

NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

www.nysut.org | May/June 2018



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All in!

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reported at
100 percent | **6**

THIS ISSUE OF
NYSUT UNITED
CONTAINS
INFORMATION
REGARDING
THE NYSUT
MEMBER
BENEFITS
SUMMARY
ANNUAL
REPORT

NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS

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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.

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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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First round of state testing deemed 'disastrous'

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunders@nysutmail.org

Students in tears after hours of standardized testing. Faulty benchmarks that mislabel kids and schools. A disastrous rollout of computer-based testing.

Those were some of the issues raised by union leaders, educators and parents about the state's first round of standardized tests for grades 3-8 in April.

"If the State Education Department wants to restore the trust and confidence of parents in its testing system, this isn't the way to do it," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. "If children are going to sit for state standardized tests and are prepared to do their very best, SED must be able to guarantee that the tests are fair and accurate, and they don't leave kids anxious and rattled."

In the weeks leading up to the English Language Arts testing, NYSUT raised strong concerns and questions. After a data breach earlier this year, NYSUT wrote a detailed letter to SED and the Board of Regents, calling on them to put the brakes on computer-based testing. NYSUT voiced concerns about inequity for low-wealth districts; a lack of infrastructure and poor Internet capability in some schools, and whether computer-based testing accurately measures student learning — or just how well students can maneuver around a keyboard.

The state's foray into computer-based testing turned out even worse than the union predicted. In many of the nearly 300 schools test driving the new system, students were unable to log in, lost work or had to repeat entire tests. Widespread reports of technology failures came flooding into NYSUT, news outlets and across social media.

Teachers in Victor, Saranac Lake, Shenendehowa and Spencerport, for example, reported some schools were unable to administer the computer-based tests properly because of technological failures. In at least one fourth-grade class in the Capital Region,



students' entire tests were wiped out by malfunctioning computers. In Yonkers, some students "lost" their tests, while others attempting to answer multiple choice questions reportedly could only choose between four answers — all of which said "system error."

While SED initially tried to call it a "glitch," SED Commissioner MaryEllen Elia and Regents

Chancellor Betty Rosa ended the week with a late Friday afternoon statement acknowledging what they called "an unacceptable failure" and vowing to hold the state's new testing company vendor, Questar, accountable.

Educators raised numerous concerns about the traditional pencil and paper tests, too.

NYSUT's Twitter and Facebook feeds were filled with heartbreaking anecdotes from members who described student frustration, exhaustion and tears. Now that the tests are untimed, educators at some schools reported students as young as 8 years old sitting for five or six hours to finish their work. Others said students sat through their lunch period. One teacher tweeted: "I had three students tell me since they took the test through eighth period, they did not eat the entire day. One girl thanked me for the extra

Starburst (candy) I gave her as that was all she had to eat since dinner the night before."

The week's developments only added fuel to the ongoing condemnation of the state's testing system. On Monday, the day before testing began, NYSUT launched an online Thunderclap calling for the state to fix the unfair benchmarks, or cut scores, that set proficiency rates for the standardized tests.

Opt-out advocates, meanwhile, said the problems underscored their concerns and encouraged parents to consider opting their children out of the state's grades 3-8 math assessments that begin May 1.

NYSUT posted fact sheets for parents and educators outlining opt-out rights at www.nysut.org/optout.

Tell SED and the Regents about YOUR experience with this year's first round of state testing!

Whether it was the paper/pencil exams or the computer-based tests, we heard troubling stories of developmentally inappropriate questions, excessively long testing sessions and a variety of technology failures. Now's the time to share these accounts with the SED Commissioner and the Regents. Go to mac.nysut.org and email your message to the Regents and commissioner.

NOTE: This is not a form letter. Be sure to fill in the subject line and an email message — this is YOUR story!



COMING UP

May 6-12

National Nurses Week. Visit www.nursingworld.org for ideas to celebrate nurses. The 2018 theme: Nurses Inspire, Innovate, Influence.

May 7-8

NYS Board of Regents meets, Albany



May 7-11

National Teacher Appreciation Week, visit www.nea.org and www.pta.org for resources and ideas.



May 8

LGBTQ Advocacy Day
Health Care Lobby Day

May 15

Statewide school budget and board voting

June 20

Last scheduled session for New York State Legislature, Albany

June 30-July 5

NEA Convention, Minneapolis, MN

On the cover

Christopher Albrecht, 2018 New York State Teacher of the Year.

Cover photos by El-Wise Noisette and Becky Miller

Tough talks produce a solid budget, with work to be done

Boosts school aid, funds hospitals, addresses *Janus*

By **NED HOSKIN**

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After marathon negotiations and debate that came down to the deadline, the enacted state budget represents progress and moves New York's public schools and community colleges forward.



■ Kevin McCallister and Claudia Murphy, of Southern Westchester BOCES, in Albany for BOCES advocacy day.

"Facing a challenging fiscal environment and threats from Washington, we advocated for a state education budget that would help students — and our public schools — continue to make strides," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

"A nearly \$900 million overall increase to school districts; more state funding for community colleges; and the restoration of a lifeline for SUNY hospitals are steps forward," Pallotta added. "As we continue to press for initiatives important to public education and working families, we thank

those who advocated and secured protections for public sector unions and who made public education and health care their priorities during these difficult talks."

The enacted budget includes numerous policy initiatives, including labor protections to help mitigate an adverse *Janus* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court (see page 11). NYSUT

will continue to advocate for statutory changes that will return teacher evaluations to local control without any state mandates, Pallotta said.

The 2018-19 enacted budget totals \$168.3 billion. It closes a state budget deficit of \$4.4 billion without significant proposals to raise revenue. Here are some highlights.

Pre-K-12 school aid

■ The enacted budget increases public school aid by \$859 million, or 3.41 percent. The Foundation Aid increase is \$618 million, with a set-aside for community schools of \$215 million. Expense-based aid, which includes BOCES, is fully funded at \$240 million.

Teacher centers and professional development

■ The spending plan restores teacher center funding in the amount of \$14.26 million and provides funding for the Mentor Teacher Intern Program, \$2 million; National Board

Certification, \$368,000; and Teachers of Tomorrow, \$25 million.

Charitable funds

■ The budget creates two types of educational charitable funds to help mitigate the loss of state and local tax deductions in the new federal tax scheme, one on the state level and one on the local school district level. NYSUT advocated strongly to ensure that the state-level fund only benefits elementary and secondary education in public school districts. State residents may also contribute to the SUNY or CUNY foundations.

Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program

■ The budget creates a \$1 million loan forgiveness program for certified teachers who are employed full time in an elementary or secondary school, have outstanding student loan debts, and either teach in a



PHOTOS: EL-WISE NOISETTE

■ Special Schools Day: From left, Nataly Macchia and Roseanna Cutieatta, from the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls school.

shortage subject area or a hard-to-staff district. Economically disadvantaged applicants may also qualify.

Community schools

■ The state continues to fund community schools through a Foundation Aid set-aside that increases from \$150 million to \$200 million.

SUNY and CUNY

■ The budget includes \$729 million in operating aid for SUNY state-operated campuses and \$547 million in operating aid for CUNY senior colleges.



■ June Smith, left, Smithtown Teachers Association, and Lorraine Hegarty, Three Village TA, visit with a Long Island lawmaker during the Committee of 100.

Education at stake in crucial special elections April 24

By Ned Hoskin

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With the precarious balance of power shifting in the state Senate, the results of the April 24 special elections for legislative seats will carry extra significance. Education is going to be a major issue.

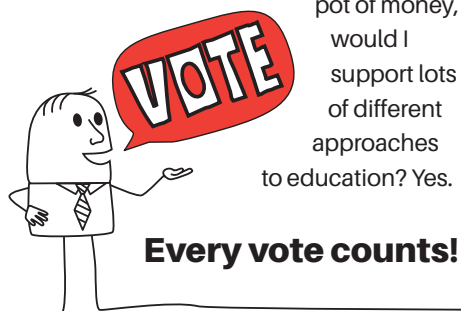
Shelley Mayer, NYSUT's pick to fill the 37th Senate District seat in Westchester, is running against a champion of corporate charter schools who has been supported in the past by the family of embattled U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

"My opponent's campaign is funded by millions of dollars from

out of state people who do not identify themselves as advocates of charter schools. It's completely disguised," said Mayer, a Democrat and member of the Assembly from Yonkers.

"One of our big complaints is that traditional public schools need additional funding, and the fact is the Senate Republicans have bailed out these charter schools time and time again using the same pot of money," she said. "If there was an unlimited

pot of money, would I support lots of different approaches to education? Yes.



But there's not an unlimited pot and all of our traditional public schools need additional money. Districts like Portchester and New Rochelle need more foundation aid. There's not an unlimited supply and our first priority should be traditional public schools."

Taking a break from door knocking for the union's candidate, Yonkers Federation of Teachers President Samantha Rosado Ciriello said union members understand the difference.

"Shelley has supported our schools, and because of Shelley we've avoided closing pre-Ks, we've gotten after-school programs, we've gotten additional funding for rebuilding Yonkers," she said. "We support Shelley Mayer!"

Feet on the street

NYSUT members in several regions of the state have been pounding the pavement, manning phone banks and putting the union's greatest asset — people power — into action for candidates in the special elections: **Patrick Burke**, an adjunct professor at Buffalo State and a NYSUT member in the union's Pipeline Project, for AD 142 in Western New York; **Cindy Doran**, a retired business teacher and NYSUT member from Troy, for AD 107; **Harvey Epstein**, for AD 74 on the Lower East Side; **Ari Espinal**, for the open AD 39 in Central Queens; **Steve Stern**, an advocate for public education, for AD 10 on Long Island; and **Luis Sepulveda** for SD 32 and **Nathalia Fernandez** for AD 80, both in the Bronx.



■ NYSUT President Andy Pallotta with student activists from Brooklyn College, his alma mater, on Higher Education Advocacy Day.



■ Building support for higher ed: Carolyn Kube and John Schumacher, right, both of UUP, meet with Sen. Kevin Parker, D-Brooklyn.

SUNY and CUNY Community College Base Aid

■ The spending plan provides an additional \$18 million in base aid funding which equates to an FTE increase of \$100 per student.

SUNY hospitals

■ The enacted budget provides \$92 million in funding for the SUNY hospitals, which will be allocated from the federal Care Restructuring Enhancement Pilot Program.

SUNY capital funding

■ The enacted budget restores \$200 million to state-operated campuses for a total of \$550 million. An additional \$35 million was included for SUNY community colleges for a total of \$74.2 million. The additional

funding for community colleges is for Fashion Institute of Technology, Nassau County CC and Ulster County CC. Educational Opportunity Centers received a \$10 million capital appropriation.

All in! Sticking with Our Union!

