

SRP NewsLink

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

Past, present, future coalesce at leadership conference

By Andre Mathis, Union-Endicott School District Office Personnel Association president

At the recent SRP Leadership Conference in Saratoga Springs, participants embraced the past in a highlight of the first evening with the unveiling of the SRP History Trail. There, SRP guides led small groups through an exhibit of large posters of NYSUT SRPs in action — from the 1960s to present day — advocating for public schools, students, and a better way of life for our members.

At the opening session, Kim McEvoy, chair of the SRP Advisory Committee, and Paul Pecorale, NYSUT second vice president, spoke to the importance of our strong history and celebrated our present victories such as the approval and adoption of resolutions at the 2019 RA, including regulating the practice of toileting students and of respect for all SRPs.

We celebrated the success of NYSUT's Support School Staff initiative, which resulted in the passing of state legislation on the issues of school bus cameras, workplace violence, and retirement equity for New York City Paraprofessionals.

On Saturday, hundreds of SRPs wore "Support School Staff" T-shirts and looked toward the future of the ongoing success of SRPs. This was reassured through the NYSUT Officers Cracker Barrel, with all four statewide officers taking the time to speak and to answer our many questions. Next-Gen NYSUT and the importance of being

counted in the 2020 Census sessions completed our morning.

We were inspired by this year's keynote speaker Matthew Powell, the 2019 National Education Association (NEA) Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year, a member of the Kentucky Education Association. Matthew shared stories about the SRPs who made a difference in his life and discussed the advocacy work he does to make a difference for his community and for the students at Graves County Central Elementary School in Mayfield, Kentucky.

The conference is the result of the commitment and hard work of the SRP committee. With months of in-person meetings and phone conferences, we hoped to offer the best workshops and host activities to allow members to engage and interact with one another. Committee members moderated dozens of high-quality, professional development workshops and facilitated roundtables for the nearly 220 SRPs (including 57 first-timers) who attended representing 58 locals.

Collectively, we donated more than 400 new children's books to the Buffalo City School District, accepted by Jo Ann Sweat, president of the Buffalo Educational Support Team.

Raffle sales raised \$2,675 for the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund.

Three bins of travel-sized toiletries collected were distributed through



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Elizabeth Rios-Bakari, Rochester Association of Paraprofessionals, holds cracker barrel question card.

NYSUT's NEON Committee to students in the City of Albany schools and to Operation Adopt-a-Soldier.

Save the date. We hope to see you at the Oct. 23-25, 2020, SRP Leadership Conference in Saratoga Springs.

For more information on the workshops offered at the conference, visit www.nysut.org/srpconference.

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Honoring SRPs (from left): NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale, with 2019 NYSUT SRP Members of the Year Priscilla Castro (United Federation of Teachers), Colleen Condolora (Capital Region BOCES Association), and the 2019 NEA ESP of the Year Matthew Powell (Kentucky Education Association).

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IMPORTANT DATES:

National School Breakfast Week
March 2–6, 2020

NEA ESP Conference
March 20–22, 2020, New Orleans, La.
www.nea.org/esp

NYSUT Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference
April 30–May 1, 2020, Albany

NYSUT RA
May 1–2, 2020, Albany
www.nysut.org/ra

RA Deadlines:

Nominations for SRP Member of the Year and other RA awards are due by
Dec. 12, 2019
www.nysut.org/ra

Proposed Resolutions
Feb. 18, 2020

Proposed Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws
Feb. 2, 2020

2019 SRP Leadership Conference photos



Before the conference, SRP Advisory Committee members rehearse for the SRP History Trail: (from left) Mark Warner, Syracuse TA; Sandie Carner-Shafran, SABEA; Kim McEvoy, Rondout Valley FT & SRP; and Billy Coleman, New Rochelle FUSE.



SRP History Trail guides Sandie Carner-Shafran (2nd from left) and Reggie Colvin, UFT (2nd from right) walk conference participants through the history trail.

