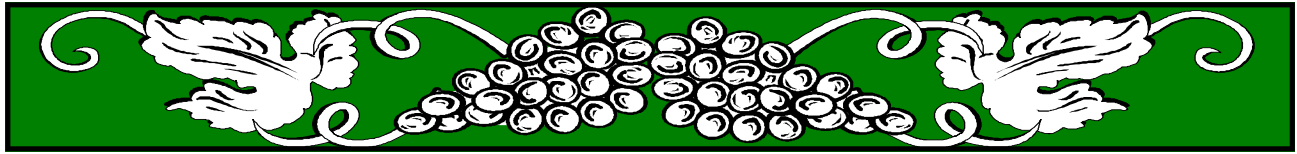


June 2009

# the grapevine

NTA TEACHING ASSISTANT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



## Budget Layoffs Affect Everyone



### Contacts:

#### NTATAC Executive Committee

Sheila Manning (NWS)

Joni Mongelli (TH)

Berenda Johnson (PK)

Patricia Favata (VG)

NTA Office 562-8120

NTA President Phillip Cordella

Vice President Vicky Pittman

Treasurer Angela Sartori

Secretary Karen Roberts

Human Resources 563-3424

NTA Benefit Trust Fund

562-7988

NECSD website:

[www.newburghschools.org](http://www.newburghschools.org)

NTA website:

[www.newburghta.org](http://www.newburghta.org)

Grapevine newsletter e-mail

[Grapevinetanews@aol.com](mailto:Grapevinetanews@aol.com)

Editor: Maureen Pavlik

Asst. Editor: Patty SanSevero

The recession has not only hit the stock market and the auto industry but it has trickled down into the education of our children and the almighty dollar. The Newburgh School district has been under fire for the termination of staff in order to meet it's budget for the 2009-2010 school year. Since the state money arrived and the school budget passed, employees faced with layoffs are wondering why this still is necessary, when they will be able to return to their positions and how they will be able to afford their COBRA health premiums on unemployment.

Ten teaching assistants, 27 1/2 teachers and 120 total staff are being affected by the layoffs. Some teachers were spared due to an MTA tax glitch that saved their positions. The layoffs seem unfair when employees like teaching assistants make up some of the lowest salaries in our district. What is further disheartening is that administrative and top-heavy positions within our central administration infrastructure have not been touched. Many feel that an elimination of a central administrative employee makes more sense financially and has less of a disadvantageous effect on students in the classroom. On May 22, 2009, a supplemental memorandum of agreement regarding staff movement was agreed on and posted on [www.newburghta.org](http://www.newburghta.org).

### Thoughts on the subject:

**Teaching assistant:** "The layoffs and cuts will hurt everyone including the children. Class size increases and students will not have the opportunity of that extra one to one attention that assistants can provide. We supported the budget, now where's our support?"

**Teacher:** "They should cut the programs that are not working or find some alternative. It's crazy. It impacts the students and their test scores. Class size is increasing. The basics shouldn't be cut."

**Administrator:** "Ultimately it's the students who suffer. One would think there are other places to cut instead of those who interact directly with students."

**Parent:** "If 28 students are in a classroom, one teacher is not enough coverage to properly attend all their needs, educational or otherwise."

**Student:** "If I lost one of my regular teachers, it would be hard to keep up my grades. My parents would be disappointed in me."

Notice the **GREEN** headlines in this issue! It's our attempt to go **GREEN** whenever we can, like asking the SENTINEL to print the GRAPEVINE on recycled paper! Earth Day awareness and preserving our environment for future generations is important to us all.

# Shopping for insurance? Keep NYSUT Member Benefits Trust in mind.

Insurance - it's one of those things no one likes to think about. Is it necessary to have? It depends on the type of insurance, on your personal risk tolerance and other individual circumstances.

It can provide peace of mind, and usually once you need it, it's too late to apply for it.

NYSUT Member Benefits Trust endorses a variety of voluntary insurance plans to provide extra protection for you and your family. Consider these options when you're in the purchasing process.

## **Term Life Insurance.**

Members and their spouses (or certified domestic partners) under age 85 may apply. Up to \$1 million of coverage is available for applicants up to age 65. Coverage up to \$30,000 is available for applicants between the ages of 65 and 84.

## **WrapPlan<sup>SM</sup> II Flexible Premium Adjustable Life Insurance**

is group universal life insurance. The plan allows you to purchase life insurance coverage that increases as your term life coverage decreases or terminates. You must be age 65 or under to apply.

## **Personal Property & Liability Insurance.**

Policies include automobile, boatowners, homeowners/renters, personal excess liability (umbrella), mobile home, recreational vehicle, snowmobile, motorcycle, fire and landlord's rental dwelling.

**Disability Insurance** provides tax-free benefits to help meet living expenses if a covered

sickness or injury prevents you from working. You must be under age 64 and work 20 or more hours per week to apply.

## **Accidental Death & Dismemberment**

**Insurance** covers you against any type of accident in the course of business or pleasure. Worldwide Emergency Travel Services is included, and an education benefit for qualified children is also provided.

