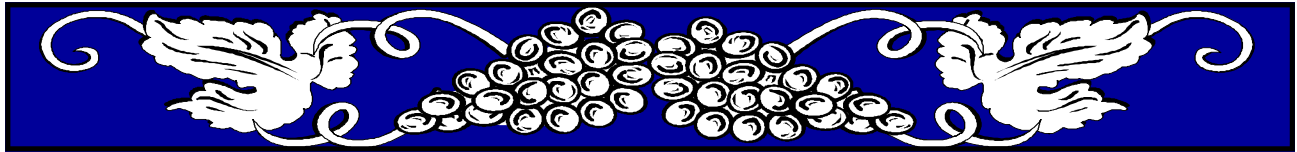


the grapevine

NTA TEACHING ASSISTANT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



New Leadership

Everywhere we turn there is new leadership. From President Barack Obama's inauguration and move to the White House to the Newburgh Teachers' Association officers election results, change is imminent. As our economy plunges into a recession, we watch the bailouts do little to keep unemployment, foreclosures and businesses from failing. Such is the role of leaders to take the impossible and affect changes. The NTA is no different. As a strong union of officers, teachers, teaching assistants, substitutes and retirees, we will persevere. There can be no divisiveness for the goal is the same for the union and our country, **we are all in this together!**

It may be premature, but I would like to thank the NTA officers who have listened to our contractual concerns over

the years and thank them profusely. Although these are paid positions, much of the officers time is spent at meetings, or in Albany fighting for our rights. This is considerable time they could spend with their families. Much is sacrificed for the greater good of the members. I commend President Phil Cordella, VP Vicky Pittman, Treasurer Angela Sartori and Secretary Karen Roberts for their efforts over the past four years. Thank you for your generous contributions to our union.



The NTA Officer election results are in!

- President Elect: Patricia Van Duser (Fostertown)
- Vice President Elect: Judy LeRoy (Temple Hill)
- Secretary Elect: Jeanne Daley (Stewart)
- Treasurer Elect: Ellen Hart (Pre-K Renwick)

*****Terms Effective July 1, 2009—June 30, 2012*****

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
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www.newburghschools.org

NTA website:

www.newburghta.org

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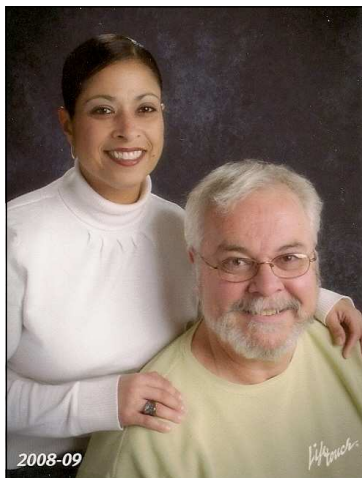
Asst. Editor: Patty SanSevero

Notice the blue/white layout of the Grapevine, Carly Sigelbaum's favorite colors honor the memory of a student whose spirit lives forever in "Carly's Kids" and her mission, "Healing the Children"...See page 4 for details..

Paraprofessionals and Teachers Working Co-operatively

Respect and Communication are *key* to effectively making a classroom work! That is what teachers and paraprofessionals say! The American Federation of Teachers have also gathered information from teachers and paraprofessionals on how to make working together ... Work!

- Create a healthy, open relationship between teacher and paraprofessional:
 - Set aside time to get to know each other; discuss experiences, background, strengths and weaknesses; set classroom goals.
- Active Listening is the key to true communication. It is a way to get to know another person and understand their side of a problem or issue. It also helps with being able to speak freely and explain or express each side of a problem and work out solutions. Areas of active listening include:
 - Encouraging (*can you tell me more; could you give me more detail*), Clarifying (*ask who, what, where, when, and why; clarifying helps you get clear information from the other person and understand his/her point of view*), re stating the facts (*this shows you've been listening to the other person and helps to make sure you've understood what they are saying*), Reflecting, Summarizing, and Validating!
- Avoid communication barriers like:
 - Destructive criticism & name calling, diagnosing or mind-reading, ordering or threatening
- Planning together keeps you productive and motivated.
 - Planning daily/weekly schedules and activities can make both lives easier.
- Assertiveness and mutual respect cement the bond in a classroom team.
 - Express yourself clearly without resentment or rage, ask questions when you need to, and address problems in a non-confrontational way as soon as they arise.
- Defining roles and responsibilities can prevent confusion and conflict.
- Feedback builds a working team.
- The AFT can help teachers and paraprofessionals build good working relationships. All information in this article were printed in a brochure titled "Creating a Classroom Team" by the AFT. For more information go to www.aft.org.



