

# SPEAK OUT!



## Don't Miss the Benefits Fair!

Mark your calendar for the 15th Annual District Wide **BENEFITS FAIR & FLU SHOT CLINIC**.

All district employees are welcome to attend. It will be held at the Burgundy Basin Inn at 1361 Marsh Road on Thursday, October 6, from 2:30-5:15pm.

Join your colleagues and enjoy beverages from the cash bar and *free refreshments* at this social event. Visit each table to get useful information and freebies.

Enter raffles to win fabulous prizes. The drawings will be at 5 pm.

**Hope to see you there!**



## From the President: Jolene DiBrango - Fall Back into your Union!

By now you are back into your familiar routines or if you are new to our district, you are starting to settle into your new role with us. Here in the PDTA office we are busy working on activities and campaigns that provide you with union value.

Just wait until you hear about what we are working on right now! If you are new to Pittsford, you will be asked to join our union in October. If you have any questions about the value of union membership here in Pittsford, contact your membership volunteer or building representative. We will also be opening up the Sick Leave Bank for enrollment in October. You can only join during that month, so if you aren't a member, consider joining. Information on that will be coming out via email at the end of the month.

We have our annual Flu Shot Clinic and Benefits Fair on Thursday, October 6th. It is a great time to get together with colleagues, eat, win prizes and get immunized. You can

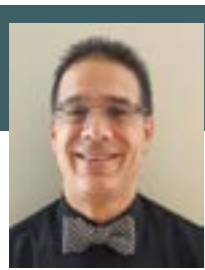
attend two PDTA workshops this fall. One was created to assist you in having those tough conversations during the holidays with relatives and friends who may not understand or support unions, and the other workshop highlights the importance of learning why education has become so political and your role in the political process as an educator. Both workshops are available in the Teacher Center catalog and are open to our teachers and school related professionals/SRPs.

We are also planning a fundraiser and social event for all of our members to kick off the new school year and to help fund our two Barb Shapiro Student Scholarships given to deserving seniors from Mendon and Sutherland High Schools each year.

Lastly, we will be participating in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. With so much going on, we hope you can find time to participate in at least one of these union sponsored (continued, p.3)

## In this issue:

- 1** From the PRESIDENT, BENEFITS FAIR
- 2** TEACHER ABSENCES, MEMBERSHIP
- 3** FALL OPPORTUNITIES
- 4-5** MEMBER ACTIVITIES
- 6** POLITICAL ACTION
- 7** SRP NEWSLINK
- 8** PUBLIC RELATIONS
- 9** JOLENE'S OPENING DAY SPEECH
- 11** CUT & KEEP



## Absence Reporting

Dwayne Cerbone, Resolution Specialist

Welcome to another exciting school year. It is my goal, as your Resolution Specialist, to represent our membership in a manner which protects your rights and simultaneously fosters the best teaching environment for you and learning environment for your students. The interests that lead to these outcomes are not mutually exclusive and represent the same professional approach and decision making demonstrated by PDTA members on a daily basis.

There is a need for me to clarify a few details related to member absence reporting and possible FMLA requirements. It is my hope that the facts presented here align with the building level and/or personal communications you have received from your building administrators. If this is not the case, please discuss this with your PDTA Building Representative immediately.

Likewise, if during an absence you are contacted and an inquiry is made that does not seem to agree with the facts presented below, please feel empowered to inform the individual that you will need to get back to them

following a conversation with your PDTA leadership. Your specific health information is personal and as an employee you maintain your right to this privacy. In some cases, you may be asked to provide documentation indicating that you are or are not medically able to perform the essential duties of your job. In most of these situations, your doctor can address the request without releasing or detailing any of your private medical details. In an event that further documentation is requested, you should contact your PDTA representative for further guidance.

Following a significant amount of discussion, fact finding, and deliberation between the District and PDTA, I present the only official absence reporting process for our members. The key concepts and/or details that led to the need to obtain this written agreement are highlighted in **bold print**.

Teachers and SRP's who are **absent more than three consecutive days** may have their immediate supervisor inform Human Resources of their absence. The reason for this reporting is simply to notify Human Resources in the event that FMLA leave may be necessary. This information is **not** used for any other

purposes such as discipline or tracking purposes.