## **Catastrophe Major Medical**

**Insurance** supplements your basic hospitalization and major medical insurance, including Medicare. You must be age 79 or younger to apply.

## **Long-Term Care Insurance**

provides choices with regard to plan design and daily benefit amounts. Services provided include care planning and coverage for home health care, adult day care, homemaker services, licensed assisted living facilities, nursing home care, hospice care and respite care.

**Vision Plan** benefits include an annual eye exam and one pair of eyeglasses. You may receive services from an out-of-network provider; however, maximum benefit is received when using an in-network provider.

**In-Service Dental Plan and Retiree Dental Plan** pay benefits for preventive, restorative and major restorative services.



NYSUT Member Benefits offers Consumer's Guides on many of these types of insurance. Call or log on today. (See below for contact information.)



For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101, visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org) or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

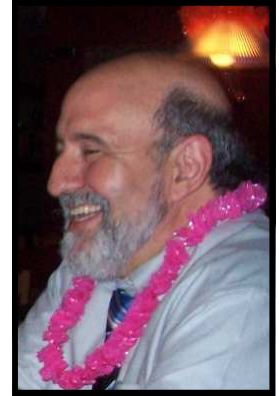
Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

# Phillip Cordella

## **Tell us something about yourself (family, teaching career, hobbies, etc...)**

**A:** I grew up in Brooklyn, NY. I went to school at Brooklyn Tech and SUNY New Paltz. After that, I subbed in the Middletown school district but student taught at NFA in Social Studies, my third certification area, with Harold Fedderman. In 1981, I taught as a Special Education teacher in Newburgh. In 1989, I became a district wide attendance teacher for the NECSD. Presently, I have served as the NTA President for the last five years.

I am married and live in Woodstock, NY with my wife and two Labrador retrievers, Prudence and Peaches and a cat. Father to 25 year old identical twin sons. One of my sons is getting his PHD at Stanford University. My other son lives and works in London, England.



## **What district position will you hold come September 2009?**

**A:** Like everyone else, I am waiting for my tentative assignment.

## **What words of wisdom can you offer Patricia VanDuser and Judy LeRoy as they step into the roles of NTA President and VP?**

**A:** Follow your instincts. Do what's right on behalf of the members. At the end of the day, be able to look at yourself in the mirror and believe you've done the right things to help district professionals.

## **What do you feel was your greatest accomplishment during your reign as NTA President?**

**A:** There are two that come to mind. I would have to say that I helped attain a four year contract for teachers and teaching assistants, one which was settled a year before the previous contract expired. Secondly, under my leadership, I fostered a democratic union which empowered many, many members to take on leadership roles on committees, etc...

## **Any Regrets?**

**A.** Yes, I incorrectly judged that a website could replace a newsletter for communication to staff.

## **Reflections on the end of his term:**

He would like to thank all the officers who worked selflessly, never hesitating when asked to do something. Thanks go to his Vice President Vicky Pittman, Treasurer Angela Sartori, Secretary Karen Roberts. A huge thanks to his NTA Office Manager Lenore Giansante and Executive Assistant Lorraine Mahon who often cover for him when he's engaged in meetings. They all do a great job! Last but not least, thanks to his wife and family.



# Carly's Mission

Carly's Mission in Santa Marta, Columbia was a huge success. The Healing the Children medical team swear it was the best mission to date. Surgeries on 69 children were completed as well as a total of 151 total procedures. Many of the children have more than one procedure done at a time. Medical volunteers would start surgery at about 7:30 am and not return home until 11:30 pm. The medical staff was exhausted but so touched by the children they were able to help. As CEO of Vassar Hospital, Dr. Aronzon stated, "This was a life-altering experience!"



This 2 month old baby weighed only 6 lb. 2 oz. Due to a cleft lip, he only received nourishment from a tube inserted into his stomach. This photo was taken two days after the team repaired his lip and he had for the first time ever taken formula from a bottle.



Dr. Abraham greeting a patient



The medical team in Columbia with their Carly's Mission t-shirts.

A patient receives a stuffed animal with a smile thanks to Carly's Mission.



## Carly's Kids' Day

## ...random acts of kindness

May 16, 2009 was a day for all children in the community to come out to Chadwick Lake Park and have fun cheerleading, face painting, cookie decorating, dancing, bouncy castle jumping and many other fun things that kids love to do! This event was put in place by the Sigelbaum family celebrating the life of Carly Sigelbaum, a beautiful little girl that many may not have known but her family wanted the community to come out and spend the day doing all the things that their little girl Carly loved to do! The turn-out was huge and along with the Sigelbaum family, there were Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and families volunteering their time to make the day a huge success! There were many sponsors that helped to make this day possible for all of the community to enjoy as well .. Thank You!!! The "Carly Fund" was also established by the family and is a charitable fund of the Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan. Through the "Carly fund", grants that reflect Carly's love for others will be awarded to local schools or nonprofit organizations that practice "random acts of kindness." There will also be annual scholarships awarded to one outstanding male student and one outstanding female student from Newburgh Free Academy. To see pictures, and sponsor list information, please visit [www.carlyskidsday.org](http://www.carlyskidsday.org) or for donations only, please visit <http://www.cfoc-ny.org>.

