



Wyoming County Retired Teachers' Association

FALL 2018

.. To Continue the Calling..

A Unit of the Central Western Zone
New York State Retired Teachers' Association

Good Times Newsletter

www.cwzretiredteachers.com

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President's Message: Sandy Kushner

"Hats Off to Educators – Both Retired and Active"

As you know, I wear two hats for retired teachers. One hat is as the Wyoming County Retired Teachers' Association (WCRTA) President, and the second hat is Co-President of the Central Western Zone (CWZ) of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association (NYSRTA).

One of the "perks" to the job of WCRTA President is meeting so many very nice retirees, most of whom are busier in retirement than they were while teaching. A major "perk" as CWZ Co-President is meeting active educators who love their jobs.

Just before the end of the 2017-2018 school year, I had the pleasure of presenting four active educators in Wyoming and Allegany counties with certificates recognizing their cash award for graduate work from the CWZ Barrie Flegel Memorial Active Educator Grant. I would like to share excerpts from their applications to demonstrate that they love their jobs just as much as we did during our careers.

Brenna Donegan teaches first grade at Letchworth and states, *"I have always wanted to be a teacher and be just like my first grade teacher. I enjoy working with children and helping them to learn and grow as young children. I love helping them achieve their goals. Their energy and kindness brings love and joy to my heart. Teaching is my passion, and I cannot think of another career that would make me this happy every single day."*

Traveling to Allegany I met first year teacher Jarret Vosburg at Fillmore Central School who teaches 9-12 Math and Science. In his application he says, *"The satisfaction of being able to shape and craft young minds, incredible former teachers, and the opportunity to give back to a community are several of the most influential factors I attribute to my decision to become a teacher. I want to spend my career as a teacher and coach at Fillmore, and hope to be a positive role model for hundreds of future students."*

Teaching Special Education at Bolivar-Richburg Elementary School I met Kristen Durow in her classroom. In her application she says, *"I have always had a love for learning and children. When I was in college I had an opportunity to volunteer in a special education classroom, and I decided right then that was what I wanted to do. I want to enrich the lives of young children and really make a difference."*

Many of us can identify this feeling, *"I entered teaching because I want to make a difference,"* states Michelle Luna who is a K-4 Literacy teacher at Wellsville Elementary School. *"My long-term goal is to work full time with struggling readers and possibly teach other teachers how to instill the love of reading into their students."*

We would all be lucky to have these four individuals teaching the children in our families. I am sure we can all recognize many more active educators with these same values, so be sure to take your hat off to them, as well, at every opportunity.

**FALL _ Not Back to School
Luncheon September 5, 2018 @
Glen Iris Inn, Letchworth
Registration 11:30 lunch at 12:00**

Membership Committee
Chairperson: Caren Dubay

Congratulations to the new 2018 retirees from Wyoming and the surrounding counties. We also welcome our new group from Genesee Valley BOCES 2017 and 2018 retirees. You are all beginning a wonderful new phase of your life!

As the membership chairperson of the Wyoming County Retired Teachers' Association, I would like to invite you to please join us. We are a unit of the Central Western Zone (CWZ) of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association (NYSRTA). Some of our members belong to the Western Zone (WZ) as you retired from a Cattaraugus County school. Our annual dues are only \$5. The first year of your membership is free. Enjoy meeting with former colleagues and making new friends from Attica, Genesee Valley, Letchworth, Perry, Pioneer, Warsaw, and Wyoming. We also welcome members from the Allegany County Retired Teachers whose Association was dissolved as of February 2017. We have luncheons twice a year, one in September, the first day when everyone is back to school, and again in May. Information is provided on a variety of subjects that may be of interest to you in your retirement.