**Absences longer than four consecutive days may require** the teacher or SRP to provide a written note by a medical provider to the District with a **general reason for the absence** (i.e. absent due to surgery) and an estimated date of return to duty. Administrators **will not ask**, and **employees are not required, to provide the District with any confidential medical information pertaining to any absence**.

For example, the staff member may say, "I will be absent due to surgery" or "I am requesting an absence to care for my ill child." Details regarding the type of illness, surgery, or medical attention given is **not required and will not be asked of the employee. At no time will staff be asked to provide any confidential medical information pertaining to any absence**.

Before returning from an **absence of more than three consecutive days**, a note **may be required** to return to work. The note needs to state the doctor feels that the staff member is able to return to work and fulfill his or her duties.



## PDTA Membership

Paul LeVan

**Welcome Back!** Now that we've started another year, PDTA will once again be launching our annual Membership Drive. Annual dues will be deducted over the course of 15 paychecks, beginning on November 15th. In a couple weeks you will receive membership information from your Building Membership Chairs:

Kathy Rudd - AC, Joanna Farrell - JR, Jen Villareale & Sue Ann McGrath - MCE, Patty Morse - PR, Rebecca Nunn - TR, Julie Barker - BRMS, Annemarie Inzana - CRMS, Steve Smith - MHS and Brian Kohrt - SHS.

**With all that is happening both statewide and nationwide, it is now more important than ever to remain united as one. If you are currently a member, you have our thanks and appreciation. If you are new to Pittsford or not yet currently a member, please join us. It is our unity that gives us strength.**



## Welcome to Fall's Opportunities!

Kim Minchella

Welcome Back Everyone! Here are a few things to keep on your radar throughout the beginning of fall:

### Announcing: The Great Bagel Breakfast Challenge

Deadline: Friday, October 28th, 2016

Teachers and SRPs please join PTSA! The school with the greatest percentage of their Teachers and SRPs who join PTSA by October 28th will win a bagel breakfast for their school, courtesy of PDTA.

ALL STAFF may join at the \$8 Faculty/Staff level – even if you have children who attend schools in the district. \$4 of this membership goes to NYS PTA and the remaining \$4 supports Pittsford students directly. Click here to fill out the quick and easy online membership form - **it takes about 3 minutes!**

You can also stop at the PTSA table at the Benefits Fair – I can help you fill out the form and take your cash or check there!

PTSA will provide me with numbers of staff who have joined, and I will send updates so your school knows where you are in the percentage standings.



### Grant Money Available

The Crump Family Award for Innovative Program Development is a great opportunity for teachers to improve their ability to create excellent learning

opportunities for their students. This grant is meant to be used where reimbursement of supporting expenses would not be covered by other methods, such as workshop tuition reimbursement or conference allocations.

The Study Grants Committee - comprised of the chair and teachers from each level, elementary, middle, and high school - will determine the distribution of the funds. Distribution of the funds will be determined by the relevance and anticipated value of the proposed studies.

Applications for study grants for the November, December, February, or spring recess periods must be completed and submitted to the PDTA Office by November 1. Find information and applications at <http://www.pdta.org/> under the Member Services tab.

### Shopping!

This year's PTSA Super Sale runs from October 18-22 in the Mendon High School gym. Are you aware that staff can come to the pre-sale day (October 18th) by showing their Pittsford ID?

That's right, you can get first crack at all of the amazing bargains! Check out the PTSA Super Sale page for information about donating items, volunteering, and shopping hours.

(DiBrango, continued from p.1)

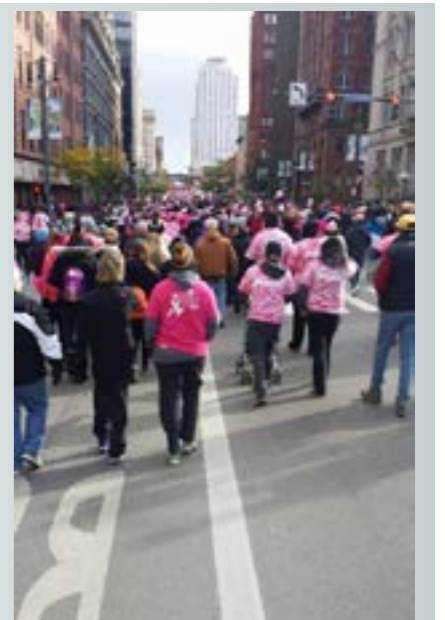
events and fall back into your union work with us!

