decision quotes at length the glowing testimony about Ms. Doe and holds that “the District cannot simply accuse: It must present proof.” The hearing officer notes “the testimony of the people who worked with Ms. Doe as a colleague or supervisor or student, including the District's witnesses, was that Ms. Doe was a hard-working, professional and diligent counselor, devoted to her students, who went the extra mile to help them be successful.”

Because of her rights as a union member, and her access to legal representation from NYSUT's legal team, Ms. Doe was completely exonerated and a terrible injustice was prevented. And students still have their wonderfully kind and dedicated counselor by their side.



PHOTOS:EL-WISE NOISETTE

WHY TEACH?

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

People kept telling Dharini Adhvaryu not to become a teacher. A promising biology major at a highly competitive private college, she was always intent on studying science — even attending a DNA summer camp while in high school on Long Island. She always thought she'd become a researcher in botany, burying her head in her studies in the corner of a laboratory. But her dream changed after she started working as a teaching assistant in the college's freshman bio lab and found it incredibly rewarding. "I said to myself, 'Hey, the most satisfying day I have had all year was not when my experiment worked,

*I could be one scientist...
or I could be a teacher
and raise hundreds*

but when theirs did." When she shared her plans with advisers, she was stunned by their reaction. "They told me I had too much potential to go into teaching ... That I could do so much more with what I knew." She found that advice really sad and frustrating. "If we know so much and we're good at what we do, why shouldn't we share that?" she said. "Why shouldn't we be inspiring the next

generation and the next one after that to love learning and perhaps be scientists?" It was then she realized why teaching was her calling: "I could be one scientist — or I could be a teacher and I could raise hundreds." After completing her master's degree in teaching at Union Graduate College and working part-time as a science teacher at Schenectady High School, Adhvaryu is excited to start her first full-time teaching job this fall

■ This fall, Dharini Adhvaryu begins her first year teaching biology full-time to ninth-graders at Lansingburgh High School. Watch her talk about her calling to the teaching profession when she spoke at a TEACH-NY forum: <http://bit.ly/2ivD9yT>.



at Lansingburgh High School. "I just love the thrill of getting them to get it," Adhvaryu said. She is not alone in expressing great hope and optimism for the teaching profession. "In my culture, teachers are highly respected," Adhvaryu said. "My parents were so proud for me to become a teacher. If we as a society appreciate the work that teachers do, it will make the profession more rewarding and encourage more people to become teachers. It will make our impact even greater." In response to *NYSUT United's* story in June about the state's looming teacher shortage, educators told us why they entered the profession, why they still love teaching and what they would say to encourage new and future teachers.

Here are some excerpts:

"Positivity. There is no better way to impact the future of this nation than to be a role model for kids. Think of your best teachers, coaches or other adults — other than your parents — who have helped make you who you are today. Be one of those people and pay it forward."

— **Michael Struchen, Indian River Education Association**

"The most rewarding career you could ever choose ... teaching is a profession that is conducted through your heart. Join your union, be part of your union, participate in your union. It is the most important thing you can do for your career."

— **Jamy Brice-Hyde, Horseheads TA**

"It's a job you'll love to hate. You WILL make a difference in the lives you touch."

— **Karen Woodring, BOCES Educational Support Personnel Association**

"Every job is challenging! Being a teacher is a special challenge and every day helping the future generation learn more about a topic that you love is SO worth it!"

— **Tamara Edwards-Wilson, Westbury TA**

"You know you're doing it right when it doesn't feel like work, like a job. It is a career, a vocation, a calling, and when it fits, you know it. And that is one of the best feelings you can have as a professional and an educator."

— **Kurt Hassenpflug, North Colonie TA**

"The desire needs to come from the heart. And when it does, you'll have chosen a job you LOVE and never WORK a day in your life!"

— **Linda Yankowski, Hyde Park retiree**

"There is no greater profession than teaching. As a child it provided me with so much and it still does today."

— **Tom McMahon, Mahopac TA**

"Teaching is a very rewarding job when you see how you are helping students learn and grow. There is

never enough time in a day which makes the days fly by. I've worked desk jobs where you watch the clock all day long and wish it was time to go. Teaching is the opposite. You watch the clock and wish you had more time!"

— **Jen Fraser, South Jefferson TA**

"WE NEED YOU! Teaching is second only to parenting in terms of sacrifice and reward."

— **Rhea Umami Modeste, UFT**

"When I eliminate the 'noise' of administrative, testing, APPR, defending/justifying academic freedom, I love teaching students. There are dozens of reasons this profession is awesome; one of the most rewarding reasons to teach is to watch a student become an adult and to know that we (teachers) helped launch him/her into the world."

— **Heather Streeter Belleville-Henderson TA**

"Be in it for the students — not the money. We work to inspire the people who will fix the future."

— **Casey Jakubowski, UUP-Albany**

"I would show them letters I have received from former students that show the rewards and I will tell them there is no better feeling in the world than helping a student reach their potential and face a challenge with success."

— **Lori Atkinson Griffin, Copenhagen TA**

"My daughter and son-in-law both recently joined our profession. I tell them to keep their chins up. Try to ignore the difficult administrators, parents and colleagues. It's very hard to be a teacher but it's worth it for the children. They are the reason we go into teaching and they deserve our best."

— **Nancy Eaton, Webster TA**

"Our country needs you to keep democracy alive! We need dedicated people to help kids think critically, develop a strong work ethic and create vibrant communities where people can thrive. After 38 years in the classroom, I can honestly say

teaching was my vocation, my passion and worth the efforts."

— **Sue Haag, Union Springs TA**

"The future of teaching will most likely involve more local choices and bring more opportunities for out-of-the-box teaching ideas."

— **Brandon Lyon, Johnstown FA**

"Stay with it if you're ready for a bumpy ride. It is beautiful to teach students, but it is a very long and difficult journey to get there."

— **Alanna Majewski, Lowville TA**

"It takes at least five years to find a niche. Network with your peers and senior educators. Communicate clearly your goals for students and parents. Give your best unreservedly and continue despite setbacks."

— **Rita Bhatt, UFT retiree**

"Teaching is truly one of the most rewarding jobs out there and when you are allowed to do it, there isn't a greater feeling in the world."

— **Erika Bosworth, Deposit TA**

"Pace yourself so you won't burn out. Have a life outside of the school day. Teaching gets easier."