A positive note ...

This mini-article will show you that building a positive relationship, listening, creating a positive environment, and keeping the lines of communication open, can provide a healthy and co-operative working environment for all paraprofessionals and teachers alike.

Pictured left are Teaching Assistant, Milagros Proano and Teacher Jim Crispi from the S.A.V.E. room @ Meadow Hill School. Ms. Proano sent us a little note describing how she and Mr. Crispi work co-operatively in the classroom. She describes them as being totally different people with totally different personalities and how they were able to develop 2 important skills in order to maintain this co-operative relationship. One is respect for each other and the other is to listen to each other or hear each other out. Ms. Proano also describes how this co-operative relationship took time and effort by both parties and how she is not treated as just a Teaching Assistant, but as an equal.

If you have any stories/ideas or pictures that you would like to share with us on how you and your teacher were able to build a co-operative relationship, please send to Maureen Pavlik—Temple Hill School or Patty SanSevero—Gardnertown School.

A New Direction



L: Brigitta Anderson and Saul Bravo with Patricia

R: Patricia Van Duser with Caitlin Rodriguez

Q: As NTA President, how will your leadership positively affect the teaching assistants?

A: As Newburgh Teachers' Association President, I think I will work collaboratively with the Teaching Assistant Chapter. I have been an elementary teacher and know the value of added support in the classroom each and every day! I feel securing a living wage for Teaching Assistants is at the top of my agenda. I would also like to see a better way to unite all our members and keep them informed in a timely manner. I look forward to our future successes.

On a personal note: I have taught in the Newburgh Enlarged City School District for the last 20 years. I started at New Windsor School as a long term sub. In 1990, I came to Fostertown to teach 6th grade. I am the mother to a thirteen (on March 9th) year old son, Sean, who is the light of my life. I am surrounded by my family: Anne Mayer, Kathy & James Marley, and Tom & Laura Mayer. As well as my nieces and nephews: Alyssa, Jake and Gregory. They all live in Newburgh and we get together often. My hobbies are watching my son play soccer, entertaining friends, gardening and watching the NFL...most importantly the NY Giants. The biggest change, next year, will be missing my Fostertown family — staff and students!! I will carry their energy, love for the children and determination for making a difference with me!! I am truly honored to be your NTA president.

On a personal note: I have been an educational support service teacher in the NCSd for the past 18 years. I was at GAMS for 17 years where I shared a very positive and collaborative relationship with my colleagues, students and their families in the educational process. This school year I made a change and currently work at Temple Hill Academy. I am married to Dane LeRoy, who has been the NFA welding instructor for the past 23 years. I am the proud mother of Christopher, 2006 NFA graduate. He is pursuing a career as a Commercial Diver/Underwater Welder. Our second child, Bryan, is currently a junior at NFA. He is an active snowboarder and outdoor sports enthusiast. As the future Vice President of the NTA, I am looking forward to working collaboratively with the Teaching Assistant Chapter, as well as, all facets of our NTA union. I am a hard-working individual committed to building our union. As an educational support teacher myself, **I know the value a teaching assistant provides in the classroom and I will strongly advocate for you.** I look forward to working together and I am truly honored to be your NTA vice president.



Judy LeRoy

Patricia Mayer Van Duser

NTA President Elect

- Teacher for 20 years
- Head Delegate, or Alternate for 20 years
- Elementary Teacher Representative to NTA Board of Directors
- NYSUT & AFT Delegate
- NYS TRS Delegate
- Secretary of NTA
- Teacher Mentor
- Graduate of NYSUT Leadership Institute
- NTA Positions: VOTE Cope Chairperson, Grievance Chairperson, Special Events Chairperson, Political Action Committee Member, Pendulum Photographer and Writer



Judy Coleman LeRoy

NTA Vice President Elect

- Nurse Teacher for 17 years
- Health and Safety committee member
- Building delegate
- Orange County Medical Reserve Corp member
- Summer School employee for 10 years
- Teacher Mentor
- Attended NTA Leadership Conferences
- Trained in IST Response to Intervention

MESSAGE FROM THE TEACHING ASSISTANT CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee would like to thank the members for their continued support. We will continue working on all issues concerning Teaching Assistants. Our goal is to keep the great working relationship we have with the NTA and work along side the new NTA Officers. We look to the future with hope and confidence that the true value of Teaching Assistants is realized.