And of course our most important job is that of enforcing our new three year contract. We were thrilled with the overwhelming support you showed our negotiating team last year when our contract was approved by 98% of voting members. While the new contract will not be in print for quite some time, everyone has access to the electronic version of the contract from '15-16 (available by going to our website [www.pdta.org](http://www.pdta.org)) and the summary document of the changes for the new contract in effect now through 2019.

If you require another hard copy

of the summary document, please contact Karen Kalinowski, our PDTA Administrative Assistant. Now is the time to notify your building representatives of any violations of our contract. Members are responsible for revealing problems 30 days from when they knew or should have known that there was a violation. And finally, be sure to check the Cut and Keep reminder section of this newsletter each edition for important dates and reminders that you should keep handy all year long.

I hope you are having a great start to your school year, and encourage you to communicate with us as the year continues so we can assist you in educating the students of Pittsford!



# NYSUT Leadership Institute Summer 2016

## Paula Fink

Over the summer I was given the opportunity to attend NYSUT's Leadership Institute in Albany. This was a week-long training in which union members from all over the state met to hone our leadership skills. It was a full, busy week; but one in which I made connections with amazing people and learned a tremendous amount about the work of our union and unions across the country.

At times it feels as if teachers are under constant attack, and hearing Mary Cathryn Ricker (AFT Vice-President) speak was especially motivating. She spoke of the importance of working together as a union and community to change this narrative. She spoke of always keeping the narrative first in all of our work.

- We are committed to building a good society
- We believe in honoring the value of and cultivating each student's potential
- We believe working in community is essential to student success
- We believe educating students is a craft that requires talented and committed professionals
- We are committed to working collectively as a powerful force for justice, change and democracy

The week was inspirational and opened my eyes to how far and wide unions reach. We have the potential to affect change and do good in our communities as well as others. We, as members, are the union. Unions are so much more than making and implementing contracts; we need to use our union values to build coalitions, work for social justice, and work towards fighting the gross wealth inequality in our country.

I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in this training and would highly recommend it to all of you. Working together with fellow union brothers and sisters was a powerful and enlightening experience. As we know the work that lies ahead for us will not be easy, but there is strength and power in union solidarity.



Paula and Karen with Randi Weingarten

## Karen Grace

I had debated applying for the NYSUT LI for a few years because I didn't know what to expect. Obviously, I'm very passionate about unionism, however I am definitely not a fan of any "Rah Rah" type of approach to leadership and I didn't know if the institute would be too much of that.

Nevertheless, I knew that the attacks on educators, unions and public schools were not going to dissipate anytime soon, so I decided that the leadership institute was

exactly what I needed to strengthen my determination in making our profession protected, respected and stronger than ever.

With that being said, I can honestly say that I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at the Leadership Institute. The experience wasn't just about leadership, it was so much more. Sure we learned techniques for more effective approaches to leadership, however more than anything, the LI taught us that our passion for wanting to help our profession is the most important catalysis for making effective change in this current unsettling climate of education.

Lastly, the people that I was able to directly work with over the course of the week was what I found to be the most powerful aspect of the week. These people showed me that we all have different strengths, approaches, and abilities, yet those differences are what makes us so strong. Those differences help us strengthen our profession by being able to bring others into the necessary work that must be done in order to change the course of education for the better.

In the end, my LI experience made me think of what Alice Paul stated, that "the movement is a sort of mosaic. Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end".

## David Larson MHS Social Studies Teacher, Study Grant Recipient August 5, 2016

*"It's important for me to be here to remember my comrades who died for me and with me."*

These words belong to Steven Melnikoff, U.S. Army 175th Regiment, 29th Division, who eloquently expressed his thoughts on travelling to Normandy, France, during a Remembrance ceremony in St. Lo on the 72nd anniversary of its liberation. Steve is a 96 year old, twice wounded, Bronze Star decorated soldier who landed at Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944 (D-Day plus 1.) His presence and positive energy during our two week tour through Normandy inspired and amazed the 19 students and 10 adults on this summer's Normandy Allies study group trip, which included Caroline Cullinan and Eliza Sherman, Mendon High School seniors. My wife, Beth, and I were privileged to be a part of this experience and to serve as chaperones for Eliza and Caroline with support from study grants from PDTA.

