

SRP NewsLink

A NEWSLETTER FOR NYSUT'S SCHOOL-RELATED PROFESSIONALS LOCAL LEADERS

FALL 2009

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SRP conference shows generous spirit

Hundreds of NYSUT members filled the Desmond conference center in Albany with union solidarity, great generosity and a strong desire to improve working and learning conditions during the union's annual three-day SRP conference.

The integral role School-Related Professionals play in education needs to be highlighted, NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi told participants. He urged SRP leaders to "define excellence in the work you do. I am completely confident you will use this opportunity and seize the day."

Laura King Montgomery, president of the NEA's National Council of Education Support Professionals, honored the strength of NYSUT's national role as a voice for SRPs. NEA is one of NYSUT's two

national education affiliates, along with AFT. Together the unions represent hundreds of thousands of school support staff across the country. Montgomery saluted NYSUT for being a strong advocate for school workers nationally and for holding conferences where SRPs can share experiences and become better union and education leaders.

Sandra Cooper, superintendent of the Sidney Central School District in Delaware County, was overcome by the donation of 355 books for the Southern Tier community, which suffered tremendous damage in 2006 flooding.

"You are really the unsung heroes in our schools and for this you are now huge heroes to me," Cooper said. "Thank you for giving back to our children."



At the SRP conference, from left: Pat Weiwurm, Johnson City EA; Karen Arthmann, Rush Henrietta EA; Laura Montgomery, President, National Council for Educational Support Professionals; Nancy Juliano, Syracuse TA; and Lisa Connor, Organization Specialist, NEA ESP Quality.

Members also raised \$2,200 for the union's Disaster Relief Fund and contributed a huge supply of toiletries for a family shelter.

"This conference was another success for SRP leaders and locals," said Vice President Kathleen Donahue. "They are ready to be a

strong voice in shaping the future of our schools and professions."

Conference participants left energized, with an increased commitment to take charge of their work lives and the stronger skills they'll need to do it.

Electronic NewsLink coming in 2010

As part of an ongoing effort by NYSUT to deliver timely, relevant news in a more effective and efficient manner, the *SRP NewsLink* is going to "electronic delivery" starting in 2010.

You will be notified by e-mail when a new *NewsLink* has been posted on the SRP Leader area of the NYSUT Web site, www.nysut.org.

What we need from all readers are current, non-employer-based e-mail addresses so that the notice can be forwarded to your e-mail inbox.

If you have a Leader Access account on the NYSUT Web site, we already have your e-mail address. Make sure that this is current information and not related to any work e-mail provided through an employer.

For a Q&A on how to create a Leader Access account, go to www.nysut.org and click on the "Leader Access" in the left column.



Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care
For more, see www.nysut.org.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Check the NYSUT Web site for details of these events.

NEA ESP Conference

March 12-14
Las Vegas

Committee of 100

March 22-23
Desmond, Albany

AFT PSRP Conference

April 8-11
Orlando

NYSUT Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference

April 28-29
Washington, DC

NYSUT Representative Assembly

April 29-May 1
Washington, DC

SRP NewsLink

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Northport TAs meet author Evelyn Rothstein at NYSUT ELT Course

The Northport Teaching Assistants who participated in the recent ELT course "Writing as Learning," not only earned three undergraduate credits from Cazenovia College, they also had a special guest lecturer at one of the courses' ten sessions.

Dr. Evelyn Rothstein, author of the course textbook, *Writing as Learning*, joined the 22 course participants. Dr. Rothstein has written two other texts, *Writing for Mathematics* and *English Grammar Instruction That Works*.

"I have had a successful history of helping schools reach high levels of achievement in all aspects of literacy and across the curriculum, and can provide educators with strategies and lessons that engage students and promote true knowledge-based learning," said Dr. Rothstein.

The Northport TAs found both the text and the course extremely useful and have been implementing the strategies with both their special-needs students and general education students to great success.

The course's instructor, Stew Lyons, told his students, "This is the same material covered in the course offered for teachers in the graduate course."

Linda Bogdanowich, a teaching assistant at 5th Ave Elementary School, enjoyed the course. "Our building coordinator was so pleased with how organized the strategies in the text were working with our special education students that she is ordering copies of the book for the special education staff," she said.