CARLY'S MISSION



The colleagues and friends of The Sigelbaum Family hosted a "Healing the Children" fundraiser in memory of Carly Sigelbaum in the south cafeteria of NFA on March 3, 2009. Funds were raised by the sale of t-shirts, blue awareness ribbons, donations, and the raffling off of gift baskets created and donated by the Newburgh teaching assistant chapter. "Healing The Children" is a nonprofit organization comprised of dedicated doctors and nurses who volunteer their time and services to attend the surgical needs of children in the United States as well as other countries. On their next mission to Columbia, every doctor and nurse will perform their services wearing a T-shirt in Carly's memory and every child/family will be informed that it is "Carly's Mission" and the child will be presented with a stuffed animal. For more information on how you can obtain an awareness ribbon, t-shirt, or if you just want to donate, please contact Ginny Bucci at Ginbuc1@aol.com. "Carly's Mission" is a non-district sponsored event but is the organization of choice by the family of Carly Sigelbaum. Your support will be felt throughout the world!



*In Memory of
Carly Marie Sigelbaum*



Did you know you can donate your car or boat? Be a host family? Hold a tag sale? Donate air miles? Visit: <http://www.htcne.org>.



Healing the Children Northeast, a humanitarian aid organization based in Connecticut, provides medical treatment to children throughout the world who lack sufficient access to necessary medical services. For over twenty-six years, the organization has arranged for the donated medical and surgical services for over 33,000 children around the world. According to Debbie Fritz, an O.R. nurse and volunteer, the medical team typically screens over 200 needy children on their first day of each mission. Children who qualify are operated on abroad while others are brought to the U.S. for surgical treatment. Teams may perform up to 100 procedures on a mission. Dr. Abraham and the team usually work 18 hour days on their feet while they are on these missions. Some of the surgeries performed are for cleft palate, cleft lip or ear, nose or throat problems. These missions take place during the volunteer's vacation from their usual employment and at their own expense. Why do they do it? The team receives so many blessings of gratitude from the children and their families. It also helps medical personnel to recall personal motivations for entering their profession. Dana Buffin, director of Healing the Children Northeast spoke at the fundraiser for Carly's Mission. She said that the organization is "honored to dedicate their next mission to the memory of one special little girl who touched so many lives". (It is also the first mission dedicated in memory of a child.) For more information or for ways you can help, you can visit the Healing the Children website at : <http://www.htcne.org>.

Top Photo: Carla Sigelbaum pictured with Healing the Children medical volunteers . Dr. Abraham, team leader, and OR nurse Debbie Fritz pictured beside Annette Saturnelli.

Photos on Right: A family of children donating stuffed animals which will be used to pack supplies and as gifts for the children operated on. Other children create gift cards for the children in recovery. Teaching assistants and teachers sell raffle tickets and t-shirts working cooperatively for a worthwhile cause.

Starting Healthy

On April 25, 2009, the Local Action Project Committee is planning a health and education fair (between 10 am and 2 pm) at Gidney Avenue Elementary School in Newburgh. The "Starting Healthy in Newburgh" fair is meant to prepare children entering Pre-K and kindergarten in September. The committee plans on fun /educational activities and health screenings.

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. Even before the grant, the Newburgh teaching assistants have been involved with Safe Homes in Newburgh. For the past two years, our chapter created baskets for raffle fundraisers, donated scrapbooks to the Safe Home families as well as collecting items of use during the annual Safe Homes drive.

Interested in donating or volunteering your time, contact Berenda Johnson at (845) 459-8334 . I urge teaching assistants and teachers to either volunteer or show your support by attending the fair.



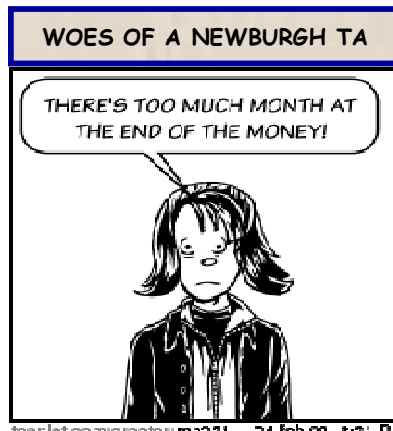
The Survey Says ...