As I frequently tell my students, there's nothing like traveling to historical places to better understand the momentous events that occurred there. Standing in the low tide surf at Omaha Beach and looking at the bluff 500 yards

across the hard packed sand, we wondered how anyone could make it through the hailstorm of machine gun fire and artillery blasts unharmed. Walking among the crosses, stars of David and grave markers at the American, British, and German cemeteries brought new meaning to the concept of sacrifice and duty. Mostly young, sometimes unknown, brothers, fathers, sons. One very recently written note placed at a headstone in the British Cemetery in Bayeux said, "I have missed you the whole of my life. Your daughter, Denise." The stated mission of Normandy Allies is to keep the sacrifices and memories of the Allied accomplishments of World War II alive, and I think all of us returned as missionaries toward that end.

From the landing beaches to the museums and cemeteries; from the personal oral history of a sharp and spry combat veteran to the tasty mussels and fresh baked baguettes, this trip overwhelmed the senses and compelled

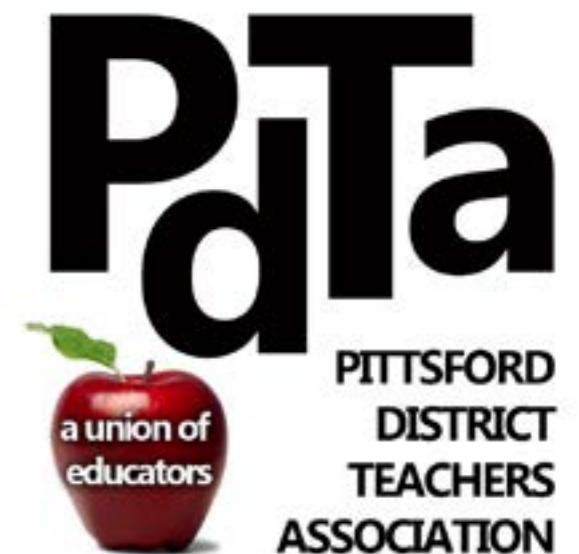


L to R: Marsha Smith, Normandy Allies President; Caroline Cullinan, MHS senior; Eliza Sherman, MHS senior; Dave Larson, MHS teacher; Beth Larson, ERHS teacher

us to reflect on the past, present and future. Wherever we visited, the French welcomed us as honored guests from the nation that helped liberate them from the evils of Nazism 72 years ago, and we in turn mourned with them following the tragic terrorist attack in Nice on July 14, the French National Day.

Traveling can change us and our world. For the students and teachers who travelled to Normandy under the guidance of the knowledgeable leaders of our group and with the frequent recollections from a drafted infantryman in the war, it was truly a once in a lifetime experience. Thank you to PDTA for supporting my teaching and learning.

**Betsy Blessington, Kim Hosbach, Patty Mayer and Kirsten Weeks participated in the Avon39 The Walk to End Breast Cancer in Boston this past July. Their team, "Fight Like a Girl" walked 39 miles in two days and raised over \$8000.00 for breast cancer research!!**



## Building News:

### ACE:

Lindsey Onofrey had a baby! Nolan Bennett Onofrey Born 9/2/16  
Bernie Wheeler's mother passed away this summer.  
Dennise Zobel recently lost her mother-in-law.

### JRE/MCE/ACE/PRE/TRE:

Congratulation to our Orchestra Teacher Hilda Grace (formerly Goluses) who was married over the summer!

### JRE:

Kim Chesko (Minchella), Annie Sanford (Triolo) and Courtney Baker (Coggins) from JRE got married this summer.

# Top PDTA Political Action Issues for 2016-2017:

Karen Grace

## 1. VOTING: Registering to Vote/Understanding the importance of voting.

Voting in primary and general elections is essential to keeping our representative democracy healthy and strong. Volunteering to work in NYSUT phone banks and on political campaigns is critical if we are to exert influence beyond our classrooms, cafeterias and health care centers.



### NYSUT & PDTA encourage members to:

#### REGISTER TO VOTE:

Voter registration information can be found at: <http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingRegister.html>

#### TAKE THE PLEDGE TO VOTE

You can pledge to vote at: <http://pledge.nysut.org/>



#### VOTE!

In local, state, and national elections.

## 2. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

We urge our members to vote NO!!