The following locals have recently reported 100 percent membership cards signed.

- Abraham Wing Teachers Association**, led by Melissa Lank
- Alden Central Schools SRP Association**, led by Patricia Overhoff
- Alexander United Teachers**, led by Paul Janes Jr.
- Andes Faculty Association**, led by Anthony Coiro
- Arkport Staff United**, led by Daniel Thompson
- Berne-Knox-Westerlo TA**, led by Kelly Gallo
- Clifton Fine TA**, led by Jessica Schreppel and Judy Sullivan
- Clymer Education Support Personnel**, led by Jerrold Schurman
- Coxsackie-Athens Assistants and Aides**, led by Darlene Mergendahl
- Coxsackie-Athens Clerical Service Unit**, led by Ann Cure and Donna Kenny
- Edinburg Education Association**, led by Thomas Moore
- Fayetteville-Manlius Education Support Personnel**, led by Susan McHale
- Frontier Registered Nurses**, led by Sheila Brown
- Geneseo Central Schools FA**, led by Allison Chanler
- Indian Lake FA**, led by Mellissa Mulvey
- LaSalle Institute FA**, led by Joann Reid
- Laurens TA**, led by David Miller and Beverly Murch
- Lyndonville TA**, led by Shane T. Price
- Niskayuna Nurses Association**, led by Carol Werblin
- Otselic Valley Employees Association**, led by Patricia Graham
- Pembroke SRP Federation**, led by Cheryl Konieczny
- Randolph Central Schools TA**, led by Cory Derrenbacher
- Remsen TA**, led by Kelly Runninger
- Scio TA**, led by Kevin Mole
- South Kortright ESP**, led by Tammy Smith and Penny Scofield
- Wyoming TA**, led by Peter Terbuska



Don't let New York become Wisconsin

By Matt Smith
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No one in Wisconsin saw it coming. When Scott Walker campaigned for the state's top political post in 2010, he made no mention of his intent to launch a double-fisted assault on public unions. But soon after taking office in January 2011, the far-right Walker wasted no time unleashing a reign of terror that drastically cut the pay of unionized public workers, dismantled long-held protections and devastated union membership.

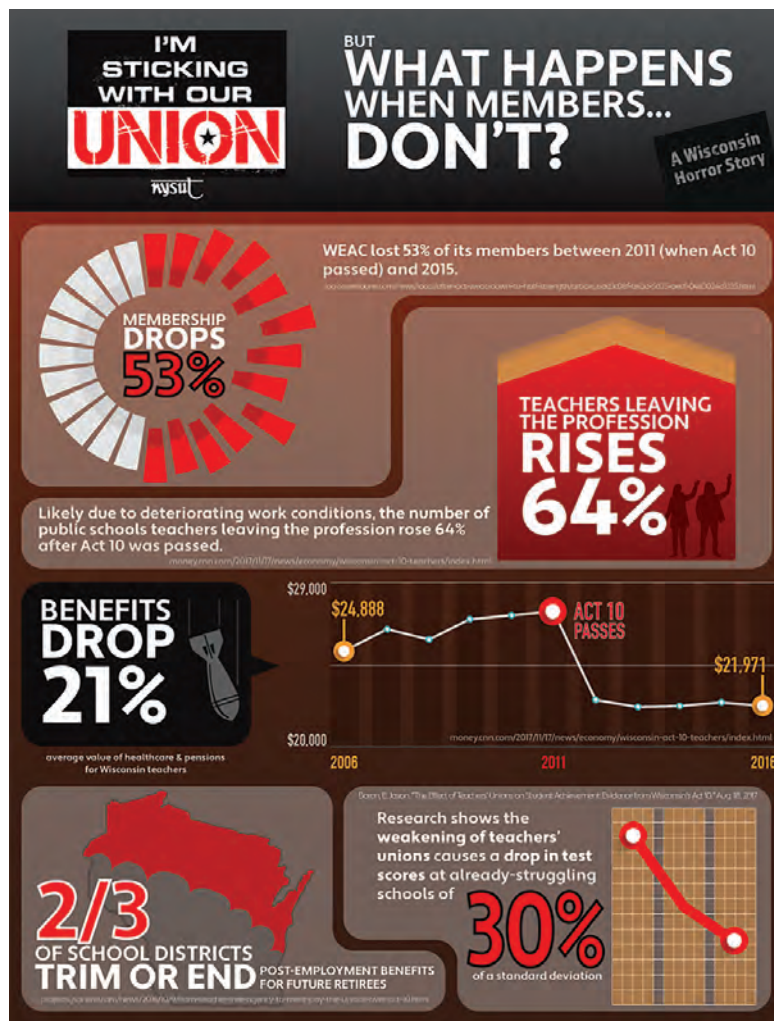
Organized labor in the historically labor friendly Badger State was never the same. And to make matters worse, Walker followed up his attack three years later, winning passage of right-to-work legislation and delivering another blow to working families.

As the dust began to settle, Wisconsin Education Association Council President Betsy Kippers issued a warning to public unions.

"Be ready," Kippers advised. "There's a national effort to pick you off issue by issue, state by state."

She was right. Republican lawmakers in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana all passed legislation that weakened the collective bargaining rights and hard-earned protections of public unions. And now, the U.S. Supreme Court will soon issue a decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* — a case funded by wealthy anti-labor interests that could devastate the future of public unions on a nationwide scale for possibly generations to come.

Don't be fooled. *Janus* — despite the claims of its plaintiff and supporters — is not about free speech, or union dues. Like the failed *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* case before it, *Janus* is about the rich getting richer at the expense of working families. It is about denying workers a voice on the job. It is about



gutting the middle class.

When Walker went after labor in Wisconsin, he drafted a union-busting blueprint that those behind the *Janus* case hope to follow. And the fallout from Walker's attack was immediate: Teacher turnover exploded. Workers' pension and health-coverage contributions soared.

So, what can be done to defend ourselves against a looming Supreme Court decision in *Janus*?

Well — first and foremost — signing a re-enrollment card is the best way to defend ourselves from the forces looking to destroy our unions.

Stay connected to your local, as well. Be active. Be involved. Be engaged. And use your voice to spread the value of union

membership, including the fact that unionists enjoy higher compensation than non-union members, collective bargaining rights, legal representation if needed, good health coverage and a secure retirement.

If our voice is diminished, our students, our schools and the people we serve lose.

By standing together, we have the power to exercise and protect our rights, and to defend our voice, our values and our union.

We cannot afford to let Wisconsin happen in New York.

NYSUT's *Janus* Action page has many tools to help you spread the word. Visit www.nysut.org/Janus and share on social media with the hashtag #ImStickingWithOurUnion.

VOTE May 15 to support your schools

By Ned Hoskin

nhoskin@nysutmail.org

Local school budget votes take place Tuesday, May 15, across the state. Unfortunately, school boards will again have to deal with the ill-advised tax cap lawmakers passed in 2011.

“Our students, schools and communities continue to cope with layoffs and cuts to many programs,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “Student success is at risk like never before. It is crucial for NYSUT members to vote May 15 to support school budgets in the districts where they live.”

The tax cap, which has been shown to disproportionately affect lower-income communities, sets



a limit on the growth of local property tax levies, or the total amount a school district can collect.

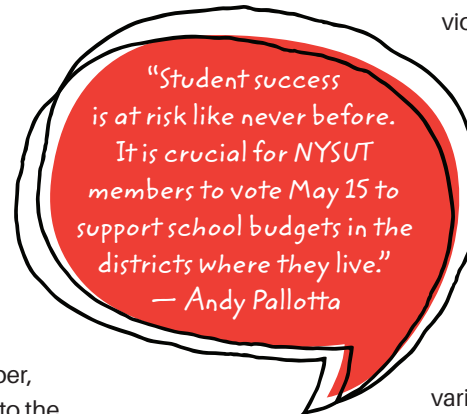
Districts calculate their local tax levy cap using a number of exemptions and a local growth factor. In addition, the cap allows some local exclusions. So, some end up higher and some end up lower than the state

tax cap number, which is tied to the rate of inflation or 2 percent, whichever is lower. This year the state tax cap is at 2 percent.

If your district wants to exceed its tax levy cap, the budget must be approved by a “supermajority” of 60 percent of those voting. NYSUT

continues working to reverse this requirement in the law on the premise that it is unconstitutional and violates the democratic principle of one person-one vote. The union maintains it’s wrong for a minority of 40 percent plus one to be able to decide the fate of the budget. NYSUT has a wide variety of materials and

training to help your local union get your school budget passed and elect school board candidates who are pro-public education. Contact your local president if you can help with postcards, phone banks or other activities to get out the vote.



Project brings union to the people



KARA SMITH

From left, NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale with Massena Federation of Teachers member April Charleson and students involved with the People Project. The project, a union initiative funded by NYSUT and supported by the American Federation of Teachers, is developing a shared vision for St. Lawrence County’s future with a focus on health issues, community schools and economic development.

Are you passionate about the union and enjoy talking to other members?

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Capital District & North
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| May 18-20
Long Island
Nassau Regional Office | June 8-10
Southern Tier
The Owego Treadway
Banquet & Conference Center |



June 29-July 1
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For more information or to apply, email MOI@nysutmail.org

Students, parents, educators target gun violence

By Ned Hoskin

nhoskin@nysutmail.org

On March 14, nearly 3 million students and allies walked out of schools nationwide. Millions more turned out for the March for Our Lives in the nation's capital and scores of other cities 10 days later. Tens of thousands marched in communities all over New York State.

One social media hashtag said it all: #ENOUGH!

"This generation has seen far too many fall in violence and called upon local, state and national officials to take concrete steps toward safer schools, free from gun violence,"

said Chris Sielaff of the Binghamton Teachers Association at the event organized by students in his city.

"Their message and conviction was inspiring to all in attendance."

The momentum continues, as shown by the day of action on April 20, the 19th anniversary of the Columbine shootings. Students at more than 2,000 schools across the U.S. walked out again, sharing the hashtag #NoMore.

At many New York schools, NYSUT members wore orange and rallied before school to tell students, "We're with you," prior to their walkouts later in the day. Others hosted voter registration drives to ensure the young people energized by this issue will be able to make their voices heard at the



ballot box. Still others held teach-ins, community forums, or town halls with local elected officials.

"We need real solutions that make our schools and our communities safer — not insane ideas like arming teachers," said Andy Pallotta, NYSUT president. "Our focus is on both the mass shootings in schools and on campuses and the gun violence that far too many students and families face in their communities every day."

Gun violence affects too many youth, especially in communities of color, on a daily basis, Pallotta said.

AFT President Randi Weingarten said, "We're standing together today to say NO MORE: No more children murdered in our classrooms or our streets. No more parents sending children to school who never come home. No more teachers, coaches, principals, librarians or other school staff standing between students and a gunman."