— **Catherine Root, Corning TA**

"It is probably one of the most challenging professions and will test you to your limit, but stick with it and the rewards are endless."

— **Thei Cherry, UFT**

"The students are why we do what we do, and helping them to succeed can be one of the most rewarding experiences that there is."

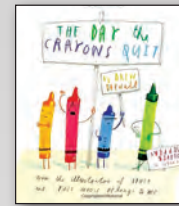
— **John Cain, Copenhagen TA**

"You will be broke and stressed, but you will still love your job."

— **Connie Catherman, West Canada Valley TA**

"Talk with veteran teachers. When I run into former students and they talk about their successes and how I influenced their life, it makes it all worthwhile. The media and the 'reformers' can never take that away from me."

— **Rebecca Pordum, Buffalo TF**

**THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT**

WRITTEN BY:
DREW DAYWALT

ILLUSTRATED BY:
OLIVER JEFFERS

Recommended by: Rebecca Benjamin, literacy specialist, Schenectady City School District, Schenectady Federation of Teachers

Suitable for: Pre-kindergarten to fifth grade

Why I chose it: This book easily captures the attention of young minds and works to engage and inspire them throughout the entire story and during follow-up activities. Students will adore reading about their most familiar and accessible art supplies and the personification applied to them. Additionally, the illustrations by Oliver Jeffers portray shapes and crayon strokes that students can see in their own work, allowing them to identify as illustrators.

What I like best: Daywalt makes this reading experience authentic for students by using different topics and devices. The crayons as characters express their feelings and provide support for their emotions in ways that relate to student coloring habits. Conflict is revealed and Duncan, the boy who owns the crayons, is left to problem-solve his way to a resolution. Daywalt's trademark humor delights and enthralls in this story. Students can easily move into understanding and utilizing a plethora of vocabulary words through the support provided in the author's contextualized references.

How teachers can use this book:

This book could serve as an introduction or model for writing claims and supporting them with evidence. It could also be used to introduce letter writing and to demonstrate the importance of the written language as a means of authentic communication and positive change through writing. Brainstorming and think-alouds can generate observation of positive communication processes within a community.

About the author: Drew Daywalt is a Hollywood screenwriter. He wrote his first children's book, "The Day the Crayons Quit," after becoming inspired by the sight of a box of unevenly used crayons. The book became a *New York Times* bestseller. "The Day the Crayons Came Home" is the sequel.

"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.

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NYSUT slams 'fake' certification plan for charter school teachers

By Sylvia Saunders

ssaunder@nysutmail.org

What? A teacher could be certified after just 30 hours of training?

NYSUT blasted the SUNY Charter School Institute's outrageous plan to allow some charter schools to "certify" their own teachers with as little as 30 hours of training — saying it would be unfair to students and open a back door to "fake" certification.

"What the charter industry is essentially saying is, 'Give us a few weeks and we'll authorize almost anyone we want to be a teacher,'" said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "This backdoor approach is insulting

to the teaching profession, the aspiring charter school teachers and, most importantly, a terrible disservice to all the charter school students who deserve highly qualified teachers. It's a travesty."

In a strongly worded public comment letter submitted to the SUNY charter committee in August, NYSUT urges SUNY trustees to shelve the proposed regulations that would allow some charter schools to bypass state certification standards and "certify" teachers with just 30 hours of in-house training and only a couple weeks of field experience. Under current state law, charters cannot have more than 15 uncertified teachers or more than 30 percent of its teaching

staff uncertified, whichever number is smaller.

"The 'certification pathway' detailed in the draft regulations is not a certification at all," wrote NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene T. DiBrango in the fiery five-page letter. "The piece of paper given to a person who completes the [proposed] process amounts to a coupon that is only redeemable for employment at SUNY charter schools."

DiBrango said the regulations, if enacted, would "significantly undercut the quality of teaching in charter schools by permitting unqualified individuals to educate large numbers of high-needs students."

She noted New York is well regarded for its rigorous teacher certification requirements — and that the SUNY draft regulations circumvent many of the established criteria for teacher certification established by the state education commissioner and the Board of Regents.

"A candidate seeking certification through this process certainly cannot receive the proper training in such a short amount of time," DiBrango said. "And allowing uncertified teachers to train teachers for certification is irrational."

NYSUT's public comment submission is the latest in the union's effort to beat back the draft regulations that emerged quietly in June and were approved by a SUNY committee at a hastily called meeting in July. They were crafted because charter chains say they are finding it difficult to attract and retain certified teachers. One in five SUNY-authorized charter schools has five-year teacher turnover rates in excess of 50 percent, DiBrango said.



SUNY TRUSTEES NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU — FAST!

The SUNY Board needs to hear from educators. The public comment period for this dangerous plan — called Alternative Teacher Certification Compliance Pathways for SUNY Charter Schools — remains open until Sept. 9.

Comments can be submitted via email to charters@suny.edu or mailed to Ralph A. Rossi, II, SUNY Charter Schools Institute, 41 State St., Suite 700, Albany, NY 12207. NYSUT has also posted SUNY's public comment link on the Member Action Center, mac.nysut.org.

The SUNY Board's Charter School Committee could vote on the regulation at its Sept. 12 meeting.

United University Professions, NYSUT's affiliate at SUNY, emphasized that the plan to lower standards contradicts SUNY's own TeachNY agenda, which calls for higher standards to "elevate the teaching professions" and longer, more intensive preparation programs.

Both the state education commissioner and Regents chancellor have voiced strong concerns about the plan, while a group of SUNY deans and directors of education programs said the "extreme measure ... would virtually eliminate teacher certification requirements for charter school teachers."

SEMI High Tech U



Aaron Sorensen, Morris TA, left, and Stacey Thomas, UFT, work together to create electricity from salt, water and a battery during the "Chemistry: Matter Matters," lab at the SEMI High Tech U Teacher Edition. The event marks the 10th anniversary of the partnership between NYSUT and the SEMI Foundation. More than 600 New York State educators have taken part since 2007.

A northern beacon of hope

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

The land in St. Lawrence County is wide and the needs are great. The median income is \$31,653 a year, according to the 2017 New York State Poverty Report. Out of New York's 62 counties, it is usually no higher than sixth rung from the bottom of the state's economic ladder.

About 111,000 people live in the state's northernmost county's vast 2,680 square miles. It is hemmed by the St. Lawrence River and Canada on one side, and by the Adirondack Mountains on the other. Its landscape shortens into hills and then goes flat, as if all the air were let out of a tire.

