

SRP NewsLink

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

SPRING 2012

www.nysut.org

VOL. 10, NO. 3

SRP image campaign in pilot phase

School-Related Professionals Advisory Committee members are test driving an exciting new branding and image campaign designed for School-Related Professionals: "SRPs Make a Difference." You've told us that not only do people not understand who you are or what you do, they especially don't understand the important role SRPs play in a student's school day. They feel invisible and often disrespected.

Using the feedback provided by committee members, NYSUT will create an effective, easy-to-use

public relations and community relations tool kit for our SRP locals to promote and highlight members' accomplishments and showcase the strong ties SRPs have in their school community. This will bring them the recognition they need that will help in fighting privatization,

lay-offs and better help the community understand the importance of passing their school budgets. Phase two will introduce the campaign to the regional offices and offer training at the 2012 SRP Conference. Eventually, the "SRPs Make a Difference" branding campaign tool kit

will be available on the NYSUT Leader Access website for all locals to utilize.

Be on the look-out for more updates about the "SRPs Make a Difference" initiative.



SRPs
School-Related Professionals
Make a Difference

SRPs are: Bus drivers, office staff, custodial and maintenance staff, food service workers and health care, monitors and security, teacher aides, teaching assistants and paraprofessionals

SRP Advisory Committee reappointed

The SRP Advisory Committee has been reappointed by NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi for the next three-year term. Of the 24-member committee, pictured below, nine leaders are new. This committee is charged with aiding NYSUT, by recommending programs and other items needed by the SRP constituency and in the planning of the annual fall

SRP conference. The members also take an active role in their NYSUT region by reaching out to local leaders and encouraging them to become involved in their Election Districts and regional SRP councils. Their names and contact information are listed on the SRP page of www.nysut.org and SRPs are encouraged to reach out to their area committee members to

share ideas and concerns with them.

"I am very pleased to have this group of experienced and dedicated leaders appointed to the SRP Advisory Committee," said



NYSUT V.P.
Kathleen Donahue

NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue, whose office oversees SRP issues for the union. "The committee members serve as great advocates for members in their region as well as identify critical issues important to this constituency group."



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

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Save the Date

AFT PSRP Conference

April 19-22
Washington, DC
www.aft.org

NYSUT Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference

April 25-26
Buffalo, NY
www.nysut.org

NYSUT Representative Assembly

April 26-28
Buffalo, NY
www.nysut.org

Committee of 100

May 14-15, 2012
Albany, NY

School Budget Vote

May 15
Statewide

SRPNewsLink

SRP NewsLink is a newsletter published periodically for New York State United Teachers' School-Related Professionals leaders. NYSUT locals and staff have permission to reprint all *NewsLink* content.

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Visit MAC and take action

NYSUT has launched a new Member Action Center (MAC) to promote legislative activity. It includes content to help local leaders and members support the union's pro-education, health care and labor political agenda. Visitors will find interactive features that will help them participate in grassroots lobbying efforts.

"The NYSUT Member Action Center is here to help you make your voice heard and to build the movement around the priorities that matter most to all of us," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta.

SRP leaders should check out the MAC and share it with members. Urge

them to sign up for the union's e-activist list to receive timely alerts, advisories and action steps.

Another way to stay involved is through the union's NYSUT Member Action Center page on Facebook. Pallotta is urging SRPs to get involved, saying: "Friend' us on Facebook for the most recent legislative updates, news and more that will help you stay informed, get engaged and take action on critical issues that affect you personally and in the workplace. 'Like' and join the NYSUT Member Action Center community."

Become a MAC e-activist and take action: <http://mac.nysut.org/>.



No diesel needed for this bus



Have you ever wondered how the exuberant energy of elementary school-aged children might be harnessed and put to good use? It seems the Dutch company De Café Racer has found a way, with a kid-powered bicycle intended to replace the traditional school bus.

Visit www.utne.com/the-sweet-pursuit/riding-the-bicycle-school-bus.aspx#ixzz1meb39IBM to read more.

Pine Bush SRP honored

Stacey Garrison was recently recognized for her hard work and dedication in working with the NYS STOP-DWI Foundation and Mothers Against Drunk Driving New York State (MADD). Mrs. Garrison, a teaching assistant at Circleville Middle School and member of the Pine Bush SRP Association, led by Angela Schuster, is one of only 22 individuals or agencies statewide to be selected for the 2011 Recognition Award. She was honored at a recent banquet and ceremony Schenectady.

"We are so very proud of her," said Schuster "for her help in raising aware-

ness about the critical importance of highway safety and impaired driving."



From left: Pine Bush SRPA President Angela Schuster, 2011 Recognition Award recipient Stacey Garrison, and building rep Margaret Whisper.

Are your pets protected?

Insurance can mean the difference between knowing whether or not your family is financially secure. Shouldn't that security extend to those four-legged members of your family as well?

NYSUT members can now protect all of their furry and exotic friends with the new NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed pet insurance program offered through VPI Pet Insurance.

With a VPI plan, you can visit any licensed veterinarian in the world. Pets under the age of 10 are eligible for coverage, and medical plans provide benefits for accidents and illnesses — ranging from ear infections to cancer. Optional CareGuard plans provide benefits for preventive care.