"We're not going away until the politicians show they are not afraid of the gun lobby and take common-sense steps to end the plague of gun violence in our country," she said.



EL-WISE NOISETTE PHOTOS

Students from the capital district and educators from the South Colonie TA (above left) joined the thousands who showed up to march at the Capitol in Albany (top and at right).



See page 21 for different voices on arming teachers and the impact educators have on students.



Amityville TA stood proudly in solidarity with students on #NationalWalkOutDay.



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, right, participates at a honk and wave event for safe schools with the Guilderland Teachers Association.



PROVIDED



PROVIDED

Kim Long, right, a second-grade teacher and member of the Pembroke Teachers' Federation, makes a statement at a Batavia march.

This generation has seen far too many fall in violence ... Their message and conviction was inspiring to all.
— Chris Sielaff
Binghamton TA



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

This sign at the Albany March for Our Lives speaks for itself.



PROVIDED

Team effort from the White Plains TA (above) demands an end to the madness at a march in Westchester County.

NYSUT staff members (right) take to the street to send a message of support for students and educators.



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

The Language of Teachers

Good Morning means I'm so glad you are here today.

Take out your work is actually a plea: show me what that beautiful mind is capable of.

Can you tell me more about that implores, do you know how much I care about you?

Yes, excellent says that in this room, you are valued.

Don't pack up yet begs you to stay; I need you to be a part of this family.

For homework, please please know

I think of you outside these 85 minutes.

That high five is an affirmation: I would give my life to protect you.

Thank you for your hard work today, I am scared.

I have hope.

I love you.

Kim Przybysz is a member of the Batavia Teachers Association. She wrote the above poem to capture the feelings of fear, frustration and hope shared by many public school educators.



Visit www.nysut.org for coverage of the April 20 Day of Action.

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NYSUT Legal contributes to court victory expanding rights for gay, lesbian workers

By Wendy M. Star and Christopher Lewis

NYSUT Office of the General Counsel

Don Zarda could fly. His charismatic life of action led him to take people by the hand and convince them to jump out of airplanes. Known as an intelligent, generous, fun and truly unique person, Zarda made friends across the globe as a skydiving expert and tandem jumping guide.

He also was gay, and didn't hesitate to tell folks, including his skydiving clients. Zarda was a civil rights activist and a bit of a rebel who enjoyed breaking stereotypes and gender norms. He often told female clients in tandem jumps about his sexual orientation to put them at ease regarding the close physical contact that's required.

One day in 2010, however, someone objected to this disclaimer. He was subsequently fired. Soon after that, he filed a lawsuit against his former employer claiming the company violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by discriminating against him because of his sexual orientation.

Four years later, at the age of 44, Zarda passed away in a BASE jumping accident — as a member of a skilled team of wingsuit adventurers in Europe. His sister and his partner continued the legal battle.

NYSUT's Office of General Counsel recently played a key role in expanding workplace protections for gay and lesbian workers, including the union's membership, by contributing to ultimate victory in Zarda's

discrimination case.

In April 2017, the family successfully appealed a lower court ruling to the full U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York. NYSUT attorneys Wendy M. Star and Christopher Lewis filed a friend of the court brief urging the court to hold that the Civil Rights Act prohibition on sex discrimination bars discrimination based on sexual orientation. Specifically, they argued that the protection the federal law already offers to shield workers against certain types of discrimination extends to gay and lesbian employees.

The court agreed. Chief Justice Katzmann, writing for the court, said "sexual orientation discrimination is motivated, at least in part by sex and is thus a subset of sex discrimination." He used the "comparative test," which asks "whether an employee's treatment would have been different but for that person's sex."

The court rejected the U.S. Justice Department's position, filed in an amicus brief, that the test should compare whether the employer treats lesbians and gay men similarly. Justice Katzmann said the correct test does not compare gay men to lesbians, but considers disparate treatment between lesbian employees and heterosexual male employees, or gay men to heterosexual women.

"In the context of Title VII," he wrote, "the statutory prohibition extends to all discrimination 'because of ... sex' and sexual orientation discrimination

is an actionable subset of sex discrimination."

The court also found that Title VII covers sexual orientation discrimination based on the "sex stereotype theory." Justice Katzmann said Title VII prohibits discrimination based on an individual's nonconformity with gender norms — norms such as the stereotype that men only date women and women only date men.

Lastly, the justice found that the law also prohibits "associational discrimination," which is discrimination suffered by an employee because of his or her association with a partner of the same sex.

NYSUT's Star and Lewis explain that the decision was a setback for the Justice Department, which argued that Title VII did not cover sexual-orientation discrimination in the workplace. This is the second appeals court to rule that the Civil Rights Act should be extended to include sexual orientation.

The case will most likely be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. NYSUT's Office of General Counsel will continue to monitor the case and advocate for expanding protections against discrimination toward LGBTQ members, while ensuring members receive any and all employment rights to which they are entitled.

— Ned Hoskin contributed to this article.



New York leads in protecting working people

A new state law aims to protect union membership in New York's public-sector workplaces in anticipation of an adverse ruling in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Additional protections for public-sector unions as part of the recently adopted state budget will help ensure that we can continue our work lifting the standard of living for all New Yorkers," NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. "The new anti-*Janus* language, promoted by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and supported in a bipartisan way by the Legislature, will help us continue to fight to improve our members' lives. It honors New York's long tradition of supporting labor as the foundation of a strong middle class, even as the wealthy elite and big corporations try to rob us of our voice and slash our wages, benefits and pensions."

The legislation clarifies that members who pay union dues will receive certain benefits and services, and unions cannot be forced to provide full benefits of membership to those who do not pay for them.

"NYSUT will continue to work to ensure that our members have strong unions, which means their voice and their values are heard in the workplace and in the corridors of power," Pallotta said.

**CONSTITUENCY
AWARD WINNERS**

**Celebrating Member
Excellence**

NYSUT annually recognizes individual members' excellence in leadership, union activism and outstanding commitment to their professions at the union's Representative Assembly. Learn more about the 2018 honorees throughout the pages of this issue of *NYSUT United* and at www.nysut.org/ra.



Follow the RA from home

NYSUT's highest policymaking body, the Representative Assembly, convenes Friday, April 27, following a jumpacked pre-RA leadership conference. RA delegates will act on two proposed constitutional amendments and 42 resolutions on a range of topics, from education, to health care and legislation.

Convention delegates will also elect NEA state directors and representatives to serve as delegates and alternates to the National Education Association convention.

For coverage of the convention, including officer speeches, remarks from dignitaries, and election results, visit www.nysut.org/ra. RA updates will also be available via the union's social media feeds on Facebook and Twitter.

Family engagement and community partnerships focus of NYSUT journal

If it takes a village to raise a child, in education, that village includes the school, educators, family — and the community.

"As we consider how to best serve the whole child, we know we can't do it in isolation. When we open our doors to families and community organizations and regard them as valuable resources, we can build understanding and increase communication," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. "This important collaboration can help to make our schools more successful in every way."

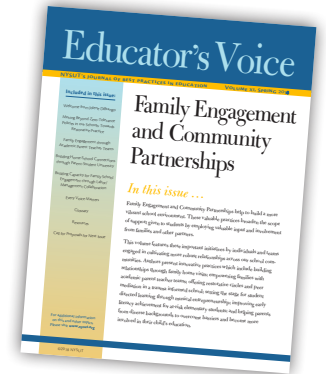
Volume XI of NYSUT's journal of best practices in education, *Educator's Voice*, will focus on "Family Engagement and Community Partnerships." Articles include a program that helps students find their voice and work on their musical skills, and a unique peer mediation program with a community mediation partner. Another focuses on a home visit program that was made possible through strong labor/management collaboration. The

journal will be available this spring for download at www.nysut.org/educatorsvoice.

NYSUT is already soliciting authors for Volume XII, "Culturally Responsive Teaching: Celebrating Diversity in Our Schools."

New York's classrooms are among the most diverse in the country. The practice of culturally responsive teaching fosters a community of learning that nurtures the unique perspectives, experiences and differences students bring to school and incorporates them into the fabric of the school.

For more information, or to download the call for proposals for Volume XII, visit www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/educators-voice/call-for-proposals. The deadline for proposals is June 15.



Teaching students who don't look like you

NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust is offering a new course that focuses on improving student outcomes by increasing teacher understanding of the impact of race, culture and language on the learning environment.

"Culturally Responsive Teaching with Diverse Learners" is offered through SUNY Empire State College at a number of Long Island locations.

The course can be used to meet the state's Part 154 regulations governing instruction for English language learners or the new Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) professional development requirements. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a research-based method designed to enhance student engagement by implementing strategies to develop stronger relationships, culturally inclusive curriculum and instruction techniques and positive learning environments.

NYSUT members receive discounted tuition for ELT courses. To register, visit <https://goo.gl/T5WJMc>. To learn more about ELT, go to elt.nysut.org.



Register now: SEMI High Tech U Teacher Edition

Registration is now open for SEMI High Tech U Teacher Edition Program, a free two-day program that provides industry-led, hands-on activities and curriculum focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

The program, to be held July 18-19 at NYSUT headquarters in Latham, offers K-12 teachers and school counselors a tour of the Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Albany for an up-close look at how relevant STEM skills are utilized in a high-tech workplace. The High Tech U curriculum — which features instruction from industry professionals — is designed to be brought back to the classroom and will include information on micro-electronics and alternative energy.

Continental breakfast and lunch are included. Costs are underwritten by the program's leading sponsors. Participants will also earn 14 Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) hours from NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust.

To register, visit www.cvent.com/d/1gqmn2. For more info, contact Terry McSweeney at tmcsween@nysutmail.org or 518-213-6000, ext. 6047.

CONSTITUENCY AWARD WINNERS

Higher Education Members of the Year



Cynthia Eaton

Faculty Association Suffolk County Community College

Cynthia Eaton, an English professor at Suffolk Community College, has made her mark on two NYSUT higher ed locals. Before becoming an activist with the Faculty Association

of Suffolk Community College, where she currently serves as secretary, Eaton was an officer of the Mohawk Valley Community College Professional Association, where she was an award-winning newsletter editor and began building a reputation as an expert in online learning.

Eaton has a particular interest in MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) and has lectured about the possible impact of MOOCs on workers' rights and intellectual property rights. For several years, she was a monthly columnist for the AFT's *On Campus* magazine, where she wrote extensively about best practices in distance education.

Among her many community activities, Eaton organized the first Breast Cancer Awareness Walk at Suffolk's Eastern Campus, an event that raised more than \$7,000 for charity.



Bethany Gizzi

Faculty Association of Monroe Community College

Bethany Gizzi is a sociology professor at Monroe Community College and president of the Faculty Association of Monroe Community College, where she is a noted leader in the fight for respect and fair-

ness for her members.