I am pleased to announce the overwhelming response to the living wage survey listed in the last newsletter. Here is what our membership had to say on the subject.

- 86 TA member responses total.
- 57 TA's with 10 years or more in the district.
- 83 felt that the **responsibilities of a TA are not equal to their present salary.**
- 60 are **working a second job to supplement their income** or have had to at one time.
- 2 TA's work 3 jobs presently to support themselves and 2 other TA's are considering a third job to make ends meet. 3 TA's admitted to working summer school for necessary income.
- 21 do not work other jobs other than being a TA—but 17 of these TA's are married and have a spouse receiving a salary elsewhere.
- 69 support children on their TA salary.
- 75 have struggled to pay bills or purchase groceries.
- 57 admit to receiving assistance from other sources such as spouse, family or the government besides their TA salary.
- 10 have relied on a food pantry for meals.
- 85 feel that **TA's should be independent and are worthy of receiving a living wage.**
- 83 would support a living wage campaign.

Log onto: <http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?category=NEWS63>

View public salary information for any employee in the NCSD district, or neighboring districts. You will need to scroll down the page to the Payroll Data Center. You can search by your last name, or employer from the pull down menus. Our job title is listed as: **Tchr assistant.**



Members Quotes:

“We are an underpaid asset to the district. We cover classes and do testing as well as our normal duties.”

“Every time I get paid, I don't know whether to buy food or pay bills.”

“Without my husband's salary we would never be able to live.”

“I am unable to buy a house. I can't afford a mortgage.”

“We need to demand a living wage—who will advocate for us but ourselves.”

“We are being used to the best of our abilities.”

“Our responsibilities have increased.”

“Many TA's stay in bad marriages because they can't afford not to.”

“At times, we've eaten many pasta meals.”

“I would hope to be able to retire someday.”

Update ...

Remember the article on Gardnertown School's Big Give? Well, Gardnertown has received letters of thanks from the students of Rwinkwavu for all of the supplies as well as all of the letters that were sent by Gardnertown students. The letters and pictures are displayed in the main hallway at Gardnertown school for all to see and read! Great job Gardnertown School and we hope that your message of giving will spread throughout the Newburgh School District!



In Other News...

Renwick Pre-K Students Present Holiday Classics in Sign Language



By Meghan Fitzpatrick

Three-, four- and five-year-olds at Renwick Pre-K School presented a holiday show with a unique twist on Tuesday. The group of 17 children shared classic holiday music in sign language. Song after song the children signed the lyrics as they moved their feet, sang aloud and smiled for their proud families.

Speech Pathologist Christa O'Neill commented, "They've been practicing a long time," as she watched the show.

Teacher Laura Cyborski and Teaching Assistant Gina O'Neill spent two months teaching the students sign language and preparing them for the big show. Cyborski, a teacher with 26 years of experience, has taught autistic and deaf children sign language. She believed adding sign language to the pre-k students' curriculum would improve their attentiveness and literacy, better preparing them for elementary school. She was right. The students were so enthusiastic about learning sign language that they could be seen practicing throughout the day, even as they settled down for naptime, Cyborski said.

Kudos to Renwick Street Pre-K students for Presenting a Holiday Show in sign language! They practiced for 2 months under the direction of Teacher Laura Cyborski and Teaching Assistant Gina O'Neill. Their efforts did not go unnoticed as they performed song after song for their proud families and they even had this article printed in the Sentinel! Keep up the good work Pre-K students!



CONGRATULATIONS!

The TA Scholarship winners for the Fall Program are:

Heidi Tannenbaum (R) - Gidney Avenue School

Margaret DePuy (L) - New Windsor School

Gail Nichols (center) TA Scholarship Committee

Next Issue:

Feature Interview with Current NTA President Phil Cordella .

Who doesn't love a discount?

Especially these days, if you can save a little here, a little there, doesn't that make the purchase even more special?

NYSUT Member Benefits Trust endorses a variety of discount programs ranging from office supplies and movies to appliances and heating oil.

Read on for a brief description of all of the endorsed discount programs available to you from Member Benefits. **To ensure you'll get the NYSUT member discounts**, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 for details.