The small villages and towns are spread out 15, 22, 31 miles apart on long, open roads, making it hard to connect people and places. Farms for hay cropping, dairy and produce, such as apples and corn, provide seasonal work and sustenance. St. Lawrence County ranks fourth in New York State in overall farm products sold, and second for organic farms, according to an NPR Farm Report. The campuses at SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton provide foundations for culture, education and economic opportunity.

Beyond that, industry is sparse and jobs are scarce. GM's power train factory closed in 2008, taking 500



PHOTOS: GREG KIE

■ Kari Tremper, Parishville Area Recreation Club president, above left, and Laura Perry, PARC secretary, serve refreshments to a youngster at a Parishville town park. The food truck is funded by The People Project.

jobs with it. The merger of Reynolds and ALCOA brought layoffs. Lack of work and family poverty have escalated drug problems. Apartments rent for \$700 to \$900 a month. Abandoned houses and boarded businesses flank the roads. A shadowy Massena mall feels like something out of the Twilight Zone. Only a few businesses remain, sandwiched between long spaces of darkened stores shuttered with metal grates.

Yet, amid this landscape, a movement to recharge the isolated region is evolving. Born from the grist of need, The People Project is powered by labor and community activists who are seeking ways to revitalize the region by strengthening educational and economic opportunities.

The organization formed after the ALCOA aluminum plant — a major employer in the county — announced its closing in 2015. Local education leaders led a charge to

organize business, government and community leaders in a massive rally that helped some of the ALCOA jobs stay put.

Massena public school counselor Erin Covell, president of the Massena Federation of Teachers, earned her stripes as a leader in that movement. Heady from the change she saw possible through coalition-building, she corralled 32 education unions from 19 districts to apply for and win a \$165,000 solidarity grant from NYSUT.

"One of the main criteria is to build member engagement and coalition with community," said Covell.

The People Project, a beacon of beginnings, has already funded a youth lacrosse program in Huevelton; a welcome program for minority students at Canton; a Massena parent-outreach spaghetti dinner and a backpack program, led by community women, that feeds 300

students a week; and the purchase of a food truck staffed by community volunteers to provide food at outdoor community and sports events.

Every effort matters.

"What I see are these little sparks," said Laurie Kiah, a teacher and People Project member.

Union members are working with community groups, civic groups, parks and recreation, fire departments and church organizations as part of the project.

"It's positive. It's proactive," said Nicole LePage, a Massena guidance counselor, MFT member and People Project member.

The sparks are about to flame.

The People Project is hosting a symposium on Oct. 31–Nov. 1 at SUNY Potsdam with the backing of the American Federation of Teachers, which has pledged funding for the next five years. AFT President Randi Weingarten, who is speaking

[LOCAL UNIONS IN ACTION]

at the Potsdam event, chose the St. Lawrence region for an action plan similar to AFT's efforts with the "Reconnecting McDowell" project in West Virginia that began in 2011.

The deeply furrowed poverty in McDowell County also stems from job loss: Coal miners have lost work as natural gas replaces coal for heating. More than 100,000 residents have fled since the 1970s, leaving about 22,000 citizens. Here, too, towns are far apart, and here, too, drug abuse is a big problem. The lack of decent housing and sagging economy has deterred teachers from working here.

Support from AFT, national corporations, religious groups, civic groups and even the NFL Players Association have provided school services for substance abuse and mental health issues; sports equipment and musical instruments; school wellness clinics; work skill development expos; mentoring programs; student trips to the state capital and Washington, D.C.; a Books on the Bus mobile literacy program; reliable Internet access; water lines and fiber optics. Teacher housing is being constructed. Schools are now compliant with state education performance, and one K-8 school is now a full community school with health services.

Reconnecting McDowell has infused so much specific, definable



▣ Laurie Kiah, a teacher at Banford Elementary School in Canton and a member of The People Project Steering committee, plays with children at Lisbon Beach.

change that AFT has pledged another five years of support. Massena's Covell has met with McDowell leaders to learn from their experience and share ideas. She spent hours this summer driving the long, open roads of St. Lawrence County to meet with potential business and civic stakeholders and build support for the symposium and the projects that come out of it. The work ahead is to assess the needs and assets of the region. A summit also takes place Oct. 3 at Canton BOCES to generate awareness about community schools.

The People Project has already met some immediate needs. A Lisbon student beach program on the scenic and pragmatic St. Lawrence Seaway was revived this summer by hiring a bus, paying for swim lessons, providing lunch and purchasing

kick boards and swim belts. The town paid for a bus driver and hired a helper at the beach. Teachers volunteered every day in the sand.

"We had three kids who did not know how to swim," said teacher Alison Spears, Lisbon Teachers Association member.

Standing on the beach on a sunny day, Lisbon TA English teacher Julie Rexford was surrounded by clusters of student-made sand castles and the sounds of youngsters splashing.

"They love the water," she said. "Without this, kids would be isolated, watching TV or playing video games." Summer sets kids back academically and socially, she noted. Programs like these help buck that trend. The goal is to have the town help continue the program eventually, and perhaps have community residents sponsor a child for the beach program.

Because of The People Project, every eighth-grade student in the town of St. Lawrence will be given a hardcover copy of the book, *Wonder*, for a One Book, One Town literacy program. The book, about the struggles of a boy with a disfigured face, is part of a school kindness program.

Becky Dullea, school librarian, Kayla Phelix, eighth-grade teacher, and Margaret Snyder and Anne Avery-Truax, president and vice president of the St. Lawrence Central United Teachers, met to unpack the books in the colorful school library, which is filled with students' large-scale art sculptures.

Excitement is building as word spreads that a movie based on the

book opens in November. Since most student field trips have been erased by budget cuts, Phelix is determined to get the students out of the classroom and into a theater. The project also includes a community dinner with a theme of kindness. Students will be encouraged to donate their books, once read, to the public and school libraries.

"We definitely want to do this every year with a different book," said Dullea.

For People Project board member Michael Wills, a Morristown teacher, ideas like these will bring teacher unions out of the background of their communities. NYSUT's solidarity grant, he said, provides "an opportunity to step to the forefront."