Gizzi has served as lead negotiator for her local's last three contract cycles and as co-chair of her college's Committee on Labor-Management Cooperation.

Gizzi is an active member of NYSUT's Women's Committee; a fierce advocate for additional funding for community colleges; an outspoken voice supporting the power of collective bargaining; and an advocate for adjuncts and their issues.

In 2016, Gizzi was invited to the White House to attend President Obama's Free College Initiative panel discussion. She teaches a number of popular sociology courses, including environmental sociology, and has been co-chair of her academic department. She is also a respected and active member of the American Sociological Association.

SUNY ESF faculty, staff use their collective voice to bring change

Following a vote by United University Professions members that overwhelmingly called for his non-renewal, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry President Quentin D. Wheeler has announced his resignation, effective June 30.

ESF Chapter President Scott Blair said the goal all along has been to listen to members, who were especially upset after Wheeler abruptly dismissed three UUP colleagues from their positions as department chairs just three days before the start of the spring semester. Members also noted Wheeler's failure to make a detailed budget presentation for the past five years.

"This is about the concerns of our members," Blair said.

In March, UUP's statewide office oversaw a chapterwide vote on two resolutions that the ESF chapter

developed with input from members. One resolution asked that SUNY not renew Wheeler's contract; the other asked that UUP's statewide leaders help the chapter review the college's finances and evaluate campus administrators.

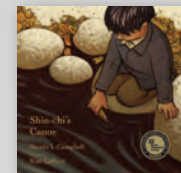
UUP mailed a ballot to every chapter member. The return rate was 75 percent, with 85 percent of the respondents approving the resolution calling for Wheeler's removal; 91 percent approved the second resolution.

"Faculty, staff and students made their discontent with Wheeler known, and their strong, collective voice was heard," said UUP President Fred Kowal.

UUP's statewide office is expected to continue seeking a review of the ESF campus finances, in response to concerns from the chapter that the ESF administration has given conflicting information about the college's financial reserves and operating budget.

Shin-chi's Canoe

by Nicola I. Campbell
Illustrated by Kim LaFave



Recommended by: Lorraine Florczyk, school librarian, John T. Waugh Elementary, Lake Shore Teachers' Association.

Suitable for: grades 4–12

Why I chose it: This story tells us why Native Americans want to be the ones to tell us their experiences and history. This picture book tells the story of a girl returning to the residential school with her 6-year-old brother. The picture book format is useful to introduce human rights.

What I like best: The simplicity of the story provokes thought and discussion. The drawings help tell the story, showing scenes such as children riding in the back of a cattle truck on their way to school. This story depicts the reality of these Indian residential schools, telling of a strong loving family required to send their children away to the school — and then joyously welcoming them home.

How teachers can use this book:

This book is a great way to discuss human rights. Fifth graders learn about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and while reading this book to students they quickly identify violations of human rights. This book can be used with middle school and high school students to discuss human rights and colonization of Native Americans. There is a one-page introduction by the author that provides background on the history of residential schools in Canada and the United States.

About the Author: Nicola Campbell is of Indigenous Nle7kepmx, Syilx and Métis ancestry and is named after her home, British Columbia's Nicola Valley, CA. She is the author of *A Day with Yahah*, *Grandpa's Girls* and *Shi-shi-etko*, which won the Aboriginal Children's Book of the Year Award. Visit www.salishwriter.com/ for more information.

"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.

Making schools a safe harbor



EL-WISE NOISETTE

By Sylvia Saunders
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When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico last fall, Nelson Rolando Rodriguez had just started third grade. The 8-year-old doesn't like talking about the monster storm, or what it did to his homeland — but he vividly remembers how scared he was in his 15th floor apartment.

"There were trees everywhere and the tower was moving," Nelson says quietly. "I thought my building was going to blow down."

While the tower withstood the winds, Nelson's local school was devastated — one of hundreds on the island that were unable to reopen.

Several weeks later, Nelson's family headed to the United States, hoping for a fresh start.

It was a difficult journey — Nelson had a tough time adjusting to schools that lacked bilingual education and other crucial support services. Traveling up the East Coast with his

grandma, mom and sister, Nelson tried attending schools in Georgia, then Alabama and Pennsylvania, before finally settling in Syracuse.

"We're actually Nelson's fifth school since the hurricane," said Jesus Ortiz, a Syracuse Teachers Association member. "He lost a lot of time and he's definitely struggled. But he's where he belongs now."

Nelson is one of more than 2,500 students from Puerto Rico who have enrolled in New York schools since the hurricane. New York is a natural destination, with more than 1 million Puerto Ricans — the most of any state in the nation, according to the U.S. Census.

The post-hurricane influx has hit virtually every part of New York and left schools and local community agencies scrambling to help families with an array of needs, from housing and employment to food and warm clothing. While New York City reported nearly 500 new students from

AFTER THE STORM: NY's top eight districts with students from Puerto Rico

Rochester 572	Schenectady 53
Buffalo 498	Amsterdam 45
NYC 464	Dunkirk 42
Syracuse 103	Source: State Education Department
Yonkers 98	

Puerto Rico since the hurricane, the majority of the displaced students so far have come to upstate cities like Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers, Schenectady and Amsterdam, according to the State Education Department. Community activists said many of the newcomers settled upstate due to the lower cost of living and because that's where their family and friends are.

"In the months ahead, we expect these numbers to grow substantially, as more and more families are finding it difficult to remain in Puerto Rico," said NYSUT First Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham, who is heading the union's ongoing relief efforts. "I've really been inspired by the way our members are going above and

▣ Amsterdam TA's Maria Mastrocinque's class includes several newcomers from Puerto Rico.

beyond to make these newcomers feel at home."

On a recent visit to Seymour Dual Language Academy in Syracuse, Abraham, a former Spanish teacher who was born in Haiti, was impressed by the bilingual school's warm and inclusive environment.

"Our culture has been one of creating a family atmosphere, an all-in team approach," said social worker Pedro Abreu, who came to this country from the Dominican Republic at the age of 10 and thrived in a New York City bilingual program himself. Since most of the newcomers arrived with no educational records, Abreu has made it a point to meet personally with parents and make home visits. Abreu also started a support group where students are able to talk about everything from difficulties making friends, to adjusting to Syracuse's harsh winter weather.

“Not everyone has stayed — some families went back because it was too stressful or because they couldn’t find employment,” Abreu said. “These kids are coping with a lot of challenges. Families have split up, they’re struggling to get by ... One child’s parent committed suicide.”

Another role model at Seymour is third-grade teacher Jesus Ortiz, who grew up in Puerto Rico and settled in Syracuse when he was 17. “I tell them ‘Look at me,’ and ‘if you work hard, you can make it here, too,’” said Ortiz, who worked 13 years as a teaching assistant while he earned his teaching degree.

With nearly one-third of his class arriving from Puerto Rico since the storm, Ortiz does little things to remind the kids he is one of them. They love to play “Enano Gigante,” a listening game that is similar to Simon Says. “It’s a traditional game in Puerto Rico that every child grows up playing,” Ortiz said. “It helps make the connection.”

Ortiz also keeps in close contact with parents: When Syracuse had its first big storm, he sent text messages reminding them that on snow days, their kids should stay home.

Academically, the bilingual program — where instruction is conducted in both English and Spanish — helps make the transition easier. The students also receive English as a Second Language services, giving them a double dose of English. Ortiz sets his room up so that the newcomers are strategically placed so they have a nearby helper. If one student doesn’t know a word in English, the



SYLVIA SAUNDERS



EL-WISE NOISETTE



ANDREW WATSON



EL-WISE NOISETTE

others will jump in to help.

“The biggest challenge for me is helping these children catch up academically,” Ortiz said. “For some, their early schooling was very limited and others were out of school for months because of the hurricane.”

Educators in other schools around the state reported the same difficulty with academic challenges.

“It takes a highly customized program for each child,” said Lisa Barbarino, an English as a New Language teacher in Amsterdam whose number of students has basically doubled since the start of the school year. “A big part of ENL is creating an environment that reduces

anxiety — where you can laugh and not be afraid to make mistakes.”

anxiety — where you can laugh and not be afraid to make mistakes.”

As more newcomers arrive every week, districts are struggling with severe space shortages and a lack of bilingual staff, ENL and English

as a Second Language teachers. With Seymour class size capped and only one other bilingual school in the district, it will be difficult to find appropriate placements for more newcomers.

“They really have a great thing going here (at Seymour),” said Syracuse TA President Megan Root. “But they’re at capacity. As they talk about expanding this, or doing this at the middle school level, the lesson here is that you have to invest in staffing and services if you’re going to do things right.”

NYSUT continues to make the case for targeted funding to help schools handle the influx of students and provide the special supports they need.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With so many in Puerto Rico still struggling, NYSUT members and supporters have generously donated nearly \$140,000 to NYSUT’s Disaster Relief Fund for hurricane relief. Starting April 24, a Disaster Relief Silent Auction of donated art and gift baskets will be online at <http://NYSUT2018.gesture.com>, with bids ending at 10:30 a.m., April 27.

You may also visit www.nysut.org/disasterrelief to donate online, or make your check payable to NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund and mail to NYSUT Headquarters, Attn. Disaster Relief, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110.





SERVICE CITIZENSHIP RESPECT



PHOTOS: BECKY MILLER

By Leslie Fottrell
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The end of the school day is a busy time for some of Christopher W. Albrecht's fourth-grade students at the Fred W. Hill School in Monroe County. Codie, Micah, Moses and Cash huddle briefly around a white plastic tub filled with small stuffed animals. They consult a list, agree on a zoned-delivery approach and then zip around their respective quadrants, dropping an animal onto each student's desk. The animals wear tags, fastened with yarn, that tell students how to begin tomorrow's school day. Codie drops a red bear wearing the tag, "Round Table," onto a desk.

"These are my students who need extra help with homework," says Albrecht, who teaches English language arts, science and technology. Albrecht is the 2018 New York State Teacher of the Year.

The after-school students call themselves the Freezer Pop Club because Albrecht provides the frozen treats for the twice weekly meetings.

With the class set up for tomorrow, the boys assemble at the round table, choose their pops and dive into homework. Micah takes a careful bite of his icy pop. "I like it," he says. "It's fun and you get your homework done."

They work on their ELA assignments with great focus and intensity despite, or perhaps partly because

of, the freezer pops. Albrecht, too, is completely focused on assisting the students collectively and individually as they work on their writing using colored pens. His method of teaching incorporates writing units by well-known author and teacher Lucy Calkins, the 6+1 Traits of Writing — ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions and presentation — and Albrecht's own colorful creativity.

Students use five different colored pens, each with a unique function. For instance, students add similes to a penciled draft with green pens, correct typos with red pens and use blue pens to replace ordinary words such as "ate," with more descriptive ones, like "devoured."

