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NYSUT Local # 13-265  
AFT Local #3082 affiliated with NEA \* AFL-CIO

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*Jordan Dirago, Editor*

# IMP@CT

## President's Message, Rich Shands

WTA Members,

CBS Sunday Morning Show recently had a commentary on the idea of unprecedented. It's worth a watch. The idea being if it is unprecedented, it's never happened before. Certainly a pandemic has happened before, that is not unprecedented, but how it changed our lives is unprecedented! We had to change overnight from toying with the idea of remote learning to living and breathing it. We kept kids engaged, involved and made sure they knew we cared.

Along the way we cared for our families and friends. Some of us dealt with the loss of family or friends.

We also dealt with waking up trying to figure out if it was an X or a Y day or if it was even daylight yet! This experience has had a huge impact on me. There are many things that we have all had to figure out on the fly. Between members who were simultaneously teaching their biological kids and their school kids. Competing for space with your spouse's remote teaching and kids on calls as well! We Set up climbing ropes across our kitchen in place of a smart board. Our "work day" went out the window! It has been a lot of work and it has taken a toll on us and our students. I feel a huge loss for our students being deprived of their time in school to be academically, socially and physically engaged.

Despite all this, we have all worked to create the positives. We all have some personal victories as well as some collective victories.

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## President's Message Continued

We supported local businesses by feeding essential workers at Kingston Hospital. We purchased and started to distribute t-shirts to WTA members from a local business. We also surprised our seniors with signs delivered to their homes. We made you tube videos to cheer up our students and let them know we are there for them. Now we are gearing up to deliver 40,000 books to all of our students! As we move forward into a long needed summer break, the big takeaway is that we made the best out of a historic situation, that will continue to have an effect on us in unprecedented ways.

We don't know what September looks like at this time. We need guidance from the state to determine this. We are not waiting around for the state to tell us though. Presently, we have committees at every level working on distance learning plans. Next, we will be seeking input from members as we work with the district to create other plans over the summer to safely get as many students back into our buildings as possible. Congratulations to our 3 retirees, Joy Kolber, Sean Peterson and Joe Zupan! We wish them well! Also to our 8 members who received tenure this year! ( Hunter Andrews, Kerry Baxter, Erin Brogan, Kyle Ferraiolo, Alyssa Kelso, Keicha Kemsey, Shannon LoRocco, Rachel Miller, and Elizabeth Werlau) Congratulations All! Lastly, I want to thank you all for the amazing work you all did this year. The amount of positive, unsolicited praise the district received from parents was an overwhelming testament to the caliber of teachers that we have.

Relax, stay healthy, reboot over the next few months. As always, reach out if you have any questions, concerns or input that you think needs to be heard.