The State Constitution safeguards fundamental rights you enjoy as a citizen of New York State, such as:

- Right to be paid the prevailing rate of wages for your labor;
- The 40-hour work week;
- Right to a guaranteed pension for public employees;
- Right to unionize – to organize, form and join unions of your own free will;
- Right to free public education through 12th grade until age 21;
- Preservation of the Adirondacks, just to name a few.



## Why Say NO to a Constitutional Convention?

- A constitutional convention puts guaranteed rights in jeopardy.
- Provisions presently incorporated in the Constitution can be revoked and new provisions may be added through legislative action resulting in popular vote on the proposed change.
- A convention can eliminate all or some of these rights already enjoyed by New York's citizenry.
- The State Cannot Afford the Cost of a Convention!
- The Constitutional Convents would cost TAXPAYERS roughly \$46 Million Dollars.



Additionally, regardless of how long the convention lasts, each delegate receives compensation equivalent to the full annual salary that a member of the state Assembly receives, currently \$79,500 and convention members could already be assembly members...thus they are getting paid twice to do the job they should have done in the first place.



Don't waste taxpayer money when the present Constitution provides for a means to amend without a general convention that would put already established principles in danger of being altered.

Present procedure has the legislature pass a proposed change and subsequent voter acceptance or rejection on Election Days when such amendments are put to the general electorate for an up or down vote. If the people agree with the proposed amendment it becomes part of our constitution, if rejected it does not. In either case the people decide on the construction of their state constitution.

The current Constitution does not require a convention to occur; only that the citizenry have an opportunity to require one to occur every 20 years. A convention that would put the rights and protections already enjoyed by New Yorkers in jeopardy is not necessary in order to amend the present constitution.

### NYSUT's Member Action Center:

<https://mac.nysut.org/>



## 3. Continue to build VOTE-COPE contributions:

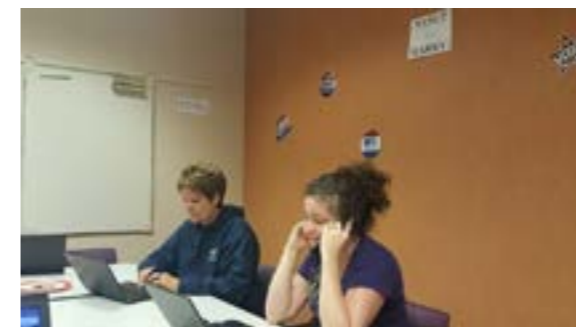
1) Before the Triborough Amendment was passed in 1982, teacher strikes were widespread as our very profession was at risk. There are those today who would like to repeal Triborough. We give VOTE-COPE money to candidates whom we feel would never vote to do that.

2) Our beloved Tiers 3 and 4, as passed in 1976 and 1983, were worse than Tier 5. Those tiers said we would pay 3% towards retirement for our entire careers and that we could not retire until 62 without huge penalties. With VOTE-COPE dollars we lobbied and supported those who (1) voted to make the 3% end after 10 years, and (2) voted to allow us to retire, without penalty, as early as 55 with 30 years of service. Those victories were truly extraordinary and would never have been achieved without NYSUT's legislative team working with VOTE-COPE money.

3) And how about tenure and our basic right to bargain collectively? What happened to Wisconsin teachers almost cannot be believed. With a sizeable political action fund at the disposal of our legislative team, and supported by the vast majority of NYSUT members, this will not happen to us.

So many of our members do not understand the battles it takes just to protect what we have won over the past 40 years. Without that protection, many would not have jobs to report to in September or pensions when they retire.

## ALWAYS STAY ACTIVE!



## SRP Newslink

Lorinda Spring



Welcome to the 2016-17 school year! I am beginning my third year as your SRP Representative for PDTA and enjoyed meeting many of our new paraprofessionals at the SRP Orientation.

### Building Representatives:

Dennise Zobel, Allen Creek  
Julie Shaw, Jefferson Road  
Jill Drake, Mendon Center  
Karen Socker, Park Road  
Lisa Mauger, Thornell Road  
Kristen Dolan, Barker Road  
Stephanie Worchol, Calkins Road  
Dave Larson, Mendon High School  
Lynne Drake, Sutherland High School  
Lorinda Spring, SRP Representative

As your SRP Representative, I serve on the Executive Committee, Representative Assembly and the District Planning Team where I continue to advocate for SRPs. It is a pleasure to represent you once again in this capacity.