This is just one of the practical, research-based courses offered by NYSUT, with the cooperation of a variety of colleges, through the Education & Learning Trust.

Earlier in the year, many of the same students completed "Intro to Exceptionalities" through the Education & Learning Trust. "Intro to Paraeducators" is the next course scheduled for Northport through ELT.

These courses are offered at a very reasonable price. To learn how to register or bring these courses into your district, contact ELT at 800-528-6208.

NYSUT governance news

The NYSUT Representative Assembly will be held April 29-May 1 in Washington, D.C. The conference call, which includes the resolution form and the SRP of the Year nomination form, will go out to leaders the beginning of November. Please keep in

mind that resolutions from your local will be due at NYSUT on Jan. 15 and the SRP of the Year nomination forms will be due on Jan. 22.



NYSUT Social Services:

Help for the caregiving of elder loved ones



Did you know that there is help for you if you are taking care of a senior family member?

NYSUT Social Services can direct you to low-cost companion services, programs that provide reasonably priced homecare, respite care while you are at work, and groups to support you — the caregiver.

Caregiving should not be done alone. Let NYSUT Social Services guide you to services in your community that can help you.

Contact us at: 800-342-9810, ext. 6206 or socsvcs@nysutmail.org.

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Critical issue:

H1N1 update

Much information has been circulating about the H1N1 virus. Accurate and up-to-date information about the symptoms, transmission, and methods to reduce exposure to swine influenza are available at www.nysut.org, www.aft.org, and www.nea.org. Get the facts to protect yourself and those you care about!

New PTSI booklet

The Pupil Transportation Safety Institute 2010 NYS Law and Regulations for school bus drivers, monitors and attendants is available for our membership. If you would like an individual copy or enough for the transportation workers in your local, please call Linda Watkins at 800-342-9810 or email her at lwatkins@nysutmail.org.

Love your veggies? Get a grant!

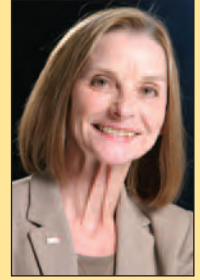
Hidden Valley Salad Dressings is offering 10 grants of \$10,000 each to help elementary schools develop a program to offer fresh produce. Anyone involved in a school — including School-Related Professionals — may apply for a grant for the school.

The grant program seeks to help schools execute innovative programs that will increase the access to, and consumption of, fresh fruits and vegetables in the lunchroom. Learn more at www.loveyourveggies.com and click on the “grants” link. The application deadline is Nov. 6.

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Nancy Juliano

SRP Advisory Committee chair



Our NYSUT SRP Leadership Conference on October 2-4 was a huge success because of all of you who attended. I enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time with “old” friends and meet new ones. How wonderful that we were brought timely messages from an incredible union leader; Laura Montgomery, president of NEA’s National Council for Education Support Professionals, who was our guest speaker on Saturday evening. I am confident that it was a great experience for you. Please join us next year and bring a friend!

Unfortunately some districts have eliminated positions due to budget woes and inadequate funding and politics. And — big surprise — it seems SRP positions are the most expendable, which is disconcerting since we make the least. I think it’s some kind of “fuzzy math” that districts use to figure out what positions to cut. School-Related Professionals are expected to “step up to the plate” and do what has to be done (and done in the past by people whose jobs have been eliminated) “for the children.” And now, with the absolutely horrible economy some of us are told that we are *lucky to even have jobs!* I always think of SRPs as being twigs — maybe made of willow — able to bend and twist and give way rather than break. Be strong and stick together and stand up for what is right and fair. Remember what happens to one of us, happens to all of us.

- As you go through your day, pay particular attention to your members. Reach out to them, help them and tell them all about what our union can do for them, and why unions are important to *all* workers. And, talk to them about the importance of contributing to VOTE-COPE.
- “You work hard for your money, so why hand it over to businesses that don’t support public education or basic worker rights like union organization, fair pay and adequate health coverage?” “A good deal? Their products and prices may be irresistible, but you may want to think about what goes on behind the scenes at some of the country’s most popular businesses before you step inside.” These two quotes are from an article in the October/November issue of *neatoday*, entitled “Spending Smart — Retail Offenders Revealed.” It is enlightening, contains great information and provides additional resources and links to comprehensive lists for an even wider range of products and services. You may read it online at: www.nea.org/neatodaymagazine.