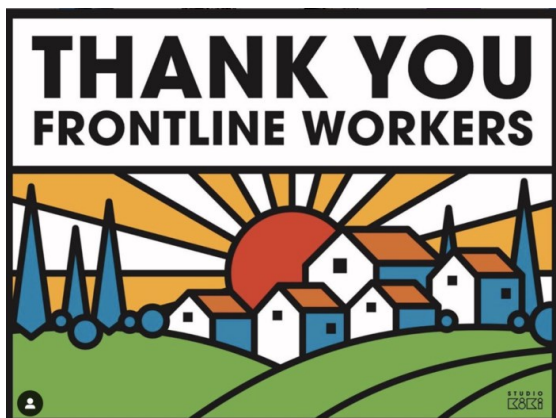
Thank you,

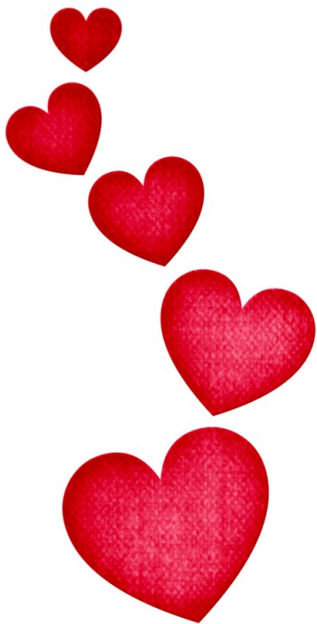
***Rich Shands***

President – Wallkill Teachers' Association

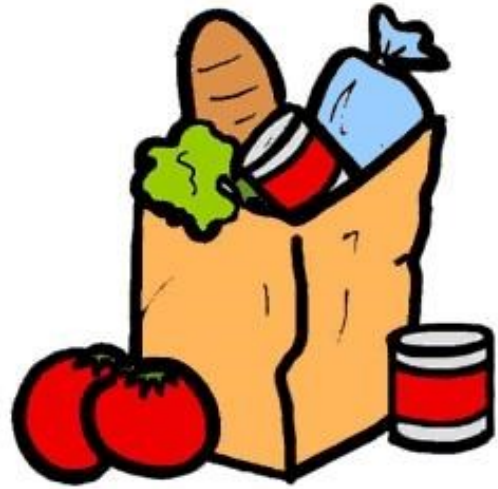
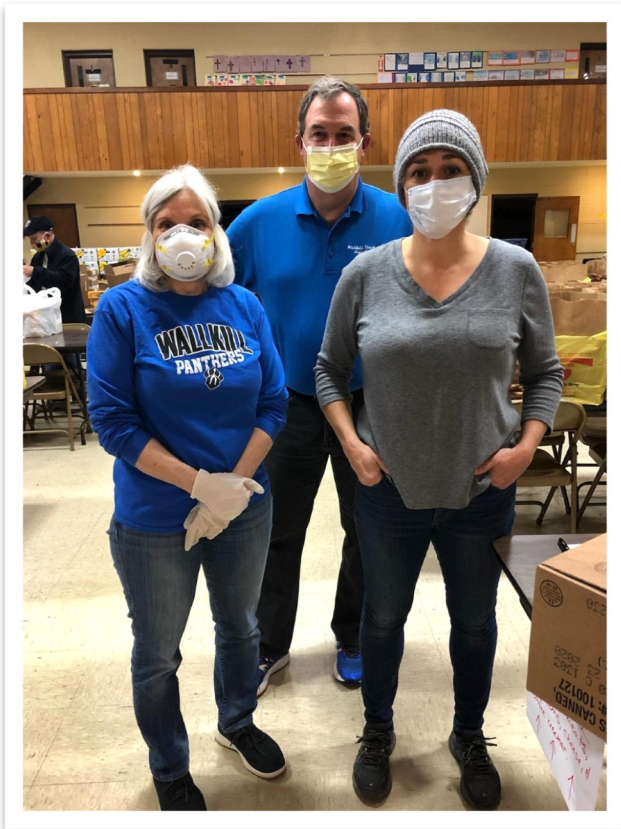
## WTA Supporting the Community

Submitted by: Melissa Servant





Delivering 50 Meals from Elsie's Place to healthcare workers in the COVID Unit at Kingston Hospital



Volunteer Work at Food Pantries



Food Drive at Hannaford's & Access Physical Therapy

# Thank You Letter to DOH and Frontline Workers

Written by Amanda Murphy



## The Wallkill Teachers' Association

PO Box 305  
Gardiner, NY 12525

To Our Heroes at the DOH:

In these difficult times, it is hard to know what to believe or how to move forward. As so many individuals, families, and organizations-including ours-work to adapt, the resiliency and steadfastness of our healthcare workers have been astonishing.

A comparison continues to be made on social media that during this crisis, we are all in the same storm, but not everyone is in the same boat. Everyone is undoubtedly facing different levels of struggle, but despite your own struggles and the challenges you are collectively facing as professionals, you continue to patch others' boats, and bail them out, and let them into your own boat-you are saving us all from going under.

While we work remotely and try to do our best to help from a distance, we recognize there is no distance for you. You are continuously asked to do testing, to enter people's homes, and to work on the front lines. You are seeing and experiencing loss we can't imagine, and then being asked to do it again the next day. Your bravery and your sacrifices go so far beyond what should be asked of you, but you continue to show up for all of us.

While you did not ask to bear this burden, we admire the strength and resolve you have demonstrated. The stress you are enduring is unimaginable.

We see you, and we are in awe of you. You are all heroes; your actions and sacrifices are appreciated. We cannot stand beside you in this time but know that we are with you-we are rooting for you, we are praying for you, and we are grateful for your service.