### Assistant Building Representatives:

Rhonda Matthews, AC  
Elizabeth Kramer, JR  
Patty Mayer and Hendrina Schindeler, MCE  
Marcia Brown, PR  
Greg Bischooping, TR  
Karen Grace, Grace Kemp, Tammy Cole, BRMS  
Chrissy Doggett, Claudia Foti, CRMS  
Scott Bielec, Tom Kennell, Paula Fink, MHS  
Marc Hellem, Brian Schafer, Amanda Marshall, SHS

Your Representatives are listed here.

### Reminders:

**Benefits Fair- Thursday, October 6 at Burgundy Basin Inn**

**SRP Leadership Conference in Saratoga Springs - October 21-23- Leaders, please consider attending. It is a great way to gain knowledge about union issues and brush up on your leadership skills!**

### SRP Representatives:

Tracy Anderson, PR  
Radhika Ramesh, TR  
Constance Bader, BRMS  
Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle, MC  
Maryanne Maland, JR  
Sherry Tontarski, MC  
Vicki McCutcheon, SHS

**ERS (Employees' Retirement System) Workshop - Monday, October 24 from 3:30-4:30 at SHS in the LGI-**

*This workshop is run by Kathy Hine and is open to all SRPs. It is a great way to get answers to questions you may have about the retirement system.*

**Para Academy - Professional learning workshops for SRPs are now available. To enroll, go to WinCap Web and click on Professional Learning>Catalogs>Electives**

If you need to contact me, I may be reached through email at: [lorinda\\_spring@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:lorinda_spring@pittsford.monroe.edu) or by phone at 267-3372.

## Have a wonderful school year!

Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan. Your feedback is welcome at [brian\\_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu)

## Why do we have a Public Relations team for PDTA, and what do they do?

Kelly Jordan



Our PR team is committed to getting involved with our Pittsford community and developing positive relationships throughout the district and community. All of our fundraisers contribute to a fund that benefits our PDTA Barb Shapiro Student Scholarships, Pittsford Youth Services, Pittsford Ambulance, and Pittsford Fire Department. How can you help? We have many upcoming events that you join us in:

1. **J.Crew Outlet shopping day** - We are having another shopping day at the J.Crew outlet store on Friday, September 30th!
2. **PDTA Benefits Fair Annual Raffle** - Please contact Kelly Jordan if you have any items or gift certificates to donate. Make sure to stop at the PDTA table on October 6th to buy your raffle tickets and participate.
3. **Making Strides Walk for Breast Cancer** - See you PR rep to sign up to join our team!
4. **Donate to the Pittsford Food Cupboard** to help them restock their shelves. EVERY building is collecting this month!



**YOU'VE GOT THIS!**

## By Popular Demand!

Jolene's Opening Day Speech

Good morning everyone and welcome to the 2016-2017 school year! Before I begin my comments I would like to thank the BOE and the PTSA leadership for always helping us kick off the new year!

This summer I had the good fortune to participate in two, week-long events. The first was the American Federation of Teachers National Convention as a PDTA and NYSUT delegate and the second was the start of my journey in the AFL-CIO Leadership Institute at Cornell University's Industrial and Labor Relations School, which is a two-year program.

During these two weeks I was surrounded by an inspirational and diverse group of educators and union leaders from all across our state, country and world. We spent long days debating politics and the problems facing our society.

We sometimes lamented whether there was any real way to solve these problems. These were heavy conversations, probably not too different from ones you've had around your coffee tables and these conversations could have turned into gripe sessions where we threw up our hands and admitted defeat.

As you know, a look at our world can become quite depressing. However, it had the exact opposite impact on me, and hundreds of other educators and unionists that surrounded me this summer. Because it occurred to us, and me, a self-proclaimed lifelong pessimist... that the answer to WHO can solve the problems of our world doesn't lie in any ONE leader or political candidate.

The people who can solve the world's problems are right here before me today. Educators are the answer and those little minds they hope to help shape! Now it may sound idealistic, even optimistic, maybe our superintendent's sunny personality has finally rubbed off on me, but I do believe it to be true.