"Poverty is our biggest issue here," said Julie Paquin, a retired court clerk who started Pack the Back with a group of friends. They use a vacant



▣ Standing, from left: Michael Wills, Anne Avery-Truax, Laurie Kiah, Nicole Lapage, Kayla Phelix and Rebecca Dulica; and seated, from left: Erin Covell and Margaret Snyder, along with two youngsters, promote One Book, One Town.

store in that nearly-abandoned mall to house and assemble food for student backpacks. The \$5,000 check from The People Project will take them through many months.

"When it gets close to the weekend, some kids get stressed; worried they'll have no food to eat, little supervision. Kids need food," said Covell. "Poverty is at the root of all this. This gets the community involved in a positive way."



▣ Like so many businesses in St. Lawrence County, the Nite N Gale Motel in Massena is a remnant of better times.



The LAP effect

For two decades, local unions participating in NYSUT's Local Action Project have learned and shared tools for strengthening their locals and their communities. Members of the 2017 graduating class offer these tips:

1. We're all the union. The LAP process encouraged members of the Clarkstown Teachers Association to focus more on newer members and to make sure all of the local's 1,000 teacher and SRP members understand they are part of the same union. The union was also a visible supporter of other unions in the community. That solidarity proved crucial through three rounds of difficult bargaining. The CTA is led by Jonathan Wedvik.

2. Know your audience. Proving there is a lesson in everything — including failure — the Salmon River TA, led by co-presidents Ronald Jeror and Adam Schrader, found success when members increased communication with their community, which increased foot traffic to events, which improved member engagement.

3. Engage your membership. Led by President Pasquale Delli Carpini, the Wappingers Congress of Teachers regularly sponsors community events

and has respectable member participation. A member poll revealed how to involve more educators. "You have to really know your membership and develop activities that meet their needs," Delli Carpini said. Young teachers with families said they need family friendly activities — food drives, coat collections, etc.

4. Remember your roots. The 104-member Frewsburg Faculty Association, led by Shaun Laska, worked hard to strengthen community ties within its small Southwestern NY district. FFA expanded outreach with a "Shop Local Business" event and an Armed Forces Appreciation night at a varsity football home opener.

5. Personal communication is key. The 88-member Fabius-Pompey Education Association, led by Elizabeth Pierce, sponsored a welcome back picnic for members. Nearly 80 percent of members attended. The local also increased VOTE-COPE participation from zero to 26 members. While 30 additional members gave to NYSUT's political action fund in the second year, attendance at the picnic fell off. The difference? The local reached out in personal calls the first year and only sent text messages the following year. The lesson: Stick with what works.

6. Engage and share. The more than 400

members of the Mahopac TA, led by Thomas McMahon, host events for charity; support fair contracts for other local unions and district employees and more. The local also provides gifts — emblazoned with the MTA logo, of course — to students at certain milestones. One lesson: Take plenty of pictures and video and share with local media. To engage the community and be recognized, people need to know what you are doing.

7. Establish your identity. The Cleveland Hill EA, led by Serena Kotch, needed an identity separate from the district to increase member engagement. The local shared its colors with the district and its logo was the district mascot, making it difficult for members to stand out. The NYSUT Communications Department designed a new, unique logo for the union. And, using organizational tools and apps, like Sign Up Genius, the local helps members participate in events more easily.

8. NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale welcomes locals attending the 2017 LAP conference.



Let's all be part of the 2017 mAsk4CampusEquity campaign

By Anne Wiegard and
Susan DiRaimo

We invite you to participate in mAsk4CampusEquity by planning and taking an arts-based action in your campus community on Oct. 31, a national day of action.

For nearly two decades during the last week of October, college and university faculty teaching off the tenure-track have protested the inequitable employment practices that harm our profession and the students enrolled at our institutions. Because student learning conditions depend upon faculty working conditions, optimal educational experiences for students require equitable institutional support of all faculty.

As the Campus Equity Week (CEW) campaign has evolved nationally, more and more activists and organizations have become involved, intensifying the political pressure on administrations to do right by their academic workers. The broadly connected Campus Equity Week activities also create a strong incentive for state and local politicians to become visibly involved with the issues. Since its inception, the CEW campaign has served an important role in the movement for academic equity. We have seen rallies, petitions, congressional briefings, letter-writing campaigns, film debuts (bravenewfilms.org/professorsinpoverty), and some other very creative actions by union members in New York.

For example, a few years ago about 20 CUNY adjunct faculty, members of Professional Staff Congress (PSC) representing faculty and professional staff at CUNY, performed a skit in front

of their graduate center. Ten of them wore elephant masks and accepted their salary in the form of peanuts to emphasize how paltry their compensation has been. Partly because of the CEW campaign, the general public now is more aware of the gross discrepancies in the salaries of teaching faculty.

For the past four years during Campus Equity Week, PSC Vice President Susan DiRaimo has handed out roses to adjunct colleagues to show her appreciation and to acknowledge that not enough “bread” has been provided in the form of salary parity, harkening back to the historic “Bread and Roses” Lowell, Mass., strike demands of 1912: Workers should earn enough to not only pay for their daily bread, but to pay for “roses” occasionally, too. Full-time PSC members believe that adjunct faculty members deserve more job security and equitable wages.

Thanks to increasing activism among the rank and file, there is now greater public awareness that some adjunct faculty make so little they are eligible for public assistance, a message highlighted by another creative action undertaken last year by United University Professions (UUP) faculty and professional staff at SUNY.

The University at Albany chapter distributed “adjunct dollars” (food coupons), posters with messages such as, “Did you know most UAlbany adjuncts could qualify for public assistance?” and sponsored a “print-in” that took place in a public space where students were able to silk-screen T-shirts with the movement’s rallying cry: “Our teaching conditions

are student learning conditions.”

On other SUNY campuses, contingent faculty displayed huge lists of all the sections taught that semester by non-tenure-track faculty.

Because arts-based actions such as these, especially interactive ones, can have a profound and lasting impact on participants, a group of artist activists from around the country has been working together for more than a year to develop a toolkit of arts projects for the 2017 Campus Equity Week actions on Oct. 31. The mAsk4CampusEquity initiative highlights the disconnections between the myths and realities of higher education today as well as opportunities to be theatrical and creative to get our message across.

We invite you to participate in mAsk4CampusEquity by

planning and taking an arts-based action in your campus community on Oct. 31. Visit our website — CampusEquity2017.com — to find arts project ideas and examples as well as other resources to support your activities, such as downloadable graphics for posters and a two-sided bookmark.