In solidarity,

The Wallkill Teachers' Association

# First Grade Interrupted

Poem written by Barbara Bouck

We bounded in the doors  
When we started in September.  
New friends and new supplies,  
New classroom rules to remember.

We played with blocks,  
We painted scenes.  
We filled our walls  
With our hopes and our dreams.

We practiced counting and writing letters,  
We tried our best, and we got better!  
Reading was hard, we never quit.  
Marble shoots taught us patience,  
And perseverance while developing grit.

We celebrated birthdays with cupcakes,  
We studied seasons and the holidays too.  
We worked hard to fill our buckets,  
With acts of kindness towards me and to you.

We counted lunches, we told our stories  
And then we checked the weather.  
We learned about mammals and about insects,  
And studied birds of many feathers.

We raised larva in containers,  
And vibrant monarch butterflies with wings.  
We also made insect catchers  
With netting and many recycled things.

We modeled Jamestown, and imagined Bird Town.  
We filled our journals with our wonder.  
We sang songs and we read poems,  
And had math puzzles to ponder.

Then one day  
We walked out the door,  
Our desks still full,  
Our work displayed on the wall.

The block area still has buildings  
Only partially constructed.  
We had started a new chapter book  
Now forever interrupted.

We didn't realize  
That would be our last day.  
We didn't have closure.  
And start a new year once again.



## YouTube Thank You Video

Slideshow created by Marie Lysandrou



<https://youtu.be/T705eXXJWGw>



## First Book Fundraiser

Submitted by Rich Shands

WTA Partnered with First Book and the AFT to bring books to our students by bringing a tractor full of new books to support social distance learning and summer reading across the district. Raising \$5,000 in 2 weeks a tractor trailer of over 35,000 books was delivered to Walkill and sent to all of our students from Kindergarten up through 12th grade!

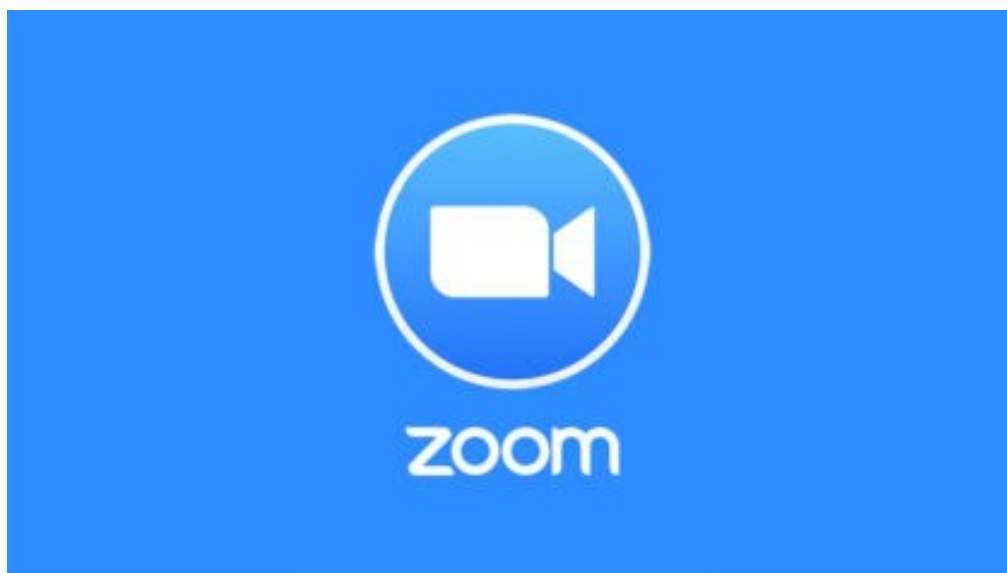


# Zoom Meetings Get Creative!

JGBMS 8th Grade Blue Team



2nd year member, Joseph Pillitteri, sporting a Quarantine Mustache







# Thank You

During these unprecedented times and in the face of incredible adversity, each of you continue to sacrifice and dedicate yourselves to our children, our families and our communities.

We thank all of the educators, school-related professionals, nurses and other health care workers who continue to demonstrate their unwavering compassion, dedication and commitment to our communities on a daily basis.

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For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

May/June '20