# Starting Healthy

On April 25, 2009, NECSD Teaching Assistants held a health and education fair at Gidney Avenue Elementary School in Newburgh. The "Starting Healthy in Newburgh" fair accomplished its goal of preparing children entering Pre-K and kindergarten in September. There were fun /educational activities, health screenings and information provided on proper nutrition, dental health, and vaccinations..

The children who attended enjoyed the bounce house, face painting, crafts, GAMS dancers, etc... Pre-K teacher, Marjorie Kowal read "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and retold the story using a magnetic board and sequencing cards with assistance from her avid listeners. Parents and families received a free book as a reading incentive, toothbrushes, toothpaste and healthy snacks for themselves and their children at the fruit table.

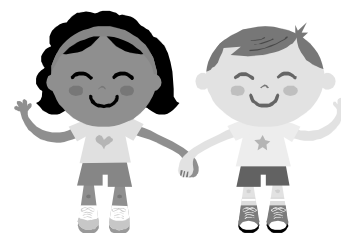
The teaching assistants were awarded the three year LAP grant from NYSUT in 2008 and have been working on ways to connect with the community in positive ways. Volunteers for the day included the LAP committee members, NECSD Teaching Assistants, Nurses, Teachers, CSEA security and aides, Administrators, Central Administration, Board of Education members, NYSUT officers, GAMS dancers, and Dawn Lambert (the Exercise Lady).

A special thanks goes to Berenda Johnson, LAP Program Chairperson, the LAP committee and all that volunteered their time. Local businesses who sponsored the event include NY Life, Zafar's Produce, Rita's Ice, Independent Living, Mid-Hudson AEYC, Dr. Cary Wagner of Smileworks Dentistry, Fidelis Health Ins., Affinity Healthcare, Pro Motion Physical Therapy, A and G Bounce Houses, and Snyder's Pretzels (distributor Bart Walsh). In addition, donations to the event were made by Torches Restaurant, Longhorn's Steakhouse and Stop and Shop.



Executive Member & LAP Chairperson, TA Berenda Johnson with her daughter Zamia Johnson (also a TA) and grandbaby Nyeir, 4 months old.

## Week of the Young Child



In accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Newburgh Pre-K centers at Washington St. and Renwick Street celebrated the Week of the Young Child (April 20-24, 2009). This year's theme was "Bring Communities Together for Children". This special week highlighted the importance of families, childhood professionals and communities working together to support every child's healthy development and early learning.

Laura Fraher, Newburgh Pre-K teacher and past president of the Mid-Hudson AEYC, an affiliate chapter of NAEYC, said, "Research shows that children attending high quality programs are more likely to develop the language, pre-mathematics and social skills they need to succeed in school."

The Week of the Young Child included an opening parade, proclamations, a puppet show, guest readers and songs at the schools. Students and staff wore red and white t-shirts in honor of the week. What made this celebration special is the 40th anniversary of the Pre-K program within the Newburgh district.



Teaching assistants of the Pre-K at Washington St., Jean Stumpf and Debbie Petrilli, attended the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children's Annual Conference in Brooklyn with keynote speakers and workshops.

Obesity has become an epidemic in today's children. Children are spending upwards of 5 hours or more watching TV or playing video games while consuming junk food and sugary drinks. They are also not getting the much needed physical activity that their bodies need which could turn into very serious health problems as they grow into adulthood. Here are some of the Do's and Don'ts that could help maintain a healthy lifestyle for you and your kids:

### Do's

- Be a role model by eating healthy yourself.
- Promote healthy eating habits by involving your kids in the purchasing, and preparing of meals.
- Have regular family meals.
- Prepare well--balanced meals avoiding foods high in fats and sugars.
- Serve up a variety of fruits and vegetables for snack-time.
- Be sure to have plenty of water and maintain plenty of physical activity.

### Don'ts

- Don't eat sugary or fatty foods and snacks.
- Don't sit in front of the TV or video games for more than 2 hours a day.
- Don't force kids to eat things they don't like, offer alternate healthy choices.
- Don't drink soda, drinks or juice high in calories and sugars.



Teaching kids to eat healthy!



## Message from the Editors

Summer is on it's way and as the 2008-2009 school year draws to a close, we wonder where the time went. It's been a whirlwind year of change with elections, restructuring and budget issues.

Summer is a time to relax and enjoy family and friends. There are members who must work during July and August to make ends meet. Please don't forget to take time for yourself too. This free time is one of the biggest perks to our positions as educators. Working with students and colleagues can be taxing at times on our blood pressure, our patience and our overall health. Summer is a time to rejuvenate. September will roll around fast enough and when it does we want to return refreshed and ready to motivate our students for another successful and healthy school year.



Sheila Manning with NYSUT President Richard Ianuzzi accepting a journalism award for the Grapevine newsletter at the Representative Assembly in Buffalo.



Articles/ideas listed in the Grapevine are not necessarily those of the Newburgh Teachers' Association, NECSD, NYSUT or AFT.