The New York State Retired Teachers' Association (NYSRTA) is our political action committee. They work to represent us in our retirement, preserving and enhancing our pensions and benefits. They provided important information and support on the Constitutional Convention vote last November. You will receive a letter of invitation in the mail about joining the State organization along with a membership application by the end of the summer. It explains why it is important for all retired teachers to be members. You can take advantage of travel programs, product and service discounts, community service opportunities and insurance programs to name a few. A quarterly magazine brings you news and important information from the ten Zones. If you are a current member, please text or call me with your membership number and expiration date. (716353-2247) Please consider joining and

Friendly Service
Chairperson: Karen Ritenour

As the Friendly Service chairperson, my role is to support members by sending cards (birthday, get well, thinking of you, and sympathy), handle requests for financial assistance like the Robert DeCormier grant (see below for more information), send emails, and present Certificate of Appreciation. I need help from ALL members especially directors to help me to fulfill this service. Remember, if you have reached your 85th birthday your membership is free and you become an honorary member as long as I have your birth date. Contact me if you are willing to be a key worker to assist me in taking care of all members. Please call me at home [716-592-3962](tel:7165923962), cell 716-982-2046, or email at karen.ritenour1@gmail.com. Here is my home address: 60 East Hill Run, Springville, NY 14141

Do you know of a retired educator or spouse of a retired educator, who is experiencing difficulty in meeting the increased daily expenses of everyday living, and has a need for financial assistance in paying fuel, medical, dental, homecare or other bills?

Or, do you find yourself in such a situation? There is assistance available! In memory of the first President, Robert R. DeCormier of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association, NYSRTA established a fund that continues to provide financial aid to retired members and spousal members, who are facing this dilemma. In some cases, a monthly stipend is granted, which enables an individual to continue to meet the daily expenses of living. In other instances, a "special grant" is given that provides coverage for an unexpected financial burden.

If you know anyone that is a member of NYSRTA, and is in need of financial assistance, or for additional information, please contact Karen Ritenour at 716-592-3962. You may also download an application and/or learn more about the fund at www.nysrta.org. On the home page, click on "membership" and then "financial assistance". Please share this information with others who may not be familiar with this valuable resource.

Yearly dues to WATA is due in the FALL. \$5 can be paid with your reservation for the Fall Luncheon. This goes to help in printing, mailing and office supplies.

Community Service

Chairperson: Claudia Cerasani

Operation Gratitude recently sent a thank you letter to us for our donation that was collected at our Spring luncheon. In the letter they "thanked us for our thoughtfulness and wonderful patriotic spirit." They are still in need of items for the care packages that will be sent out to over two million Military and First Responders in the fall. At our September meeting, please bring scarves, hats, and socks that you have made this year. Other items the troops could use are: gum, hard candy, writing materials, bandanas (dark and cotton), puzzle/word searches, ect.

Angel Action needs items for the Backpack program for the children. Items needed are: paper, pencils, crayons, other school supplies, and non-perishable food (for children).

As before, we will also collect food for the local pantries. Please bring two or more non-persihable items that will be donated to the Letchworth pantries, our fall host.

Checklist of items needed:

- Scarves, Hats
- Socks
- Gum
- Hard candy
- Writing materials
- Bandanas
- Puzzle/word search
- Paper, Pencils
- Crayons
- School supplies
- Non perishable foods
- Two or more nonperishable items for food pantries

Health Care

Chairperson: Judy Haberer

I want to congratulate all the new retirees.

Please accept my thanks for the years of service you gave to the students in your district.

Isn't summer a wonderful time of the year, seems like winter would never end. While enjoying this terrific weather please remember to take care of your skin and keep hydrated. If you are thinking of a new exercise program, be sure to check with your physician before beginning. I hope to see many of you at our Not Back to School Luncheon in September.

Legislative: State Priorities: Minimum Pension Bump Up This bill would extend the minimum retirement allowance provided to long standing retired members of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System who retired prior to July 1, 1980 and increase the minimum retirement allowance for all such retirees to \$550 per year of NYS service up to a maximum of \$19,250. Bill # and sponsor A.06603A Brindisi S.5329A Tedisco Improve Pension COLA NYSRTA supports making improvements to COLA legislation by raising the base benefit amount upon which the COLA is computed from \$18,000 to \$25,000. This change is long overdue. Bill # and sponsor A.06045 Steck S.03306 Ritchie For Ethics Reform There is talk of term limit bills both for Senate and Assembly seats (this would take action for two years and a constitutional referendum) and talks of term limits of legislative leaderships (this could be done with bills passed in legislation). We will be seeking information from our Legislators on their feelings on these issues. New York Health Act NYSRTA has no official position on this legislation. However, at this point we have more questions than answers. Primarily, how would passage of the New York Health Act affect our retirees? We will be seeking information from our Legislators on their opinion to why they would or would not support this.