Thank you for everything that you do every day for the children and communities you serve.

VOTE-COPE: your best protection

Q. A reader asks, “I hear that VOTE-COPE is our political action fund. What does that mean?”

A. VOTE-COPE dollars are the voluntary contributions made by the NYSUT membership to our political action fund. NYSUT uses this fund to help to gain influence in the political arena to advocate for and protect our members’ interests. It gives NYSUT the ability to

get our message out to elected leaders in Albany, Washington, D.C., and the public at large. These dollars have helped bring about favorable retirement legislation, SRP Recognition Day, Weingarten Rights that ensure our right to union representation in disciplinary meetings, helped defeat a midyear school aid cut and the disastrous school tax cap to name a few. We encourage

every local to run a VOTE-COPE drive and for members to contribute what they can. Contributions can be made by payroll deduction or by check. There are no two ways about it, VOTE-COPE is always a good investment and your best protection. If you have further questions, contact NYSUT’s legislative department at 800-342-9810.

What does Fair Trade look like?

Choose justice. Choose Fair Trade. When you buy Fair Trade, you take a stand against slavery and child labor in favor of fair wages, sustainable development and transparency in business. Order your Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, tea and snacks at www.labor-religion.org by following the Fair Trade links to the Dean's Beans and Equal Exchange Web sites. When you do so, these 100 percent Fair Trade organizations will make a 10 percent contribution to help expand the NYSUT/Labor-Religion Coalition Fair Trade Project. Buy Fair Trade and taste the goodness.



SRP Recognition Day is Nov. 17

Promo packets with "Proud" stickers will be mailed to local leaders mid-October.

How did you celebrate? Margaret MacCartney, School-Related Professionals coordinator, wants to know. Contact her at mmaccart@nysutmail.org with details, info and photos. Your local may be featured in our next issue of *NewsLink!*



Donation to Francis House honors former TA



From left: Vina Fedele, Shelly Hale and Sue Brewer, teaching assistants from the North Syracuse Education Association, display the donations the SRP chapter has collected to go to The Francis House, which provides a home and an extended family to people with terminal illnesses. The donations were in memory of Sue Dermady, who was a teaching assistant and member of Syracuse EA for many years and used the services of the Francis House.

The Francis House relies entirely on donations for support.

New workshops from ELT



NYSUT Education & Learning Trust has added two new workshops on the latest topics for School-Related Professionals. For more information on these programs, contact ELT at 800-528-6208.

Secondary Reading Comprehension: Strategies That Work

This workshop provides active strategies to use with middle-level and high school students who struggle with reading comprehension, including text structures and corresponding graphic organizers, tips, and signals for use with students.

Understanding Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder ADD/ADHD

This workshop is designed to help School-Related Professionals achieve a better understanding of ADD/ADHD and provide intervention strategies to facilitate positive student change.

Payroll, pension deduction can save money

Payroll deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs eliminates check-writing and late payments. This payment option is available to members of any local association that has made arrangements with its employer.

Pension deduction is available to retirees collecting a monthly pension benefit from NYS Teachers' Retirement System, NYC Teachers' Retirement System, NYS Employees' Retirement System or NYC Board of Education Retirement System. It's also an option for retirees who receive income from a monthly lifetime annuity from TIAA-CREF.

Annual premiums are easier to budget, since they are divided into smaller payments deducted from 20 paychecks (26 deductions for members of United University Professions), or from 12 monthly pension benefits.

Payroll and pension deduction also yields reduced premiums and additional coverage at no cost for these endorsed programs: Term Life Insurance; Catastrophe Major Medical Insurance; Long-Term Care Insurance; Disability Insurance; Automobile, Homeowners/Renters, Boat, Personal Excess Liability (Umbrella) and other personal property insurance; Legal Service Plan; and Retiree Dental Plan.

The WrapPlan® II Flexible Premium Adjustable Life Insurance Plan can also be purchased using deductions.

For specifics, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on the Payroll & Pension Deduction tab on the left-hand side of the home page. Or call Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.