The future of your job, your retirement and your health care hinges on decisions made in Albany and in Washington, D.C. A donation to VOTE/COPE, your union’s political action fund, helps ensure your voice will be heard on issues, large and small, that affect your life.

Political action can be confusing, and sometimes it seems there are so many parts that you can’t imagine how they all fit together. Now, more than ever, is the time when the donations you make to VOTE/COPE can help complete the puzzle.

Your contribution is an essential part of the big picture, guaranteed to produce results and protect your interest in Albany and Washington, D.C. VOTE/COPE rebates from your contributions also help us advocate for our school budget, rally community support and get our message out to our local leaders.

Although the 2011 payroll deduction campaign is now closed, you can still make a donation to VOTE COPE. Please make any donations payable to NTA VOTE COPE by check or money order and send to our VOTE/COPE Chairperson Denice Knox at Balmville School.
HORIZONS ON THE HUDSON SCHOOL

The Teaching Assistants/Aides and Honor Society Students from Horizons on the Hudson Elementary School sponsored a food drive that ran from November 8th until December 8th. The boxes of food and 5 turkeys donated up to Thanksgiving went to 8 local families. The donations that we received after Thanksgiving went to a few food banks and soup kitchens in the Newburgh area. On December 8th we totaled from our food drive 18 boxes and 5 turkeys. It was about 600 lbs of food. Thank you to the Honor Society and Nurse’s office for their contributions.

Horizons First grade also sponsored a Cultural Diversity Celebration. We had a feast featuring foods from different cultures. It was a wonderful day of stories, projects and dances from all over the world. - Submitted by Lisa Tucker, HOH School

WEST STREET SCHOOL

Teachers and Teaching Assistants from West Street School took the students on a trip to Hurds Farm. They went on hay rides, picked apples, played on the playground and learned a lot about fruits and vegetables at the fruit and vegetable workshop. They had so much fun! - Submitted by Nancy Valentin, West Street School

TEMPLE HILL ACADEMY

The staff and students at the Temple Hill Academy joined in Macy’s “Believe” campaign that raises funds for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. For every letter received, Macy’s will donate one dollar to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The event was for students to practice in letter writing skills as well as an exercise in reflecting on wants, needs and what is important to them. Students from kindergarten through eighth grade participated. They knew their letters would benefit the Make-A-Wish foundation and the children the foundation works with. The content of the letters from Temple Hill Academy ranged from holiday wishes for problems solved to jobs, from Christmas wish lists to peace. Their letter writing campaign lasted approximately 10 days. Representatives from Temple Hill Academy delivered over 900 letters to local Macy’s stores. Macy’s website reports they have surpassed their goal of one million letters. The Temple Hill Academy art department created the mailbox for students to deposit their letters. - Source: The Sentinel

HORIZONS ON THE HUDSON SCHOOL

In November two Teaching Assistants from Horizons On The Hudson School, Mrs. Tucker and Mrs. Moore went to Montreal for a conference for our International Baccalaureate Program. It was a great conference which expanded on what we are doing in the classroom. Several other Teaching Assistants will be attending a conference in New York City in April. IB Mission statement: The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. - Submitted by Lisa Tucker, HOH School
The Teaching Assistant certificate authorizes individuals to provide direct instructional services to students under the general supervision of a certified teacher. There are four certificate levels issued: Level I, Level II, Level III, and Pre-Professional. In order to qualify for certification, you must pass the New York State Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills test (NYSATAS) or the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST) and successfully complete the Child Abuse Identification and School Violence Prevention and Intervention workshops and apply via the State Education Department for State Certification as a Teaching Assistant.

**Level I Teaching Assistant:** Is the entry-level certificate for teacher assistants. This certificate permits the holder to provide direct instructional services to students under the general supervision of a licensed or certified teacher. Valid for 3 years and may be renewed for 3 additional years.

**Level II Teaching Assistant:** One year of experience as a certified Level I Teaching Assistant and you must have 9 college credits. Valid for 3 years and may not be renewed.

**Level Three Teaching Assistant:** Have a valid Level I or II Teaching Assistant Certificate plus and additional 9 more college credits for a total of 18 or more.

Teaching Assistant Applications can be done by going to the TEACH online section of the NYS Education web site.

**Web Site:** http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/

**Cost** for each application is $35.00.

To keep the Level III Teaching Assistant Certification valid you must have 75 hours of professional development every 5 years. The district provides this in the form of staff development days, faculty meeting etc, it is the district’s responsibility to send this information to the state. Please keep your own records on the professional development you take.