Trivia contest winners from Saratoga-Adirondack BOCES Association show off their prize — pairs of union socks!

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New SRP ELT seminar on toileting students

By Hilda Monfredo, Western Sullivan United Teachers & SRPs, SRP executive vice president



The issue of toileting in schools has been a concern for many SRPs, who

are responsible for toileting and diapering students of all ages in our schools.

I'm a member of the statewide SRP Advisory Committee and toileting safety was an issue we brought forward to NYSUT, as a concern impacting many SRPs. A resolution at the 2019 Representative Assembly on this issue was submitted by 15 NYSUT Locals and one Retiree Council. The resolution was approved and adopted.

At the summer 2019 SRP NYSUT Education and Learning Trust Instructor Training, I decided to be trained in leading the new seminar, which addresses some of the issues we brought up in the resolution, "Working safely in schools: Preventing illness and injuries

when toileting students." I wanted more knowledge of the subject so that I could present it to other SRPs in New York State.

This workshop will help SRPs understand the importance of using protective gear and advocating for its availability. It outlines the dangers of blood borne pathogens. It provides an overview of lifting strategies — including using various assisted devices, since the students that SRPs may need to toilet or diaper may be larger and heavier than the SRPs themselves. The workshop also has several helpful scenarios to help SRPs through many toileting situations.

I've been an ELT instructor for 19 years, and am an SRP ELT Mid-Hudson regional coordinator. I am excited to be able to present this informational workshop to other SRPs.

For information about bringing this or other NYSUT ELT workshops to your local, visit www.nysut.org/elt.



SRP Recognition Day

How did your local celebrate New York State School-Related Professionals Recognition Day?

"Please tell us how you celebrated, so we can celebrate you and share your creativity with others," said NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale. "Enter our contest and be entered to win a 2-for-1 entry to the 2020 SRP Leadership Conference, Oct. 23-25, in Saratoga Springs."

Email a description of your event and photos, links to video, or other supporting documentation to NYSUT SRP Coordinator Leslie Fottrell at lfottrel@nysutmail.org.

Deadline: Entries must be received by Dec. 10, 2019 to be entered in the contest.

2019 SRP Leadership Conference photos



Photos (clockwise from above): Officer Cracker Barrel, with President Andy Pallotta, EVP Jolene DiBrango, 2nd VP Paul Pecorale and Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham; John Pierce, Renee Freeman and Debra Roper-Dowie, United Federation of Teachers, at the cracker barrel; Buffalo Educational Support Team (BEST) President Jo Ann Sweat accepting book donation; Education Support Professionals/Ithaca President Carla Strong (left) and Tracy Voorheis work on a trivia question at Friday's opening session; Barbara Young, Wantagh United Teachers, calculates the answer for trivia question; SRP Advisory Committee members with some of the books donated by conference attendees to BEST for students in the Buffalo City School District. (PHOTOS: EL-WISE NOISTETTE AND ANDREW WATSON)



SRP union value news around the country



Strategizing at the NEA mentoring training in Washington, DC, (from left) Karen McLean and Matee Mahabir of Herricks Teachers Association; and Rhonda Scott, Sonya Flowers (president) and Bridget Dolan of Albany Public School United Employees.

Local presidents Jill Ackerman, Ken-Ton SEA and Chris Horstman, Ithaca City SDEA, take a selfie at the AFT training on effective communications in Washington, DC.

The 2019 NYSUT Education & Learning Trust SRP Summer Training for facilitators was held Aug. 19-22 in Albany.

The Oct. 4-6 statewide SRP Leadership Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel in Saratoga Springs. (See page 1.)

The Central New York SRP Council held its 11th Annual Fall Fling Oct. 17 at the NYSUT Syracuse

Regional Office. More than 100 SRP members enjoyed workshops, a Member Benefits giveaway and donated non-perishables to the Food Bank of Central New York.