You don’t have to be an artist to undertake an art project. Start your planning now. Recruit colleagues, decide what you want to do, and identify who will do what when. Register your planned event at our website so we can also publicize it. Make a difference in October!

Anne Wiegard is a UUP delegate from the SUNY Cortland Chapter and a member of the UUP contract negotiations team.

Susan DiRaimo is the PSC vice president for part-time personnel. She currently teaches at City College of New York and Lehman College.



Support for adjuncts



NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, center, joins Paula White, left, professionals vice president at the Downstate Medical Center Chapter of UUP, and UUP Vice President Tom Tucker, right, to offer support and solidarity to adjunct professors at Siena College as they negotiate their first contract.



ANDREW WATSON

5

QUESTIONS for ... **Nicole Lee** Copenhagen Teachers Association

Special education teacher Nicole Lee heads her district's mentoring program.

1. Your district and local union have negotiated a strong mentoring program. What makes it a success?

Choosing mentors is critical. They want to be part of the program because, just like the union, their success is our success. Mentors don't do it for the money; however, when it is negotiated within the contract with a stipend, there is a higher incentive to make the program strong. Also, we tailor our

meetings around the specific needs of the interns. Giving them the freedom to set the agenda makes the program much more relevant and supportive.

2. You often match new teachers with mentors outside their subject area. Why?

The role of the mentor is to guide the intern through the nuances of the school and district, and support the intern in becoming the best teacher they can be. The mentor should be a safe person to talk to. If the mentor works within the intern's department, it might turn into a curriculum meeting or be difficult if there are issues within the department.

3. The North Country is experiencing teacher recruitment/retention difficulties. Do you think mentoring programs improve retention?

Having a mentor who has helped make you feel like part of the school and community can absolutely help keep teachers in the profession. If people feel part of something, it can often be more powerful than factors beyond our control, such as salary, preps, course load, etc.

4. This year you have 12 new teachers — that's almost one-quarter of your entire faculty. Do you have any trouble getting mentors?

Last year, I had enough people to meet the incoming new teacher needs. Halfway through the year we had openings for various reasons and I had to put out a call for more mentor applicants. The response was overwhelming. Many newer teachers were interested in becoming mentors because they had a positive mentoring experience themselves.

5. How do you introduce new members to the union?

We have a luncheon at an outside location. It's important to separate ourselves from the district and really delve into the many things we do and the various ways they can get involved. It is also important for our mentors to bring their interns to union meetings. Having someone they trust to sit with at a meeting is a major comfort to new teachers. We stress to our new teachers that, before they are tenured, the union is there to protect them and is rooting for them.

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Saving research dollars, saving lives

By Timothy Murphy, MD

The budget cuts proposed by the White House in recent weeks are overwhelming. From Medicaid for poor people's health care, to financial aid for low-income college students, to funding for equal access to the arts, so many essential services are being threatened it's hard to know where to start.

One area affects me directly. In fact, it affects thousands of researchers, university labs and college campuses, and millions of people who could benefit from research that could save their lives. I'm talking about possible cuts to National Institutes of Health research funding. While initial cuts were restored and the budget increased this year, the anti-science climate is a real threat to funding.

At the University at Buffalo alone, researchers account for more than \$40 million in NIH grants. It is not obscure lab work. I have one colleague who is finding a cure for hepatitis C. For people whose best treatment option, until recently, involved daily shots with only a 30 to 40 percent success rate and no actual cure, a one- to two-pill daily regimen that actually cures the disease is life-altering. And, with research dollars, that solution is here and many lives are being saved.

I have another colleague studying heart failure and sudden death — the kind that happens when someone suddenly keels over in the street. His data could help identify in advance the people who will experience these episodes, leading to preventive treatments that would save a lot of lives.

My own research involves developing a vaccine against ear infections. Any parent knows how painful



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these can be — and how recurrent. Far from just an inconvenient childhood affliction, ear infections can cause children to end up with fluid in their ears for months at a time — and that means possible speech and language delays. The bacteria that cause ear infections have already become resistant to some antibiotics. As the most common reason for children to receive antibiotics, ear infections are a large contributor to the global crisis of antibiotic resistance. Ear infections also cost up to \$8 billion a year in health care expenses, and untold work hours lost. A vaccine could eliminate all that pain.

Each of these research projects is funded by NIH, as are thousands more across the country. The development of new drugs, and all kinds of health care interventions and improvements, would be delayed by NIH budget cuts.

As it is, the competition for NIH grants is already intense, with only about 10 to 15 percent of the proposals getting funded. Diminishing the funds available would only intensify that competition and increase the number of times researchers must

□ Dr. Timothy Murphy is a researcher at the University at Buffalo.

rewrite and resubmit their grant proposals. Scientists already spend valuable time writing grants, going back again and again, when they could be pushing their research along. Younger researchers have an even harder time — they have to compete with Nobel Prize winners and full professors with decades of experience, big labs and established programs. It's very difficult to train the next generation of biomedical researchers if they can't get the grants they need to stay in the field.

Compounding the threat to research funds is the rising skepticism and denial of established scientific principles. For example, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, people still believe that vaccines cause autism. The paper that proposed the association has been disproven repeatedly, and *Lancet*, the journal that printed it, retracted it.

Social media has played a significant role (in the confusion): Any Google search will turn up well-researched, scientific answers from

organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control, but it will also turn up unproven, false quackery that can appear to be just as legitimate. The billions of dollars spent disproving this poorly designed, fraudulent study could have been devoted to better understanding autism.

The anti-science climate, along with scarce science funding and low-paying research positions, is discouraging young people from entering the field, a terrible blow to scientific advancement.

Instead of students following their research passion and talent, they're choosing more profitable careers. That's understandable considering they graduate from medical school with \$200,000 in debt. Many young physicians are making career choices that are driven by the need to pay off that debt, and we are losing many talented future physician scientists as a result. What a loss.

Not only are we losing research dollars and the life-changing science they can fund, we are losing the best and brightest who could come up with as yet unimaginable solutions to some of our thorniest biomedical challenges. We need the research funding and, more importantly, we need this generation of students to lead us to the improvements in health care that will serve us all — if Congress will allow it.

[Timothy Murphy, MD, a member of United University Professions, is senior associate dean for clinical and translational research at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo. A version of this story was first published by the AFT Voices website.](#)

[PASSINGS]

Josephine Sano

Longtime labor leader and activist

Josephine Sano died July 17 at the age of 97. Sano, a social studies teacher for 44 years, was a feisty union pioneer who served as president of the Albany Public School Teachers Association.