"He was sleeping," Codie reads

and pauses, deep in thought, blue pen ready.

Albrecht prompts: "Codie was sleeping. Codie was ..."
"Snoring?" Codie offers.

"Yes," Albrecht answers. "We can infer that he is sleeping and you've got a sound along with it. That's a smart answer."

The next morning, thanks to the animal tags, all students go to their first station, but no one stays put for long. By 9:45 a.m., they have moved seven times, rotating effortlessly between full class learning, and small group instruction at the round table, on the carpet in the front of the room or at their own desks.

All the while, Albrecht reinforces good behavior, kindness and citizenship, wherever he is, whatever the lesson. "That was very kind. That's good leadership," he says to a student who

■ Left: Stuffed bears help students determine how to begin each school day.

2018 Teacher of the Year instills positive values into learning





LESLIE FOTTRILL

helps another with work.

This, perhaps, is his most valuable quality. The constant side dialogue carefully interwoven throughout the day, like a silver thread in an elaborate learning tapestry, adds a subliminal richness to his lessons, and in interactions with students, colleagues and the parent helpers he welcomes into his classroom.

Albrecht praises good choices in scholarship, leadership and compassion; prompts students to do the same with their classmates; models good behavior; corrects inappropriate words or deeds; and sometimes just offers life advice.

"I feel like it's not what you teach, but how you teach it," he says. "I want to teach core values that will prepare students for the future, so they can learn to prepare and adapt."

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene T. DiBrango says it is Albrecht's emphasis on respect that "is so important in creating a safe and inspiring environment for students to learn and to thrive."

Albrecht has an abundant repertoire to entice students to love learning. He teaches science in a white lab coat. He uses a singing bowl and deep breathing to promote a calm and peaceful learning environment. And, "he's funny. Sometimes he'll say, 'It's about to get crazy in here!'" says Parker, heading to the rug for a group lesson.

Three students volunteer to act out a few lines of narrative so the others can watch and record the descriptive elements that make a story come to life. Albrecht becomes a director,

encouraging them to exaggerate facial expressions so the class can see and describe an eyebrow jutting upward in surprise, or a mouth curled downward with disdain.

"Great! Now get to work adding description," Albrecht tells the class. "Remember, good writing gets into your head, and it gets into your heart."

Several former students who now work as journalists credit Albrecht's passionate instruction as the impetus for their career choice.

Samantha Spagnola, a high school senior and former student who interns in his classroom several afternoons a week, admits she still uses colored pens and says Albrecht inspired her to pursue teaching.

In his 20 years at Hill Elementary, Albrecht has mentored 11 student teachers, more than 20 student observers and six high school interns.

"He is so helpful, supportive and encouraging," said Brittny Emery, Albrecht's current student teacher. "Very early on he made me feel part of the team in the classroom."

Albrecht meets with incoming student teachers in the summer, motivating them via email and phone calls. "I hope to impart joy and love for the profession," he says.

That's not the only work he does in the summer. After Albrecht receives his class list, he begins to handcraft personalized pencil holders for each student. It takes many steps, from cutting the wood and drilling the holes, to burning each student's first name with a pyrography pen into the holder and then sanding and staining the wood. The

Left: Albrecht offers after-school homework help to students who call themselves the Freezer Pop Club.

pencil holders are as useful as they are adorable and, when pressed, Albrecht estimates he spends about a half hour making each one. It is certainly time well spent. The pencil holders become treasured talismans of learning and of Albrecht's lasting impact on former students.

"I still have my pencil holder," Spagnola beams.

"I am surrounded by excellence," says Albrecht. "I have been blessed with Amy Stoker, my teaching partner of 20 years. Likewise, classroom aide, Lisa Kennedy has been with us for 10 years. Sharing the responsibility of educating children with two people who I think the world of is a dream come true."

Albrecht works hard in his classroom to inspire all his students.

"Chris feels that his day doesn't end when the school day ends," says Principal Brandon Broughton. "He makes himself available in the evening to answer homework questions," by phone and in person.

Albrecht hosts monthly after-school movie parties for students who complete their book packet requirements, eats his lunch with students in the classroom, and has recess with his students. He is the yearbook adviser and an announcer at district basketball games.

He credits his wife, Jennifer, who he said handles most of the home responsibilities in addition to having a full-time job, which allows him to spend the extra time he needs for lesson plans, mentoring student teachers, after-school assignments and community service. "I married my high school sweetheart," Albrecht says. "She's amazing, understanding and supportive. I'm very lucky."

Community service a hallmark for Brockport teacher

Christopher W. Albrecht emphasizes the values of community service and citizenship to his fourth-graders, yet his actions speak louder than words.

Albrecht, 2018 NYS Teacher of the Year, is a trustee of the Western Monroe Historical Society in Brockport, which maintains the Morgan-Manning House. Built in 1854, the house was privately owned until a tragic fire in 1964 claimed the life of the last member of the Morgan family to live there. The society fully restored the house.

"It's a crowning jewel of Brockport," says Albrecht, a member of the Brockport Teachers' Association, led by Orlando Benzan.

Brockport TA members help clean up and maintain the grounds of the house, Benzan says. Albrecht also ensures, "there are opportunities for his students to get involved and learn about the history of our community."

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta says making community involvement an integral part of education encourages good citizenship. "It's wonderful to see the connection between students, the Brockport community and the Brockport TA."

Albrecht's teaching is all about those connections. He and Jane, a fourth-grader who loves the sciences, began researching Monroe County's Lewis Swift, a well-known 19th century astronomer. In January, with Albrecht's help, Jane and three other Brockport students made an in-costume, multimedia presentation at the Morgan-Manning House. "Star Struck in Brockport —

Lewis Swift, The Man Who Looked Up" merged science and history into the account of Swift's stellar accomplishments. Last year, in honor of the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, Albrecht guided a group of students to research Brockport resident and celebrated author Mary Jane Holmes.





PHOTOS PROVIDED

Lessons in compassion, service

Union nurse brings aid, hope to Puerto Rico

By **Liza Frenette**
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Like most health care professionals, Alicia Schwartz, a care coordinator with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, is trained in providing calm, steady care in the midst of medical crisis. The caregiver mindset kicks into high gear when tragedy strikes.

Schwartz was one of more than two dozen nurses and health care professionals who traveled to Puerto Rico last fall to help with recovery efforts.

On the island, Schwartz and her team found deplorable conditions. She treated an elderly couple living

in a sodden house missing half its roof.

The rooms were filled with mold.

There were no windows or doors. But their lifelong possessions were there and they did not want to leave.

"We provided the wife with asthma medicine, gave them supplies, a portable battery operated nebulizer, medication, and taught them about (drinking) water safety," Schwartz said.

At other homes, Schwartz taught people how to wrap

soggy mattresses with plastic or to use plastic mattress covers so they would not be sleeping directly on wet material. Some of the people are so poor, she explained, that it would be unthinkable for them to throw out their mattress.

"If your home is devastated, what money do you have to spend?" asked Schwartz, who was born in New York but moved to Puerto Rico at age 11. On this trip, her team drove through towns wrecked by mudslides, and traveled roads garbled by debris. They were escorted by town mayors, policemen or the National Guard.

Schwartz, a member of the United Federation of Teachers/Federation

of Nurses, has been named NYSUT 2018 Health Care Professional of the Year for her work

in New York City and her feet-on-the-ground response to Hurricane Maria.

That care continues stateside. Since returning to New York, she has helped more than 50 families on the island by providing solar lights.

Some families have been without electricity since September. No heat. No

refrigeration. No stove to cook on. Thousands of homes still have tarps for roofs "and hurricane season will be starting again soon," Schwartz said, adding that the suicide rate in Puerto Rico is on the rise.

"It's really hard to see a part of the United States that's treated like a third-world country," she said.

Schwartz provided medical and practical assistance as part of a team of health care professionals with the American Federation of Teachers. Her group left the relative safety of the capital city to tend to rural areas.

"I'm not staying in San Juan. We need to go out," this determined nurse said. Schwartz traveled with a driver, a doctor, plumbers, electricians and helpers. In some locales, they set up a clinic. They taught people how to clean water using water filter pills, or how to clean mold from their homes to avoid getting asthma.

Schwartz said it was a fight to get enough water for the rural regions from the supplies sent to San Juan. "A person needs a gallon of water per day," she said, expressing frustration with the politics of rescue work. "A big part of our job was to stop people from using the river because it was contaminated."

Many pharmacies were closed. Those that were open only supplied a week's worth of medication. Schwartz's group brought with them

a month's supply of medication and the doctor in their crew was able to write prescriptions.

After Maria hit, Schwartz had no communication with her parents, who live in Fajardo, about an hour and a half outside of San Juan. "For two weeks, we were going berserk," she said. Her mother is bedridden with Alzheimer's Disease. Finally, while she was on the island with the disaster response crew, Schwartz was able to connect with them.

She brought them a solar light.

Wherever Schwartz traveled she came across people so thankful for the help from the union professionals.

"Puerto Ricans are humble people. They give us hugs, smiles and even try to feed us," Schwartz shared in a piece she wrote of the experience. "Many thank us for our service but this is what we do. No thank you is needed ... We continue to raise awareness and be the voice for Puerto Rico."

CONSTITUENCY AWARD WINNERS

Health Care Professionals Member of the Year



■ Alicia Schwartz, United Federation of Teachers/Federation of Nurses

For more info

Read *In the Eye of the Storm*, Schwartz's first-person account of her time in Puerto Rico. The article will be featured in the May issue of Home HealthCare Now, available at <https://journals.lww.com/homehealthcareonline/pages/default.aspx>.



CONSTITUENCY AWARD WINNERS

School-Related Professionals Members of the Year



Margaret Dalton-Diakite

United Federation of Teachers

Margaret Dalton-Diakite of New York City is a member of the United Federation of Teachers and has been a paraprofessional in Manhattan schools for more than 23 years.

Dalton-Diakite has been a leader in ensuring that her colleagues receive professional development opportunities. She is also known throughout both UFT and

NYSUT for her organizing skills.

She was elected Manhattan Paraprofessional Borough coordinator in 2014 and is a member of NYSUT's SRP Advisory Board.

"School-related professionals are the unsung heroes of our schools and campuses. By honoring Margaret, we honor all of our members who do the important work of providing support in an academic setting," said NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale, whose office oversees SRP issues.



Stephen Rechner

Union of Clerical, Administrative and Technical Staff at NYU

Stephen Rechner has been fighting for the rights of working people for almost 30 years. President of the Union of Clerical, Administrative and Technical Staff at New York University, Rechner has been lead negotiator for several of his local's contracts and, in the early 1990s, led the fight for domestic partner benefits for all NYU employees. He also edits UCATS' award-winning

newsletter.