The Mid-Hudson Regional Office held its annual SRP Leadership Conference at the Otesaga Hotel in Cooperstown, Nov. 1-3, was attended by 150 SRP members.

The NYSUT ELT SRP online

turnkey training for facilitators was held on Sept. 14 in Rochester and on Sept. 21 in Albany.

The Rochester Regional Office held an SRP Meet & Greet Nov. 20 for nearly 60 SRP members — including more than a dozen attending an SRP event at the RO for the first time. They learned about the professional services and benefits available to them through the union.

During holidays, note signs of elder decline

By Ani Shahinian, NYSUT Social Services specialist

The holidays are upon us and it is a time to take stock of what we are grateful for when it comes to family and being together. The elders in our families may be traveling to be with us, or we may go and visit them. It is often a time when we begin to notice that our parents, grandparents and other elderly relatives are not functioning in their usual capacity.

Aging relatives and their children are often in denial that problems may be occurring.

Early warning signs you may notice as you spend time with your loved ones:

- Disheveled clothing
- Changes in mood or extreme mood swings that were not part of that person's personality in the past
- Poor personal hygiene
- Depressed or low energy temperament
- Unexplained bruising
- Trouble getting up from a seated position
- Missing important appointments
- Uncertainty or confusion when performing once familiar tasks
- Forgetfulness

- Poor diet or weight loss
- Late payment notices, bounced checks and calls from collections
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Forgetting to take medications

If you are visiting an elderly relative in their home look for these signs:

- Unexplained dents/scratches on car
- House and yard need care and maintenance
- Newspapers still in plastic wrap or mail piled up
- Spoiled/expired groceries that don't get thrown away
- Broken appliances

If you find you are noticing a decline in functioning and want to know what types of services and care are available for your loved one, you can call NYSUT Social Services and speak to a specialist who has access to resources and information that may be helpful.

Enjoy the holiday and know that your union is here to help you and your family should the need arise. Contact NYSUT Social Services at 800-342-9810 ext. 6041, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.



SRP incentive to pre-RA leader conference

The Pre-NYSUT RA Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference is Friday, May 1, 2020, and will include a workshop on SRP issues.

NYSUT is offering reimbursement on costs of a double-occupancy rate hotel room and travel for SRP presidents (and up to two SRP chapter presidents for umbrella locals) for Thursday, April 30, 2020.

Note: This is a reimbursement offer. Participants must pay the hotel upon checkout and submit a voucher, with original receipts, to NYSUT after the conference.

Local presidents with questions should contact Patrick Lyons plyons@nysutmail.org.

ERS members, sign up for NYSLRS' Retirement online



New York State & Local Retirement System
Colleen C. Gardner, Executive Deputy Comptroller

NYSUT SRPs* who belong to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System, (ERS) can now sign up for online access to their retirement information. The New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) has a new way for you to check your retirement information. Retirement Online gives NYSLRS members and retirees a convenient and secure way to review your benefits and manage your account in real time.

With Retirement Online, you can view your benefit information, update

your contact information, and view or request an update to your beneficiaries. Active members will be eligible to apply for a loan, and retirees can create their own income verification letters.

In many cases, you'll be able to use Retirement Online instead of sending forms through the mail or calling NYSLRS. And it's safe to use – NYSLRS has incorporated several security measures similar to those used by financial institutions.

NYSLRS is committed to providing you a safe and secure experience. When registering, you'll be asked a series of questions to verify your identity. The questions are provided by a trusted third-party source, and NYSLRS does not store the questions or your answers. It is recommended you use Retirement Online

with Internet Explorer.

Visit the NYSLRS website at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire to learn more about Retirement Online, and take a few minutes to create your new account.

NYSLRS is a division of the Office of the State Comptroller. State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli is the administrative head of NYSLRS.

**Most NYSUT SRPs belong to the ERS. However, certified teaching assistants belong to the state's teachers' retirement system (TRS). SRPs in New York City have their own retirement plan.*

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Visit: www.nysut.org/srp 