Sano believed in using the collective bargaining process to improve teaching and learning conditions. When she won NYSUT's Not for Ourselves Alone: The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award in 2006, she reminded new teachers that the benefits they enjoy today were the result of difficult battles.

"Tenure, maternity leave, health insurance, prep time, class size, are some battles you must keep fighting. Nothing is secure forever," Sano said. Her indomitable spirit is best summed up by one of her favorite phrases by Hubert Humphrey: "It is better to live one day as a tiger than to live a lifetime as a chicken."

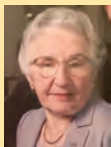
Eileen Linda Kaplan | Feb. 18
Plainedge Federation of Teachers

Frank W. Magee, III | June 9
BOCES Teachers Association of Westchester #2

Loraine Rubin | May 26
Nassau BOCES Central Council of Teachers

Kenneth Silvio | May 28
Rochester Teachers Association

Full obituaries, if provided, are available at www.nysut.org. Submissions must include decedent's full name, union affiliation and date of death, and contact information for the person submitting the notice. Fax notices to 518-213-6415; send to Andrew Watson, NYSUT United, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; or email awatson@nysutmail.org.



EDUCATION

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Getting to know ... Bonnie Brown

Bonnie Brown is senior video acquisitions and reference assistant at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University. She was interviewed by Christopher Crowe, vice president of the Union of Clerical, Administrative and Technical Staff. Crowe is a member of NYSUT's SRP Advisory Committee.

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

One of the highlights of working here is getting to meet and work with so many different people whose range of interests and influences contribute greatly to our media library. I am fortunate enough to work closely with this diverse group of professors, students and staff members, and their input has been a crucial part of our feature film and documentary

collection (more than 45,000 DVDs). Collaborating, in support of their teaching and research needs, has helped [the catalog] grow into the comprehensive collection of feature films, performances and documentaries that it is today and I'm proud of that.

How did you get involved in your union?

I have been a supporter of unions ever since my mom (who looks a lot like Sally Field) watched the film "Norma Rae" with me many years ago on television. I didn't really know much about unions before then but the film certainly piqued my interest. I started to pay attention especially after learning that my great-grandmothers had worked in factories in Lowell,



Mass., where the "factory girls" set up some of the first unions in the United States in the 1800s. We wouldn't have many of our rights today without our unions.

I first became involved with mine after standing up for a colleague who was being treated unfairly. This didn't make me popular with management and when they began to target me the union stepped in to help with my defense. With their assistance, the support of my colleagues, and the help of two courageous NYU student workers who had witnessed many of the supervisors' misdeeds, we were fairly successful and the situation for all of us has improved.

After this experience, I became a more active union member, doing leafleting, stuffing envelopes, etc. I was recently a delegate to the NYSUT Representative Assembly for the first time. I also recently contributed my first article to the UCATS newsletter, *Momentum*, about my experience and I plan to contribute more.

How do you make a difference?

I believe in justice and fair treatment. I very much believe that if you know someone is being treated badly or unfairly, then you should try to be there for them in the same way you hope they would for you. I didn't always think that was something I would ever have to worry about



PROVIDED

UCATS member Bonnie Brown.

because everything had been going fine for me. However, things continued to get worse for my colleague. In order to remain diplomatic, especially when we are getting along fine, we sometimes don't stand up for others when it is the right time to do so. I regret my lag in doing so at the time. But I did find out the hard way why most of us don't.

How about community activities?

My passion is for the environment, human rights/animals rights and community service, all of which require solidarity and organization just like unions. Without a safe place in which to live and work, all other rights will simply become irrelevant.

I am currently the chair of the Sustainability Committee at the Bobst Library, a volunteer for the Community Service Committee, as well as an ocean activist and an environmental and animal rights activist. I have been an onshore volunteer for Sea Shepherd Conservation Society since 2010 and have attended many educational events, protests and activist meet-ups on how best to protect our planet and ALL of its inhabitants. To me, each and every day is an opportunity to show respect and care for our planet, which sustains us all.

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Hope, solidarity for a cure

NYSUT's support of Making Strides walks marks 15 years

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

Soon enough people in pink — pink sneakers, pink shirts, pink feathered boas, pink hats, pink hair and, yes, pink neckties — will tread sidewalks, parks, campuses and beach boardwalks across New York State.

Come October, it's time for the return of the annual American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks, where pink symbolizes hope and solidarity in the quest to save lives from the damages of breast cancer.

This year, we have breaking news on the pink front: Anyone who registers and raises \$25 or more online by Sept. 9 can receive a Hope Hero pink supercape. Visit www.acs.org for more information.

NYSUT members are steadfast supporters of the ACS' Strides walks. This fall, the statewide union celebrates 15 years of being a flagship sponsor. Countless teams raise money by signing up for the walks through a NYSUT link and gathering

pledges from family, friends and co-workers to support their treks.

NYSUT First Vice President J. Philippe Abraham, who oversees social justice issues, is walking in the Oct. 29 Strides event in Glens Falls.

"The other NYSUT officers and I look forward to joining our courageous #NYSUTWarriors at Making Strides walks across New York this year as we work to find a cure for this terrible disease," he said.

"Strides walks are an important part of the NYSUT social justice agenda. NYSUT walkers and other activists raise money to educate and enable people in at-risk communities to get breast cancer screenings, and to promote healthy lifestyles to reduce the risk of contracting cancer. The money raised also enables the ACS to provide lodging, rides to and from treatment and one-on-one support services to thousands of breast cancer patients in New York and across America."

While the disease predominantly targets women, men are also affected. Last year was the first time the new ACS Real Men Wear Pink

campaign came to New York. It is a separate fundraiser from Making Strides, although the money is slated for the same causes. Their signature is wearing pink neckties.

Chris Colabello, a NYSUT regional staff director for Central New York, is gearing up for his second pink campaign.

"I'll be wearing pink throughout October. I'm really proud of the efforts of our NYSUT members in CNY, who are supporting Real Men Wear Pink while still continuing their annual tradition of raising thousands of dollars for Strides. Our members need to know they are making an impact," he said.

Since 2002, NYSUT has raised more than \$13 million to support the fight against this disease, which is the second-leading cause of cancer death in women. Last year, NYSUT teams at 18 locations across the state helped raise nearly \$1 million.