A resident of New York City, Rechner is a 1993 graduate of NYU Stern School of Business. He works full-time as an administrative aide in the Lawyering Program at NYU School of Law, a job he has held since 1986. In 2005, Rechner was elected to the NYSUT Board of Directors as an at-large director.

"The work that Stephen has done as an educator and as a unionist has improved the lives of his colleagues and his students," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "He is very deserving of this award."



"A year ago I couldn't think about teaching math. Now after minimally invasive brain surgery, my pain and dizziness are gone. I'm introducing algebra to my eighth-graders again...THANKS TO NSPC."

Nancy's road to recovery began with a call to Neurological Surgery, P.C. (NSPC) and a same-day appointment with a member of NSPC's team of world-renowned brain and spine surgeons. She received a personalized treatment plan that ensured the best possible outcome. Nancy's journey ended with minimally invasive surgery that restored her normal life, including a return to the classroom.

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QUESTIONS for ...

Rod Sherman

NYSUT Retiree Advisory Committee member
Former NYSUT Board member



1. When did you get involved with the union?

I joined the New York State Teachers Association and the National Education Association shortly after the Taylor Law was established [the law passed in 1967]. This was before the merger of NYSTA and the United Federation of Teachers created New York State United Teachers. I was elected president of the Plattsburgh TA in 1973, a position I held until 2012.

2. What was an important union moment for you?

We went on strike for three days in 1975 after years of short-term contracts and not being treated with respect by administrators. Our contract expired at the end of each year and the board of education would drag negotiations out unnecessarily over the summer. It was a fight for basic stuff. My members finally said enough — don't ask us to picket again unless we're holding strike signs. At the time of the strike, we had a new superintendent who inherited the mess and was the son of a garment worker. He had a lot of respect for unions. That strike was a big step toward improving relations between the union and the administration.

3. How did the strike benefit your union and the district?

That strike gave us our dignity back and unified us as a union and as a district. Before we struck, there was no coordination between the union and the administration. After the strike, we won longer-term contracts and teachers had a voice in district decisions — we had a say in what was taught, in hiring and firing and in textbook selections. We created a culture that involved teachers in critical issues and we became a respected voice.

4. Why sign your union card?

I'm a member of my local school board and I know how much pressure they face to save money. I tell in-service members to look at their union contract, go through it line-by-line, and ask themselves, "what would my board of education or administration give me without a contract?" Would they keep class sizes manageable? Would they give me step increases? Would they ask me to

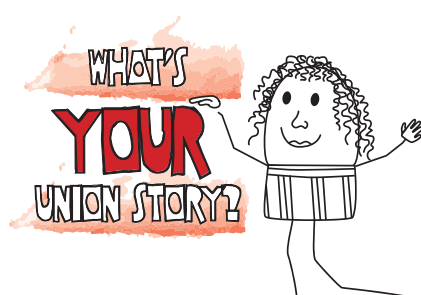
pay more for my health insurance? Do an honest evaluation of what your superintendent would give you if you didn't have a contract and you weren't in a union. When you finish, you probably won't have much of a contract left.

5. What message do you have for in-service members?

Sign your union card, of course! But also, don't underestimate what your retirees can do for you. Call on them. They have a lot of institutional knowledge and can help. If asked, they might run for a board seat, get petitions signed, or even just help stuff envelopes. Many belong to local organizations and can speak on your behalf. Keep your retiree members involved in your school. We are here for you.

We want to hear from you

There is no "typical" NYSUT member. You are all unique and have a story to tell. We want to hear it. How did you become involved in your union? Do you have experience in a right-to-work state? Do you remember the bad old days? Share your story at the Janus Action Center. Visit www.nysut.org/Janus and click on "Tell it."



It's an honor

Kennie Leet, Broome Community College Faculty Association, earned the top prize at the Art of Science Conference at Binghamton University with her scanning electron micrograph of a heart-shaped grain of feldspar.

Barbara Patterson, United Liverpool FA, and **Diana Zuckerman**, Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers & School-Related Personnel, received the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers President's Award for 2017.

Four NYSUT members were selected as Fulbright Teachers for the U.S. Department of State's Global Classrooms Program. The educators will complete a yearlong professional development program in international instruction. **Phillip Moshoyannis**, Hicksville Congress of Teachers, will travel to Peru; **Noel Folts**, Dansville Teachers Association, will travel to Senegal; **Seth Guinals-Kupperman**, United Federation of Teachers, will travel to India; and **Richard Johnson**, UFT, will travel to Peru.

In print

John Adriance, Albion TA retiree, and his son, Patrick, co-wrote, *There Are a Lot of Things I Could Tell You About Myself, But I'll Keep It Short*. The e-book is about student expectations, self-perceptions, aspirations and concerns on the eve of seventh grade. The e-book is available at Barnes and Noble.

William Hill, Commack TA retiree, has had a revised edition of his book, *The California Trail Yesterday and Today*, published by the Caxton Press. The book was recently named "Book of the Week" by the California State Library. Visit www.caxtonpress.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.



Letters are published at the discretion of the editor, who takes space, relevancy, fairness, legal liability and accuracy into account. To submit a letter, email united@nysutmail.org, fax to 518-213-6415 or mail to Letter to the Editor, NYSUT Communications, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110. Please include your name and hometown or union.

Arming teachers is a really bad idea

It has been proposed that teachers be armed in schools under the theory that if teachers were the first responders in an active shooting, the response time would be reduced from about 8 minutes to less than 5.

This is a really bad idea.

In the horrific event of an active-shooter situation, a teacher's role is not one of passively awaiting rescue. Upon the first indication of an active shooter, a teacher's duty is clear. Teachers must quickly gather the students and hustle them into the classroom. They must lock the door and cover its window. They must herd the students into the closet, and have them lie down on the floor. Teachers must turn out the lights and rush to pull down the window shades. They must silently pile desks in front of the door, and hand out thick textbooks to the students (to be used to protect their heads.)

The teacher must take attendance (to ensure all students are accounted for). They must make sure the students keep absolutely still, and shush any crying or screaming. They must instruct the students to put their cell phones on "silent" mode. Teachers must remind them to not open the door, even if someone knocks. The teacher must at all times listen, because at any point he or she may have to give new instructions to the students. For instance, if the

fire alarm bells ring, it will be the teacher's responsibility to determine whether it is better to stay put, or to follow fire drill protocol. If a knock does come at the door, it is the teacher who must decide whether to answer it ... or to keep perfectly still.

The teacher who abandons the students to grab a gun and rush after a shooter puts 20, 25 or 30 students at risk.

Any teacher thinking of volunteering to bear arms in schools, ask yourself and answer honestly: "How prepared are you to kill someone's child by mistake?" The potential for making a tragic mistake in such a situation is monstrous. And who will assume liability when the inevitable mistakes happen? Will the law hold a teacher harmless if he or she makes a mistake? Will parents? Will school boards? Will the news media?

Respect for our Constitution, in particular the Second Amendment, does not require that we turn our schools into kill-zones. To keep our children safe, we must work, rather, to keep military-grade weapons — weapons of war — out of the hands of civilians.

Catherine Peacock, Bay Shore Classroom TA retiree

I was that shooter

On Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018, at 2:01 a.m., Tim C. wrote:

Hi Mr. Reischer, I'm not sure you'll remember me, but I sure remember you. My name is Tim C., you were my fourth-grade social studies and homeroom teacher; I believe I was in the first class you had at Schodack Central!

This message is long overdue, my sincerest apologies for that.

I want to thank you for being the first adult in my life to care, to see the endless potential in your students, and to inspire us. Now that I'm a bit older, and presumably a drop wiser, I think about the events and people that lead me to today. Your name surfaces often as I try to piece together the how and the why.

Looking back to 25+ years ago when I was your student, I know that you tactfully paid special attention to a few of my fellow students, as well as me. At the time I didn't understand, but I did appreciate it. I think you knew the challenges that this group faced, that maybe things at home weren't great, or that they'd been dealt an unfair hand at childhood.

My trajectory for life was not great back then, my future probably looked like: menial jobs, misguided relationships, substance abuse/addiction, endless struggle, etc. ... not a terribly great outlook. I'm not going to lie, it wasn't always easy, there were

struggles and hardships, but ... you helped provide the building blocks for me to cope with this.

What sparked this note to finally be sent was the tragic Parkland shooting earlier this week. I was that shooter 20 years ago. I had the means, the lack of empathy, the anger/frustration, and everything else you can think of for that tragedy to have been my reality. I'm relieved that I never did that and I am ashamed I had those vivid thoughts/plans, but the only reason it didn't happen was that a few people actually cared and made a difference in my life, of which you were the first.

For my fellow classmates and their families, thank you! From me, and my family today I cannot thank you enough for going above and beyond; it paved the way to not only prevent tragedy, but also help create a relatively enlightened adult who's making a difference in hundreds, if not thousands of lives every day — not to mention providing an environment that ensures even the notion of what could have been with me will NEVER happen with my family.

You're one of the good guys, fighting what may be the most important battle for our society, the battle to empower children, to protect them, to guide them in a healthy and meaningful direction. Without a doubt, one of the most under-appreciated, thankless, and I'm sure frustrating positions to be in. While it may not be a lot — thank you.

Tim C.
(Sent via email to Sid Reischer, Schodack Central School Faculty Association)

STATEMENT BY NYSUT PRESIDENT ANDY PALLOTTA ON ARMING TEACHERS:

Schools must remain sanctuaries for learning and places where parents and the community know that their children are safe. It is misguided to think, however, that more guns in a school — in the presence of children, and in the hands of educators who don't want them — is an answer.

Still, there are actions that state and national leaders can take. Educators need a greater investment

in mental health services, school psychologists, social workers and school counselors so trained professionals have a better chance of identifying a student in crisis and intervening before tragedy strikes. As part of the important conversations ahead, increasing school security must be on the table.

Many of our members are responsible gun owners. Some belong to

the NRA. These mass shootings have led to a great deal of soul-searching, and — we believe — increased support for commonsense gun control measures. We believe this will reduce the likelihood a parent ever again has to bury a child killed in a school shooting. Lawmakers of both parties must come together and act to protect students, schools and educators.

— NYSUT PRESIDENT ANDY PALLOTTA

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[PASSINGS]

Pearl (Lisansky) Bromberg | Jan. 3, 2018
United Federation of Teachers

William Curtis | March 8, 2018
Watertown Education Association

James J. Lombardi | Jan. 6, 2018
Niagara Falls Teachers


Richard McCowan | Jan. 3, 2018
UUP-Buffalo State

Marjory Schuster | Feb. 17, 2018
Syracuse Teachers Association

Milton M. Weiser | Dec. 14, 2017
UUP-Buffalo HSC

Josephine D. Wise | Dec. 15, 2017
UUP-Buffalo Center

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 Julie Malec, NYSUT United, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; or email jmalec@nysutmail.org.