NYSUT members receive a 5 percent group discount on the base medical plan and up to a 15 percent discount if multiple pets in a household are enrolled. VPI — part of the Nationwide Insurance family — has served as the largest and most recommended pet insurance plan in the U.S. since 1982. VPI currently has nearly 500,000 policies in place and occupies 61 percent of the pet insurance market.

To get started, please contact VPI toll-free at 866-838-3461 (this is a dedicated number for NYSUT members) or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on "Discounts & Travel — Members" and then "VPI Pet Insurance." There you'll find a link to a NYSUT member-specific VPI website. You can also contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 with any questions.

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

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

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Karen Arthmann
SRP Advisory Committee chair



Many of you will be attending the Representative Assembly in Buffalo in April, and for you I am preaching to the choir. You are already showing the deep commitment you have to your union and its members by attending these very important sessions. To those of us who will be fortunate enough to be there, we know the significance and impact this political assembly has on legislation that impacts all educators: teachers and SRPs alike. Without the RA, our voice as a state union would not be heard state-wide or nationally. It is important work that we do and that we will continue to do. We need the support of our leaders and members now more than ever, at a time when our educational unions are under constant attack by governors and our own representatives who needle us about our "golden parachutes" while trying to abolish the laws that keep our contracts in place and give us the right to collective bargaining.

For those who tell me they hate politics and can't stand talking about it, let me reiterate what I have said before. Everything is political. The fact that you are employed and can enjoy the rights you have in your contracts came about because of politics. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and hope someone else will take care of it. We are that "someone else." The RA passes those resolutions that may become law; the ones that keep our jobs as safe as possible and provide us with benefits for ourselves and our families. If you can't be at the RA, make sure your voice is heard by your representatives who will be there. We're in the business of education; we need to make sure we are educated also. We need to keep our union strong and fight, not only for additional monies and benefits, but also to keep the ones we have already fought so hard to win.

Check the NYSUT website often. You will find a listing of the many resolutions submitted for the RA by NYSUT locals; many of which were authored by SRP locals. You need to know and talk about these directives submitted by your sister and brother locals. Click on the link to sign NYSUT's online petition for the state aid restorations. Please encourage your members, family and friends to go to the petition and sign on too. Your support and voice in this matter is imperative! Lastly, the website has a link to take you to the Member Action Center to take action and send a fax to legislators highlighting issues of great concern to our members. I've sent my faxes — it's fun and it's easy. Join me in supporting this directive! More information about MAC and the petition can be found in this publication.

I hope to see many of you at the RA, and I thank each and every one of you for your support of your union, and the time and energy you give so freely. I know it's not always easy, but it is always necessary and appreciated.

Welcome new SRP members

SRP NewsLink sends a big NYSUT welcome to the newly organized Commack Aides in the NYSUT Suffolk region.

Sachem teacher aide honored by BOE and parents



Elizabeth (Betsy) Burbige, a teacher aide in the Sachem School District for 12 years understands just how important that extra set of eyes and hands in the cafeteria of Gatelot

Elementary School actually are. On Feb. 7, Betsy, a member of the Sachem Central Teachers Association, Teacher

Aide Unit was doing lunch duty in the cafeteria. She noticed a student who appeared in distress and whose face seemed red. The frightened boy could not answer her when she asked if he was choking so she immediately administered the Heimlich and the lodged piece of food came out onto his tray. "I again asked if he could speak and he said 'yes, I am ok,' words I was so happy to hear," said Betsy. The boy was then taken to be seen by the nurse.

"It all happened so fast...(needless to say) it was frightening, but I was so happy to see his bright smiling face in school the next day." Betsy received a heartfelt thank you and gift from the parents the following day and was honored at the March 7 school board meeting.

"We are so blessed to have such a quick thinking professional here in our midst at Sachem!" said Cathy Rienth, SCTA vice president and a NYSUT SRP At-Large Director.

Why don't large school buses have seat belts?

According to *School Transportation News*, which utilizes information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are several reasons seat belts are not required on large school buses. The greater weight and mass of a school bus means that passengers are less vulnerable in a school bus than in an automobile, and they sit above the usual point of impact. Also the school bus passengers are not seated near doors or large window openings, so they are not likely to be thrown from the vehicle. Protection from ejection is a primary function of automobile seat belts. But the main reason is that school buses incorporate a passive restraint system called compartmentalization, which is designed to protect children without seat belts.

Interestingly, on Oct. 21, 2008, NHTSA published a final rule in the *Federal Register* upgrading the school bus passenger crash protection requirements of FMVSS 222. The requirement for lap/shoulder belts on small school buses applies to small school buses manufactured on or after Oct. 21, 2011. Likewise, the requirement that voluntarily-installed seat belts in large school buses must meet the performance and other requirements specified by this final rule applies to large school buses manufactured on or after Oct. 21, 2011. The requirement for the 24-inch seat backs and the self-latching seat bottom cushions

apply to school buses manufactured on or after Oct. 21, 2009.

For more information about the seatbelt issue; a history of seat belt devel-

opment including watershed events in US school bus passenger safety over the past 80 years; as well as background on how seat belts have evolved in school buses, go to www.stnonline.com/go/837.



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