As educators we need to remind ourselves of why we began our careers in the first place. We wanted to help mold young minds and make this world a better place. We wanted to inspire,

mentor, build teams and collaborate. So this year my challenge to each of you is to use the power you have as educational leaders to transform this community, state, country and even our world into the kind of place we want it to be. And it won't require you to do anything extra. All you have to do, is teach.

I'd like to quickly review just a couple of the problems we are facing as a society and the answers we can provide in our classrooms and work environments.

World problem number one: messages of isolation, prejudice and division. The solution to this problem is simple. We teach inclusion and model it each day and in every way that we can. It may start in an elementary classroom when an adult lines up a class for a "special".

That teacher, SRP or administrator must pay close attention. Is there one child that always gets shuffled to the back of the line ...alone? If there is, we must do something about it. Make a choice that will end the isolation and create an environment of inclusion.

And it continues in ways big and small as students travel to middle and high school. As educational leaders we must make decisions about how we pick student partners, groups and teams. Our actions mustn't create an environment of isolation where it is always the same children being picked last or in some cases always being picked first.

It reinforces the notion of haves vs. have-nots. And let's not pit boys against girls. It divides us, it reinforces stereotypes, labels children and it promotes an environment of one gender being better than another. We must study the water fountain, the locker room, and the cafeteria table. We mustn't allow one single incident of bullying to go unchecked.

Believe me, as an educator for over 20 years, I know our days can be long and on particularly tough days we might be tempted to ignore some negative student behaviors, but we cannot. There might be a dirty look we see one child give another child, a bump out of line, a

smack at some books in another child's arms, simple name calling, and we might be tempted to look away...or let it go unchecked, but we cannot! We MUST not!

World problem number two: this notion that differences are a bad thing. At the AFL-CIO Institute I was one of only two educators in a large class of 28, everyone else worked outside the field of education and most were from NYC.

The class was diverse and made up of leaders from organized labor and unions. We were asked to create a circle and anyone who wanted to was asked to step into the circle and say out loud a social identity that he or she identified with.

Those who felt the same identity could walk into the circle with you, make eye contact with you and then turn to those outside the circle and make eye contact with each of the remaining members of the class. By the time the exercise was over not only did we see what made us each unique and yes, different, but we also were able to see how alike we were in ways that we couldn't possibly see by just looking at our skin color or gender.

There is so much in this life that binds us together and we must find that common ground. We all want to be accepted, be safe, be free, learn, grow, and love. And we want to help others when we see them in pain, hurt, failing or struggling. We all want to be successful and happy.

We must create opportunities in our classrooms and schools to celebrate and explore our differences and our diversity in all sorts of authentic and honest ways.

We must strive to find outings that reach beyond the walls of our schools to provide these experiences for our students AND for ourselves as their role models.

When I left the Institute, I can now say that a NYC bus driver, a teamster, a parole officer, and yes, even a LAWYER... are my friends. We weren't the same religion or color. We may not share the same sexual identity or come from the same ethnic background, but we are like family because of the week of shared experiences we had together.

And that one powerful exercise that pointed out our

(continued, p.10)

(DiBrango, continued from p.9)

differences actually accentuated the ways in which we are similar.

While I attended the American Federation of Teachers Convention we heard about the incredible work being done at the Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel; their mission, "building a shared society, one community, one school at a time". They "currently operate integrated schools and communities in six locations with 1,320 Jewish and Arab students and more than 3,000 community members".

Not only are there Jewish and Arab students in these integrated schools but Jewish and Arab teachers. Imagine, a school built to create a society of peace, love, safety and acceptance in a land of differences. A school that teaches children to learn about the complex

realities they will have to face every day and the ways to problem solve them in peace.

When they started 20 years ago, they had one school. Now they have six. That's the power of education. It is, in one word, transformative.

During one of the many seminars I attended this summer there was a quote by Victor Frankl, the late Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, which stuck with me. "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

This summer amid the sun, blue skies, Olympic Games and warmth there was an awful lot of negative stimulus coming at us. And it could make us feel absolutely helpless. However, we all

have a choice. As educators, let's choose to be powerful.

So, challenge yourself to teach what really matters in addition to all of the subjects like science and history, etc. Teach what can make this world an EVEN better place.