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CONSTITUENCY AWARD WINNERS

“Not for Ourselves Alone:” The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award

Nadia Resnikoff
Middle Country Teachers Association



Nadia Resnikoff has served as union president of the Middle Country Teachers Association in her Long Island school district since 2001, and is involved in union leadership on the local, statewide and national levels. As a teacher and education advocate, Resnikoff has served on the State Education Department’s Commissioner Advisory Committee.

Resnikoff has served as mentor/intern program coordinator, guiding new teachers through requirements, curriculum, regulations, evaluations and more. She has also met as an advisor with hundreds of teachers to help them grow as effective teachers.

She has served on NYSUT’s Civil and Human Rights and Fair Trade committees. She’s walked in the Women’s Marches in Washington, D.C., and New York City the past two years and traveled to Ciudad Juarez

with the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State Border Pilgrimage to learn about the effects of NAFTA on people, economy and working conditions.

Resnikoff is a past member of the NYSUT Board of Directors and a graduate of the Leadership Institute. She is also a delegate to the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, where she served on the AFT Program and Policy Council and Learning First Alliance Council.

Anne Goldman
United Federation of Teachers



Anne Goldman was among the first to seek collective bargaining rights for nurses in New York City, having successfully bargained on behalf of nurses in the UFT’s Federation of Nurses against major corporate entities running hospitals and home care services. She has advocated politically with NYSUT to help push

for the passage of state laws, including the end of mandatory overtime for hospital nurses and the safe patient handling bill. She is chair of the NYSUT Health Care Professionals Council.

A nurse herself, Goldman is a member of the NYSUT and UFT Boards of Directors and of the American Federation of Teachers Program and Policy Council. She played an instrumental role in the inclusion of an additional 35,000 registered nurses to her national union. She works on professional issues and is on national and statewide

committees dealing with nurse recruitment and retention, staffing issues and specialty training.

Since 2013, Goldman has served as the UFT vice president for non-Department of Education members, working with private-sector members in negotiations, labor relations and legislative activities. She has also testified on behalf of family child care providers to increase the state minimum wage, provide training, inspections, background checks and the need for subsidized early child care education.

Sandy Feldman Leadership Grant

Lori Griffin
Copenhagen Teachers Association

Lori Griffin is an English teacher with the Copenhagen Central School District and longtime leader and activist with the Copenhagen Teachers Association.

Griffin is a graduate of NYSUT’s Leadership Institute and member of her local’s Local Action Project team as well as the union’s political action committee. She was a founding member of a regional PAC of NYSUT locals.

A one-time radio personality with several Watertown stations, Griffin has spearheaded a grassroots campaign to address the teacher shortage in the North Country. The campaign has been used by NYSUT



as a template for other locals to follow.

Griffin is the proud product of the State University of New York, with degrees from Oswego and Potsdam.

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CONSTITUENCY AWARD WINNERS

Retiree Members of the Year



Millie Glaberman

United Federation of Teachers

As a young teacher, Millie Glaberman walked the picket line in the 1960 strike that led to the creation of the United Federation of Teachers. In the nearly 60 years since, her commitment to the union hasn't wavered. As an in-service member, she was a liaison to the Central Labor Council, received five proclamations from Manhattan borough presidents for her activism and, in 1978, served as the Manhattan political action coordinator, a position that taught her the value of phone banking. She is the current UFT/RTC political action coordinator, guiding the group's efforts from topic research, to script writing, to contacting phone bank volunteers. Last year, her group made 22,000 calls, helping the union soundly defeat the proposed New York State Constitutional Convention.

"Millie shows what one person can achieve when passion and professionalism combine," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.



Mel Stern

Retiree Council 20

Mel Stern is a tireless union advocate, leader and activist. President of Retiree Council 20 and co-president of the Half Hollow Hills Retiree Chapter, Stern was an enthusiastic backer of Christine Pellegrino, a former educator who achieved a David-and-Goliath-sized win last year in a race for the New York State Assembly. As a NYSUT Political Action Committee member, Stern split his time between hitting the campaign trail on Pellegrino's behalf and working relentlessly to defeat the constitutional convention; in the four months preceding the vote, Stern held weekly retiree phone banks. As an in-service member, Stern served as a NYSUT Election District director and as president of the Half Hollow Hills Teachers Association.

"More than 83 percent of New Yorkers voted 'no' on the constitutional convention last year and we couldn't have done it without the help of retirees like Mel Stern," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

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qc.cuny.edu/BilingualEdOnline

Associate Professor of Special Education Lenwood Gibson (third from left) and students discuss teaching matters.



Honeoye Falls-Lima Education Association

Members of the Honeoye Falls-Lima Education Association teamed up with the HFL Secretaries Association, the HFL Transportation Association, local businesses and community members to raise money for AutismUp, a local organization that provides programs and workshops for parents and students. Union members hosted a bowling tournament in March, raising \$2,500.

"The HFLEA annual bowling tournament is part of our community/unity vision," said David Bacon, HFLEA president. "As a union, we want to move beyond the schoolhouse walls, get our people together, and help alleviate problems in our township. Autism has affected every district across our country and our members see this locally."



PROVIDED

St. Regis Falls UTA member and second grade teacher Nicole Manley reads with her class.

St. Regis Falls United Teachers Association

Using a grant from First Book, Inc. and NYSUT, St. Regis Falls United Teachers Association, led by co-presidents Brian Marsh and Patricia Godreau-Sexton, took part in Read Across America this year by hosting a book giveaway. To honor this year's theme of diversity, the local chose International Down's Syndrome

Awareness Day for its event.

School library media specialist Bethaney Cotten gave each pre-K through grade six teacher a selection of books, along with possible discussion points and book highlights. At the high school, all of the diversity books were on display, and students were encouraged to read a book from a place they had never been or a viewpoint they were not familiar with.

Ogdensburg Education Association

The Ogdensburg EA is in its second year of serving free, hot meals to the community, surpassing the 1,000-meal mark. In February, the local, working with the Knights of Columbus, held a dinner with celebrity chefs from Ottawa. Giveaways included OEA-branded shopping bags, water bottles, pencils and crayons.

Funding for the meals is provided by The People Project, a joint venture of NYSUT and the AFT, which supports unions in the fight to end poverty and create stronger community bonds in St. Lawrence County.

OEA member Mary Marcinko oversees the dinners and organizes volunteers. "As a new teacher and resident in the Ogdensburg School District, I want to become more engaged in the community," she said. "Getting involved in the union is a great way to do that." She started the dinners as a project for her AFL-CIO leadership training, and the People Project began sponsoring the meals.

The community dinner team has been awarded another People Project grant to fund two more years of themed dinners.

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

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2017 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

**FOR NEW YORK STATE
UNITED TEACHERS
MEMBER BENEFITS TRUST**

This is a summary of the annual report of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, EIN 22-2480854, Plan No. 503, for the period September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The Board of Trustees of New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust has committed itself to pay certain vision and other claims incurred under the terms of the plan.

Insurance Information

The plan has contracts with various insurance companies to pay certain claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2017 were \$68,421,601.

Because they are so called “experience-rated” contracts, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total insurance premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2017, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$21,553,010 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these experience-rated contracts during the plan year was \$14,250,596.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$26,082,218 as of August 31, 2017, compared to \$22,973,822 as of September 1, 2016. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$3,108,396. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets, that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$11,897,915. This income included participants’ contributions of \$3,739,885, earnings from investments of \$1,522,751 and other income of \$6,635,279.

Plan expenses were \$8,789,519. These expenses included \$5,513,646 in administrative expenses and \$3,275,873 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights To Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

1. an accountant’s report;
2. financial information and information on payments to service providers;
3. assets held for investment;

4. transactions in excess of 5% of the plan assets;
5. insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers; and
6. information regarding any common or collective trusts, pooled separate accounts, master trusts or 103-12 investment entities in which the plan participates.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of Ms. Lynette Metz, Fund Director, Trustees of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455, 518-213-6000. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$12.00 for the full annual report, or 15 cents per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and

accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (Trustees of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

PRIVACY NOTICE:

NYSUT Member Benefits
800 Troy-Schenectady Road
Latham, NY 12110-2455
800-626-8101
Plan No.: 503; EIN: 22-2480854

*Notification of Availability
of Privacy Notice*

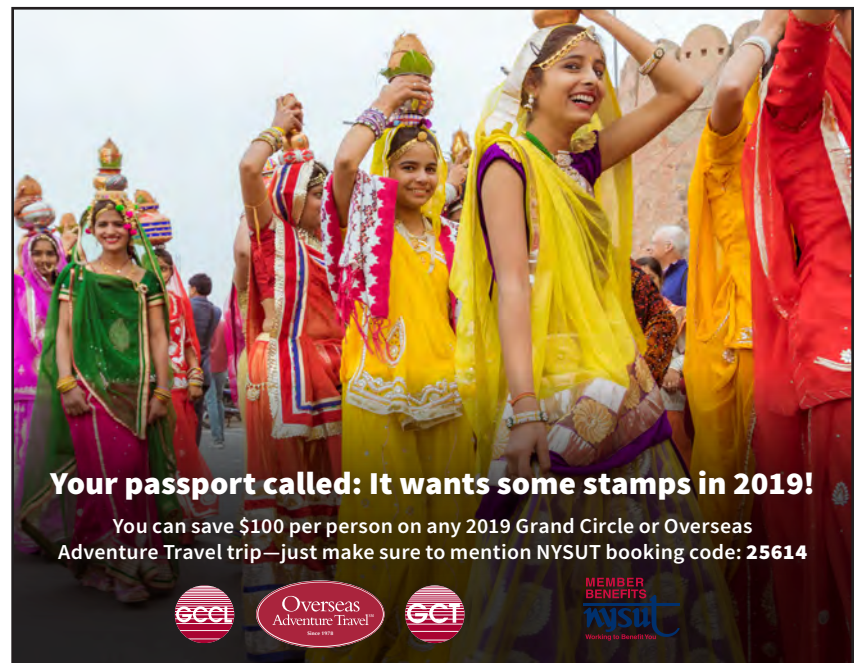
[As required by 45 Code of Federal
Regulations Part 160.520(c)(1)(ii)]

In the course of providing you with access to health benefits, Member Benefits has access to information about you, which may be considered protected health information (PHI) under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of

1996 (HIPAA) regulations. As a participant of Member Benefits, you were previously provided, either through publication in the NYSUT United publication or USPS mail, with a Privacy Notice describing our privacy practices, legal duties and rights concerning your PHI.

If you would like to receive another copy of our Privacy Notice, you can download a copy from our website at memberbenefits.nysut.org, or you can contact Member Benefits’ Privacy Official Betsy Porter at 800-626-8101 or by submitting to the above address a written request for a copy.