To find a Making Strides walk in your area, including event dates, start times, and the local NYSUT team, visit MakingStridesWalk.org/NYSUT or NYSUT.org/makingstrides.

Making Strides walks

■ Oct. 14

Buffalo, Canalside, 8:30 a.m.
Watertown, Alex Duffy Fairgrounds, 10 a.m.

■ Oct. 15

Albany, Washington Park Parade Grounds, noon
Binghamton, Recreation Park, 11:30 a.m.
Bronx, Orchard Beach, 10 a.m.
Central Valley, Woodbury Common Premium Outlets, 7:30 a.m.
Brooklyn, Coney Island Beach and Boardwalk, 9 a.m.
Wantagh, Jones Beach State Park Field 5, 8 a.m.
Manhattan, Central Park 72nd Street Bandshell, 9 a.m.
Utica, Masonic Campus, 10 a.m.
Syracuse, SRC Arena at Onondaga Community College, 9 a.m.
Corona, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, 10 a.m.
Staten Island, Midland Beach, 10 a.m.
Rochester, Frontier Field, 7:30 a.m.
Purchase, Manhattanville College, 10:30 a.m.

■ Oct. 22

Jamestown, Jamestown Community College, 9 a.m.
Riverhead, Suffolk County Community College Eastern Campus, 8:30 a.m.

■ Oct. 29

Glens Falls, Civic Center, 11 a.m.

[KUDOS!]

It's an honor

The **Schenectady Federation of Teachers**, led by President Juliet Benaquisto, received the 2017 Best of Schenectady Award in the Labor Organizations category. The Schenectady Award Program identifies companies and organizations that "help make the Schenectady area a great place to live, work and play" through service to their customers and the community.

In print

Furwa Jawad, United Federation of Teachers, has written *The Story of My Suffering: A Collection of Short Stories of Suffering Children*. The book features first-person accounts of children abused at the hands of mentally ill parents. Jawad seeks to "provide hope — there is light at the end of the tunnel — and to help start a conversation to ensure no child suffers in silence." The book is available at Amazon.com or www.archwaypublishing.com; a

portion of sales will go to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Jill Mary Kohler, Retiree Council 22, has written *Permission to Approach? The Adventures of an American Tutor Working for a Global Family*. The book shares her experiences tutoring a child on the island of Ibiza and integrating into a family of wealth. The book, published by Mill City Press, is available at Amazon.com.

Jenny Morrill, Colton-Pierrepoint Teachers Association, has co-authored

Weaving Healing Wisdom with Paula Youmell. The book is a guide to "letting go and letting be" while educating readers about learning to deal effectively with stress, illness, poor eating habits and injury. It is available at www.3marigolds.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.



JONATHAN FICKIES

▣ Jay Broad, RC 18, and scores of other Nassau County retirees, make thousands of calls during summer phone banking sessions at the Nassau regional office to raise awareness about why New Yorkers should vote NO on the Nov. 7 constitutional convention ballot question. See page 5 for more.



PROVIDED

▣ Mary Kruchinski, RC 10, went door-to-door as part of NYSUT's six-week Education Summer program. At a Saratoga Springs home she met, from left, Ana Ventre, Albany Public School Teachers Association, Vivian Ventre and Therese O'Neil, RC 10.

Did you know? ?

NYSUT Retiree Services consultants are resources to 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

TBD, 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

TBD, 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

Regional conferences

- **RC 13, Oct. 12, Wiltwyck Golf Club, Kingston.** Retiree Services Consultant: Jennifer Shaad-Derby
- **RC 15-16, Oct. 17, Crowne Plaza Suffern.** Retiree Services Consultant: Ellen Pincus
- **RC 5, 6, Oct. 24, Burgundy Basin.** Retiree Services Consultant: Peter Randazzo
- **RC 17-23, Nov. 2, TBA.** Retiree Services Consultant: Joan Perrini (Long Island retirees)
- **RC 11, 45, May 23, 2018, TBA.** Retiree Services Consultant: Mark Padgett

▣ From left, Rosemary Catanzariti, ED 52 director, Louise Levine, RC 19, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and Christine Pellegrino, Baldwin TA, at a Long Island DiNapoli fundraiser. Retirees helped Pellegrino score a David-and-Goliath win in the Ninth Assembly District special election.



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This is YOUR union ... here's how it can enhance your life

NYSUT Member Benefits offers an annual update from the chair of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust and the director of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust/CEO of NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation about Member Benefits:

How does being a NYSUT member benefit my family and me?



NYSUT First Vice President and NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Chair J. Philippe Abraham:

Your union is committed to fighting for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair

pay and upholding the labor rights of the talented men and women working daily in the education and health care industries.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to take the time to get to know your union, learn what it does for you and find out what resources are available to help enhance your life, whether you are currently working or enjoying retirement.

One place to start is familiarizing yourself with all of the endorsed programs and services available from NYSUT Member Benefits — everything from crucial insurance products that help protect your family to discount shopping programs that can save you money on everyday purchases.

What other benefits come with participating?



Director/CEO Lynette Metz:

In addition to offering quality programs and potential savings opportunities, participation in Member Benefits-

endorsed programs and services gives you a trusted advocate should any issues or concerns with these programs arise.

Our programs are regularly reviewed by Member Benefits staff and consultants to ensure they meet the ever-changing needs of the NYSUT membership. While our endorsed programs might not always be the lowest-cost products, our trustees, directors, staff, consultants and advisers work tirelessly to obtain and maintain quality programs at competitive prices for NYSUT members and their families.

Members are always encouraged to shop and compare before utilizing any of our programs.

Are my dues dollars used?

Abraham: No, they are most definitely not used to support the operation of the Member Benefits Trust or Corporation. Member Benefits receives funds to cover expenses from negotiated endorsement arrangements (including, in some cases, a percentage of premium paid) with many of the providers of our endorsed programs.

These funds are used solely to defray the costs of operating Member Benefits, including compensation, rent, office expenses and the cost of retaining consultants, auditors and attorneys to advise the trustees, directors and their staff. Where appropriate, Member Benefits revenue is also used to enhance the benefit

programs for participants and develop new programs and services.

No monies are paid to NYSUT except reimbursement for the use of facilities and for services and personnel provided by NYSUT to Member Benefits (the reasonableness of which amounts are certified annually to the trustees and directors by the Fund's & Corporation's independent auditors).