- Teach acceptance.
- Teach forgiveness.
- Teach kindness.
- Teach truth.
- Teach equality.
- Teach hope.
- Teach strength.
- Teach civics.
- Teach civility.
- Teach honor.
- Teach respect.
- But most of all...teach love.
- We can make a better world together!
- Thank you!

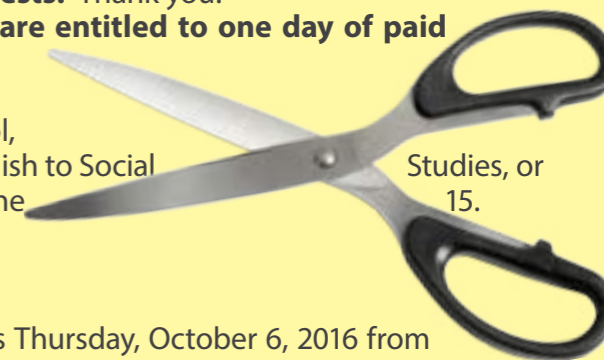


## The MCE 5th Grade team is energized and READY TO GO!



## Cut and Keep Reminders

- You have rights won for you by your union! Under the law, you have a right to union representation in an investigatory interview with a supervisor if you reasonably believe that the interview will lead to discipline. **The right is only triggered if you request union representation.** The representative must be a union leader. If you believe you may be disciplined, a reasonable period of time shall be afforded to you to obtain such representation. That means you never have to meet with the supervisor right away, and you are also entitled to know the subject of the meeting. These are known as your **Weingarten Rights**. Please keep this information handy.
- **Did you know Monday afternoons are reserved for PDTA meetings?** They are! The District has agreed not to schedule meetings on Monday afternoons when PDTA is holding their meetings. However, now it seems that our own members are scheduling department meetings and other meetings on Monday afternoons. **Please avoid scheduling meetings on Monday afternoons so your PDTA leaders can attend their meetings and represent you and your interests.** Thank you!
- **Are you a teacher who made a change this year? You are entitled to one day of paid summer work** if you:
  - a. moved from one school to another,
  - b. moved grade levels within the same elementary school,
  - c. changed subject matter areas; i.e. Math to Science, English to Social Studies, or
  - d. are notified of a change in room assignment after June 15.



Please see section 1-8 in your contract for all details.

- Our Annual Wellness and Benefits Fair and Flu Shot Clinic is Thursday, October 6, 2016 from 2:30-5:15 pm at the Burgundy Basin Inn, 1361 Marsh Road. Mark your calendars. **All employees are welcome, and you may leave to attend the fair once your professional responsibilities have been fulfilled.**
- As of July 1, 2016, all permanently or professionally certified teachers or educational leaders and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders are required to register with SED in the month of his/her birth. This registration process will be done using the State Education Department's TEACH system. These certificate holders will be required to register every five (5) years thereafter.
- Don't forget **Health Fund money is not deposited until October.** At that time your funds will be available to you. Full-time staff members who are not on the payroll as of October 1, but who are on the payroll before February 1 of the school year, shall be eligible for a pro-rated portion of the health fund, according to the following schedule:
  - On the payroll before November 1: 80% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before December 1: 70% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before January 1: 60% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before February 1: 50% of the benefit

Part-time staff members of .5 or more shall receive a prorated contribution of the above schedule.

In order to receive this prorated contribution, staff members must fill out and submit the "Request for Prorated Health Fund Benefit" form found on <http://www.pdta.org/> by March 1 of the school year.

- Traveling teachers are reimbursed for mileage expenses between buildings. The paperwork and official mileage amounts are easily accessible from the "Forms for Business Office" tab of the "Employee" section of the District's website: [www.pittsfordschools.org/documents.cfm](http://www.pittsfordschools.org/documents.cfm).
- Sick Leave Bank Open Enrollment begins October 1. Please refer to an upcoming e-mail from Karen Kalinowski, our PDTA Administrative Assistant, for all the details. **If you are already a member of the Sick Leave Bank, you do not need to enroll again.** If you are unsure, email or call Karen in the PDTA Office.
- Like us on Facebook (Pittsford District Teachers Association (PDTA) – A Union of Educators) with over 480 likes and counting! Follow us on Twitter @PDTAunion with over 550 followers!

## Financial advice shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all approach!

Are you looking for unbiased, objective advice *specifically designed* for you and your family? With the NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed Financial Counseling Program, you've found it.

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