Sincerely,
Board of Trustees,
NYSUT Member Benefits Trust



Your passport called: It wants some stamps in 2019!

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Grand Circle Travel is a NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of a percentage of net sales based upon the number of eligible purchasers during a calendar year and 10% of group sales based upon the type of travel booking and paying travelers for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

Retiring soon? Make sure to maintain your NYSUT membership!

Is retirement on the horizon for you? The transition from active employment to retirement brings challenges that must be handled carefully. Let NYSUT Member Benefits help.

You MUST maintain NYSUT membership as a retiree in order to continue participating in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs and services. You can accomplish this in one of two ways:

1. If your local offers retiree membership, you must continue membership within your local. Compliance with your local's retiree membership requirements is a prerequisite for continued membership in NYSUT and the American Federation of Teachers (one of NYSUT's national affiliates).

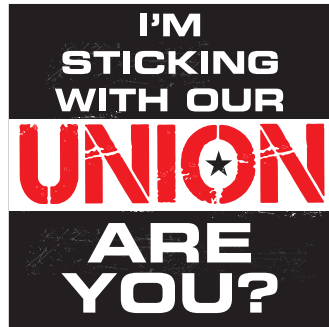
2. If your local does not provide some form of retiree membership, you will continue as an at-large retiree member through the Retiree Council (RC) in your region. Make sure your local reports you as retired and changes your member code to "3" or writes "retired" on the membership report that is sent to NYSUT. This will afford you membership in your geographic retiree council, NYSUT and the AFT.

Retiree membership is not automatic for the National Education Association. You may choose to join NEA as a Lifetime Retiree for a one-time fee of \$250.

At this time, as a current NYSUT member or retiree participating in NEA Member Benefits, you do not need to purchase retiree membership with NEA. To join NEA national, contact NYSUT Retiree Services at 800-342-9810, ext. 6291. For retirees from former NEA locals with an NEA insurance policy, you must maintain your NEA membership in order to keep the policy.

If you are a non-lifetime NEA retiree member or know someone who has been lost from the NEA/NY rolls, contact NYSUT Member Records at

800-342-9810, ext. 6224 for information on how to join NYSUT and NEA as a retiree.



For questions about establishing retiree membership, contact the following membership departments:

United Federation of Teachers:

212-598-6855

United University Professions:

800-342-4206

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY:

212-354-1252

All other NYSUT members:

800-342-9810, ext. 6224

For questions about maintaining your NYSUT membership or information on NYSUT retiree programs, contact the NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant serving your region:

Buffalo area (RC 1, 2, 3, 44):

Tracy Beatty, 716-634-7132

Jamestown area (RC 4, 46):

Louise Ortman, 716-664-7425

Rochester area (RC 5, 6):

Peter Randazzo, 585-454-5550

Syracuse/Utica area (RC 7, 8):

Anne Marie Voutsinas, 315-431-4040

North Country/Capital District (RC 9, 10):

Jeanette Stapley, 518-825-0730

Southern Tier (RC 11, 45):

Mark Padgett, 607-786-5742

Greater Capital District/Mid-Hudson area (RC 12, 13):

Jennifer Shaad-Derby, 518-783-7977

Orange, Rockland, Putnam and Westchester counties (RC 14,

15-16): Ellen Pincus, 914-592-4411

Nassau region (RC 17, 18, 19):

TBA, 516-496-2035

Suffolk region (RC 20, 21, 22, 23):

Joan Perrini, 631-273-8822

Florida (RC 43): Judith Kalb,

561-994-4929, ext. 129.

Payroll to pension deduction

The transition from payroll deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs to pension deduction is NOT immediate and automatic. However, follow the steps below, to ensure a smooth transition.

■ Contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 when you know your definite retirement date; Member Benefits will then communicate that information to each of the plan administrators of programs you participate in.

■ Call each plan administrator of programs you participate in to verify your address so you can be billed at home once payroll deductions stop; Member Benefits can provide you with the necessary contact information. You should receive a bill for each program you had on payroll deduction. If you do not receive a bill, contact the applicable program administrator to verify that a bill was mailed to your proper address. Any discounts you enjoyed with payroll deduction will continue for up to one year with your home billing. Pension deduction yields the same discounts and additional coverages as payroll deduction.

■ Make sure to pay each bill that you receive. You must be on home billing for one billing cycle so that your pension system has time to put your permanent monthly pension benefit in place. While you may be receiving a monthly pension benefit, this does not mean that your permanent benefit has been finalized; deductions can only be taken from the permanent benefit.

■ When you receive the bill for the next premium, it should include a Pension Deduction Authorization Card. Complete and sign the card, and send it back with the bill to the plan administrator in lieu of payment. If you do not receive a Pension Deduction Authorization Card with your second bill, contact Member Benefits for one to be sent to you.

■ Upon receipt of your Pension Deduction Authorization Card, the plan administrator will transmit the details to Member Benefits regarding pension deduction of your program(s). Member Benefits then submits this information to your pension system to start the deductions with your next monthly benefit. This process must be done for each program you participate in. Contact Member Benefits if you have any questions along the way.

Allow time for each of the steps above to be completed. Note: To be eligible for pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs, you must be receiving your monthly pension benefit from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, New York City Teachers' Retirement System, New York State Employees' Retirement System or New York City Board of Education Retirement System, or receive income from a monthly lifetime annuity from TIAA.

Leaving your bargaining unit?

If you are leaving your bargaining unit for any reason other than retirement and are participating in any Member Benefits-endorsed programs, you must join NYSUT as an Associate Member-Continuing NYSUT Member Benefits Coverage to continue participating in those programs. Payroll deduction is not available for Associate Members.

If you have any questions, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.

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Retirement benefits for Tiers 3 and 4

New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) benefits are based on years of credited service, age at retirement and final average salary (FAS). If you joined between July 27, 1976, and Dec. 31, 2009, you are in Tier 3 or Tier 4.

The amount of service credit you have at retirement can make a big difference in the amount of your monthly payment. For information about earning service credit as a school employee, read our blog post at www.nyretirementnews.com/earning-nyslrs-service-credit-school-employee.

As a Tier 3 or 4 member, your FAS is the average of your earnings during any 36 consecutive months of service when your earnings were highest. In addition to your regular salary, your FAS can include payments such as overtime and holiday pay; however, some payments, such as termination pay, cannot be included. The amount that your earnings can increase from one FAS year to the next is also limited and cannot exceed the average of the previous two years by more than 10 percent.

If you retire with less than 20 years of service credit, your benefit will equal 1.66 percent of your FAS for each year of service. For 20 or more years, your benefit will equal 2 percent of your FAS for each year

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.



DiNapoli, administrative head of the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) and trustee of the Common Retirement Fund,

of service. For each year beyond 30 years, you will receive 1.5 percent of your FAS.

You are eligible for a service retirement benefit at age 55 with five or more years of service credit. If you retire between the age of 55 and 62 and have less than 30 years, you will receive a reduced benefit. For the full retirement benefit, you must be 62 years old or have at least 30 years of service credit.

Our online benefit projector calculator (www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/projecting-your-pension.php) allows you to compare retirement outcomes based on different retirement dates, FAS amounts and service credit totals. Check your Retirement Online account (www.osc.state.ny.us/retire) to see your current total service credit. Your Member Annual Statement includes pension estimates along with service credit and salary information.

For more information about Tier 3 and 4 benefits, review your plan book at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1522/service_ret_benefits/index.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).

NYSTRS — Still your best investment

Q: How well funded is the New York State Teachers' Retirement System — should I be worried?

A: Absolutely not. With \$115.5 billion in assets at the end of its most recent fiscal year, NYSTRS is both well funded and managed cost effectively. Investment fees and expenses average 24 cents per \$100 managed, as compared to 60 cents or more in fees associated with a private retirement plan, such as a 401(k).

After nearly 100 years of providing pension benefits to the state's public school teachers and administrators, NYSTRS was nearly 98 percent funded using an actuarial value of assets, and virtually 100 percent funded based on a market value of assets, as of June 30, 2017. For more information about the fund's health, check out the Annual Financial Report; find it in the library at www.nystrs.org.

Q: I've heard that NYSTRS has unclaimed funds.

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

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

Ronald Gross • 631-273-8822
rgross@nysutmail.org



How do I find out if I have any? And if I do, how do I claim them?

A: Not only does NYSTRS have unclaimed funds, but it has a lot of unclaimed funds. To date, the system's unclaimed funds account lists more than 2,000 names. Even more names appear in its abandoned account database, currently numbering nearly 10,000.



We encourage everyone to check the site and see if any of those missing monies belong to them. After all, it only takes a moment and could result in an unexpected windfall. Here's how: visit the NYSTRS website at www.nystrs.org and select the unclaimed funds tab at the very bottom left of the home page — look closely, it's a tiny tab that's easy to miss. The tab will direct you to two lists: unclaimed accounts and abandoned accounts. Both lists are alphabetical by last name and display the listed member's last known teaching location or place of death. The abandoned accounts list, which contains significantly more entries, is also searchable by last name or last known teaching location.

If you have unclaimed funds, first call NYSTRS at 800-348-7298, ext. 6250 to discuss disbursement options and then complete and submit a withdrawal application (REF-7A).

Did you know?



The New York State Teachers' Retirement System's funded status ranks second among the nation's top 30 public pension systems, according to the publication *Pensions & Investments*.

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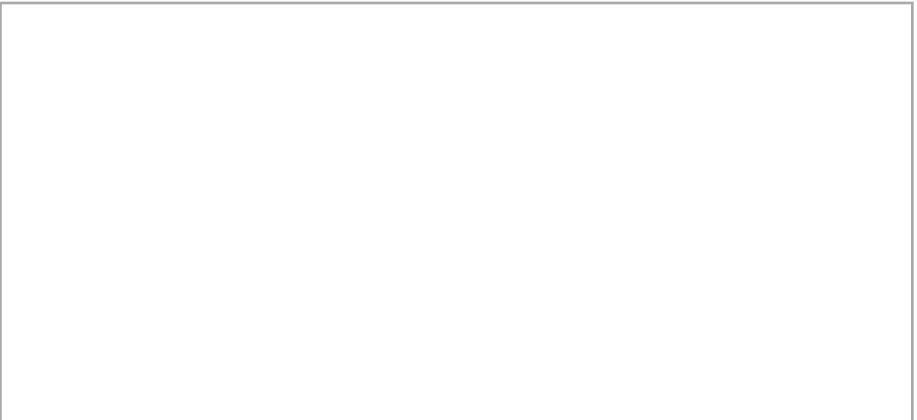
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NYSUT members receive a 33% discount off of tuition for graduate courses. ELT is now a CTLE provider and many courses are applicable for NYSED Certification.



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