Bose® - Special pricing on Bose consumer products, including music systems, computer speakers and home theater systems.

Dell - Receive a 7 percent discount on most items such as laptops, desktops, printers, plasma screens and more. Or choose a pre-configured system at a discounted price.

Barnes & Noble.com - Discounted items up to 40 percent. Members receive an additional 5 percent discount only through the Member Benefits Web site.

OfficeMax Retail ConnectSM - Discounts from 10 percent to 40 percent off certain office supplies and services at OfficeMax retail locations when providing the OfficeMax discount card at time of purchase. If OfficeMax is not in your vicinity, you can order online (you'll need username,

password and Internet address to receive the discount online).

Working Advantage - Order discounted tickets for movie theaters, movie rentals, theme parks, Broadway shows, sporting events, online shopping and more.

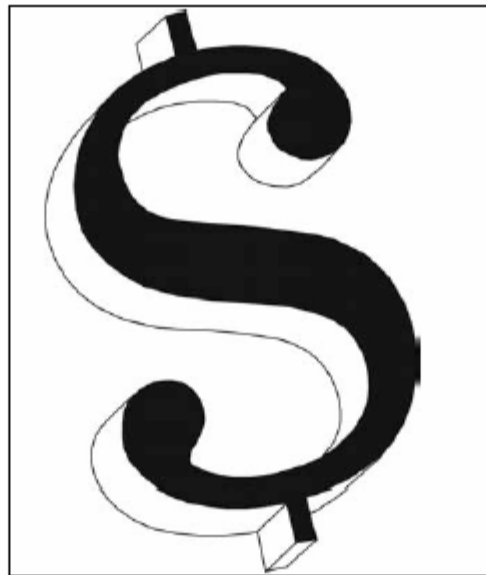
Six Flags - Purchase discounted admissions to participating parks using the Member Benefits Web site link.

Philips Lifeline - A simple push of a button gets appropriate help in a timely manner to relatives who live alone. Receive a discount off the initial installation fee and monthly monitoring costs.

Car & Truck Rentals - Discounted car rentals from Alamo, Avis, Budget and Hertz. Discounted local and one-way truck rentals from Budget Truck Rental.

The Buyer's Edge - Use this buying service to comparison shop for your best deal on major appliances, furniture, luggage, automobiles and more.

HEAT USA - Substantial discounts on heating oil. Free lifetime 24-hour service contract, annual cleaning and more. Available in limited areas in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. First-year membership is \$25; receive second year membership free.



For information about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

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

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A Union of Professionals

Dates To Remember...

March

- 2—Executive Committee Mtg
- 3—Carly's Mission
- 10—Building Rep. Mtg
- 18—Sup't Conference Day
No school-students
- 24—Gen. Membership Meeting
NTA 4:15 PM

April

- 2—Empty Bowls NFA North
Cafeteria (5—6:30 PM)
- 6—Executive Committee Mtg
- 7—Building Rep. Mtg
- 9—17 Spring Recess
- 25—Starting Healthy Fair
GAMS 10 AM—2 PM

May

- 4— Executive Committee Mtg.
- 12—Building Rep. Mtg.
- 16—Carly's Kids Day
- 19—1/2 Day Staff Development
- 21—Pre-K 40th Anniversary
Anthony's Pier 9

Kristina Driscoll (pictured left), daughter of Nancy Driscoll (Vails Gate High Tech Magnet School) recently received her P.H.D in Electrical Engineering from Boston University. Kristina is a graduate of Vails Gate, South Junior High, and NFA. Kristina is employed by the University of Cambridge, Cambridge UK, where she will be teaching and doing research. Her family and friends are very proud of her!

Flu .vs. Cold

Tis' the season folks for runny noses, coughing, sneezing, and all around feeling miserable! Can you tell the difference? Is it the common cold or is it the Flu? Check it out here and **Be Well** this Cold and Flu season!

FLU

- Fever
- Headache
- Aches
- Chills
- Dry, unproductive cough
- Tiredness/moderate
- Chest Congestion/severe
- Symptoms: 3-6 hours



COLD

- Sneezing
- Stuffy Nose
- Sore Throat
- Headache/rare
- Hacking/productive cough
- Tiredness/Mild
- Chest Congestion/mild
- Symptoms: gradual



Pictured: Nancy Driscoll (3rd from left) with her daughters Megan and Kristina, granddaughter Emily and son Andy.



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