What is on the horizon?

Metz: Some exciting changes to our term life, level term life and disability insurance offerings will be announced in the next few months. You also will hear about a new purchasing program.

Member Benefits has endorsed a number of other new programs in recent months, including Abenity Discounts (online savings), Office Depot/OfficeMax, Premier World Discovery (group tours) and Tunstall Medical Alert.

Explore our new online financial planning center on the Member Benefits website — **memberbenefits.nysut.org**. The site contains more than 100 modules on different financial topics along with a financial wellness checkup so you can see where you stand with your savings and retirement plans.

All NYSUT members are encouraged to visit the Member Benefits website to learn more about our endorsed programs and services. You can also call us at 800-626-8101 to speak with one of our staff members and request copies of any of our printed materials.

Please note that although some NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs may provide legal or financial advice, Member Benefits itself does not offer investment, legal or tax advice. Participants should consult their own investment, financial, tax and legal advisers to help them with an evaluation of the benefit programs.

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The Master of Science in Teaching Programs are designed for career changers or graduates who have earned their degrees in areas other than education.

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Certificate Programs

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St. Thomas Aquinas College
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New website a one-stop shop for retirement planning

The New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) introduced a new self-service website — Retirement Online — with more ways for our members and retirees to access their retirement information.

Our online service will simplify the way you do business with ERS — you no longer need to call us or print out and mail forms for certain changes or requests. Instead you can submit them right from your computer. Once you create an account, you will be able to:

- Update your address, phone number and email address.
- View your beneficiary selections or submit a new beneficiary designation request.
- Apply for a loan and check loan balances.

We also have tools for retirees, beneficiaries and employers, and we are working to develop more features for members. Over time, you will be able to purchase service credit, manage your loan account and estimate your pension benefit.

Retirement Online is available weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. As our offerings increase, we will expand our hours to give you around-the-clock access to your retirement account. Please note: The site works best with

Internet Explorer or Google Chrome.

We encourage you to use Retirement Online — but registration is optional. You may also print forms and send them through the mail.

When using the website, you can be sure that your account information is secure. Retirement Online has security safeguards similar to those used by financial institutions for online banking. When you register, you will be asked a series of questions to verify your identity. The questions and answers are provided by a trusted third party and are used to protect your account information.

We have online user guides that can help you with the registration process and answer basic questions, such as what you should do if you forget your password. Our staff is also ready to help with your Retirement Online needs. If you have questions, please call our contact center or email us using our secure contact form at www.email.NYSLRS.com.

Register or sign in today at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirement_online/customers.php.

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

Kathy Hine • 585-454-5550, ext. 144
rochers@nysutmail.org

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

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



In every issue, state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, administrative head of the New York 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.

COLA increase starts in September

Q: Do you know what the Cost-of-Living Adjustment will be for 2017?

A: Yes, we do. For eligible members who receive monthly benefits through the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, the annual COLA for September 2017 through August 2018 is 1.2 percent. That means the maximum COLA increase retired members will see is \$18 a month.

And remember, that increase applies only to the first \$18,000 in retirement benefits. If your entire retirement benefit totals less than \$18,000 annually, you'll receive a smaller COLA increase; those who don't qualify for the COLA in September will receive the increase once they do become eligible.

COLAs help offset the impact of inflation by providing annual increases to TRS retirement benefits based on the cost-of-living index. To be eligible, you must meet one of the following criteria: Be at least 62 years old and retired more than five years; be 55 and older and retired 10-plus years; receive a NYSTRS disability

Did you know?

A constitutional convention vote takes place Nov. 7 in New York State. Vote "no" to protect your retirement security!



benefit for at least five years, regardless of age; or be a surviving spouse of an eligible retiree, receiving a lifetime benefit. Note: spousal COLAs are half that of retiree COLAs.

Q: Retirement is still several years down the road, but I'd like to start planning ahead. Is it too early to attend a PREP seminar or a benefit consultation?

A: Absolutely not. In fact, the earlier you attend, the better. Benefit consultations and PREP seminars don't cost a thing, and you can attend as many sessions as you want over the course of your career.

Contacting TRS is the first step. Although free, consultations must be scheduled in advance. PREP seminars explain critical, benefit-related decisions and review financial and legal considerations. You can stay for an entire seminar, or select modules that address your concerns. A PREP video, poster and brochure are available at www.nystrs.org. Contact TRS at 800-782-0289, ext. 6180, or use your MyNYSTRS account, to reserve a PREP seminar seat.

Personalized retirement benefit consultations, including a printed estimate of your retirement benefit, are available either in person or via videoconference at TRS offices statewide. Dial 800-782-0289, ext. 6110, or use your MyNYSTRS account, to make an appointment.

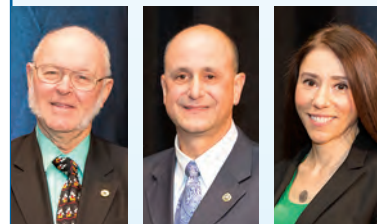
NYSUT TRS consultants

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)

Paul Farfaglia • 315-431-4040
pfarfagl@nysutmail.org

Jolene T. DiBrango
trs-q&a@nysutmail.org



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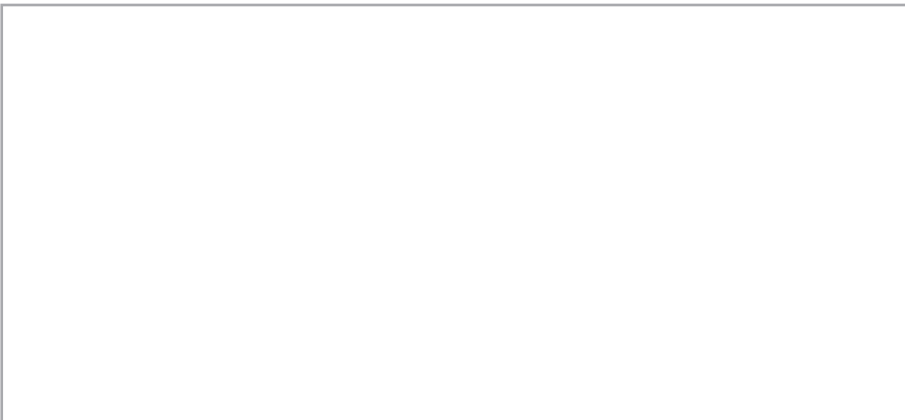
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