Remember it is your responsibility to send all forms etc. to the state and keep your certification up to date!!!

New York State Teachers' Retirement System ...

Want to learn more about your retirement benefits or begin planning your retirement? Here are some dates and locations where you can schedule your in-person consultations:

**Albany**
(800) 348-7298, ext 6100
NYS Teachers' Retirement System
10 Corporate Woods Drive
Albany appointments are scheduled
During regular business hours,
Monday through Friday, year-round

**Kingston**
Board of Education
61 Crown Street
Jan. 6, 24; Feb 3, 28; March 14, 28
April 7, 26; May 5, 16, 26

Central Valley Elementary School, 45 Route 32

**Pension Answers & Benefit Estimates**

As part of your retirement planning, you should meet with a NYSTRS representative who can answer your pension questions and provide you with printed benefit estimates. You can book a consultation (or a Pension & retirement Education Program - PREP): **Online:** through the MyNYSTRS area of the NYSTRS website - www.nystrs.org or by calling NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, ext. 6100.
Mrs. Lori Rizzo, 1st Grade Teaching Assistant at Gardnertown School, is "The Pro Basket Maker of All Time!" Mrs. Rizzo makes Gardnertown's Safe Homes Basket yearly, and also makes all of our baskets for school fundraisers! Thank you for all of your creative basket ideas!!

Baskets pictured: top left - Washington Street Pre-K, top right - Fostertown School, bottom left - Gardnertown School

The Newburgh Teaching Assistants Chapter of the NTA attended a NYSUT conference in Albany recently and was selected to receive 400 books for the NECSD!!! The conference attendees were asked to bring 1 book to the conference and districts in need were chosen to receive the books by NYSUT. NECSD was one of the chosen districts. All of the books will be distributed to the elementary level libraries throughout the district soon!

Pictured above: NECSD Teaching Assistants who attended The Safe Homes Annual Dinner Reception. The reception raised over $30,000 dollars by raffling off the donated baskets for The Safe Homes of Orange County. Thank you to all of the schools and staff that help support this wonderful organization!
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℠ 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.

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 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.
Message from the Editor

It's hard to believe that the first half of the 2010-2011 school year has already past. We have all worked hard and accomplished so much this year thus far. All of our hard work, determination, and sincerity to the organizations in which we choose to help, would not be as successful as they have been without all of our support and participation. This is equally important to the lives of every child we come in contact with on a daily basis. Our love, support, and passion for educational success in the classroom will lead every child in the right direction for a successful educational career from Pre-k all the way through to 12th grade. Thank your peers, your mentors, and yourselves for doing a superior job everyday that you go to work and tell yourself that today is going to be a GREAT day to learn. Don't forget that the way you deliver instruction to a child, will impact them for the rest of their life ... and THANK YOU!! Patty

If you have any classroom activities, instructional ideas, or conference materials that you would like to share with the Grapevine for the Spring issue, please feel free to email me at patty@servocomm.com.

ACHIEVEMENTS

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Deans List: Tamatha Johnson, Dutchess College
Promotion: Sam Fava-ta, WHUD Promotions Director
Acceptance: Sean Lyden, OCCH Nursing Program, Kaplan Hall

*Congratulations*

A year can make a big difference. This year's October 2010 American Cancer Society STRIDES walk was held on a beautiful fall morning. How different from the rainy walk in October 2009. Thanks to the money raised from these walks, breast cancer patients can have access to new treatments. Many dollars are needed to fund research to search for new medicines and hopefully one day a cure. Walking with our friends, family, and co-workers brings us closer together in our fight against this disease. I was fortunate to walk with friends, family, and co-workers and it was great to see so many teaching assistants and teachers from the Newburgh Enlarged City School District come out to walk in support of this cause. Every minute, day, month, and year are precious to any person who has experienced cancer. Hopefully with the support of so many, we will get closer each year to a cure. - Submitted by Barbara Butrick, New Windsor School

Gardnertown School Teaching Assistants raffled off a "pink" basket to support the ACS STRIDES Campaign 2010. The basket was won by Mrs. Nancy Gross and raised $185.00 toward the 2010 Campaign. Thank you to all that donated and made this basket a success! - Submitted by Theresa B-Lyden, Gardnertown School

American Cancer Society - STRIDES 2010

The Newburgh Teachers Association has a Facebook page. "LIKE" us and you could win a $25 gift card to a local business.