

The Official Publication of the Walkkill Teachers' Association  
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,

They say the older we get time seems to move faster. This is my 26<sup>th</sup> year teaching at Walkkill and the school year is flying by! I would love to slow down time just a bit to enjoy Colden's first day of skiing or a great climb on some rock somewhere.



Time could go by a little bit more slowly so that I can enjoy the friendships and work partners I have made over the years. I am grateful for all the friendships and collaborations that I have been able to be a part of with great professionals during my career. I have always loved maps and climbing/whitewater guidebooks. They show you where you have been, where you are, and help you dream where you want to go next. I was reminded of this from a John Green Ted Talk.

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## President's Message Continued

A map is a great representation of us as lifelong learners, to me they help me to stay hungry for the next adventure. Maps and guidebooks show the reality of where we are, and the dream of where you want to go next. This applies to what we do as teachers; we reflect on where we have been, apply what we have learned and plan where to go next. This is how we inspire our students to look beyond where they are at. I wish everyone a great rest of the school year and keep looking for new things to explore!

Thanks All,  
Rich Shands

## 25 Year Members

WTA would like to congratulate the following individuals for being a special part of our district for the past 25 years:

- *Teresa Custy*                      *David DerCola*
- *Glenn Lapolt*                      *Michele Missale*
- *Meredith Rubinstein*      *Richard Shands*
- *Michael Strano*

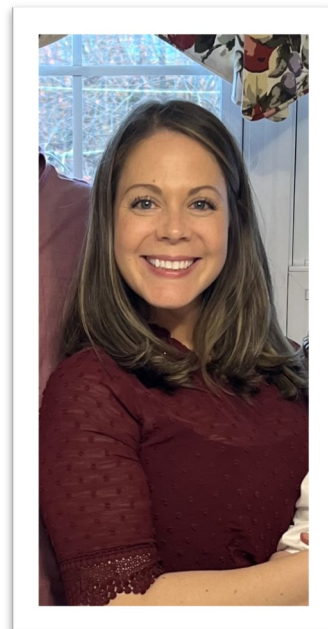


## New Member Spotlight

My name is **Taylor Palen** and I am from Wallkill, NY. I teach 5<sup>th</sup> Grade at Ostrander Elementary School. This is my first year teaching! I graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Childhood Education with a minor in Psychology. Fun fact, I am teaching in my old 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom! In my free time, I enjoy coaching cheerleading and spending time with my friends and family. I am so excited to be teaching in my home district, and I can't wait to see what the rest of the year brings!

## New Member Spotlight

Hello! My name is **Jenny Walsh** (Ostrander Elementary). Prior to being hired at Wallkill, I was a teacher at Tri-Valley Elementary in Sullivan County for 8 years, where I taught 2nd and 3rd grade. I am so excited to be here now because I am a Wallkill native! I graduated from Wallkill High School in 2006 and I still live locally. At home, I have a 2-year-old daughter and an 8-month-old son who keep me very busy! When I am not spending time with my family, I enjoy baking, being outside, and do-it-yourself projects at home. I feel so lucky to work in the community where I live, and to be a part of such a welcoming school environment!



Hi! My name is **Zack DeCarlo** and I am the new Special Education teacher at Wallkill Senior High School! I received my BA and MS degrees from Mount Saint Mary College in May. In my free time, I enjoy golfing and spending time with friends and family. As an alumni of the district (2014), I am super excited to be back at Wallkill to make a difference in our learning community as a teacher and a coach!

Hello, My name is **Bridgette Sroka**, and I am the new Elementary Orchestra teacher! I teach at Leptondale Elementary, Plattekill Elementary, and Ostrander Elementary. I recently graduated from SUNY Geneseo with a Bachelors in Music Performance, and Nazareth College in Rochester with a Masters in Music Education. Although I have been in many parts of New York, I grew up across the river in Wappingers Falls. I am very glad to be teaching so many amazing musicians, and I am excited to be starting my career in such an amazing district!



# 1st Day Pictures





## WTA Happy Hour @ Nu Cavu

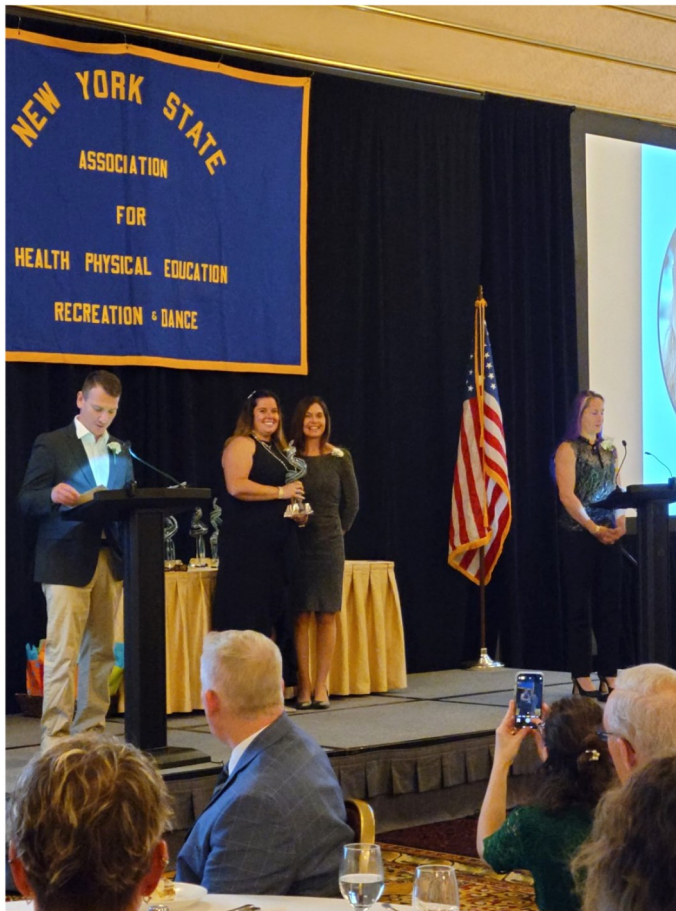


## Happy Retirement Dave Moore!



## Congratulations to Jen Gravelle!

WTA would like to congratulate Jen as she was recently awarded the NYS Adapted PE Teacher of the Year Award. She was nominated by the Catskill Zone in early March followed by her acceptance at the state level. After writing a thesis and with the help of three letters of recommendation from WTA members Stephanie Cartica, Bill Earl and Dave Moore, she was notified of winning the award by the President of NY-SAHPERD, Murphee Hayes. At the ceremony, Jen presented a speech of acceptance and was joined by her family, Bill Earl, and Leo Sladewski.



## SRP Appreciation Day



### Beneficiary Designation—NYSTRS Submitted by John Bohan

Just a friendly reminder concerning your Beneficiary designation in the NYSTRS system. If you were to pass away during your active career as a teacher, your designated beneficiary will receive a generous payout from the NY state retirement system. You might however, have a different beneficiary in mind now than the one you first provided.

For instance, you might have designated your parents but now have a spouse and/or children. You might have designated a spouse who no longer is your spouse. You might have new children to add to the list. You get the picture. In order to update/change your designated beneficiary:

- \*Go to [nystrs.org](http://nystrs.org) and set up an account if you have not already done so or login as a pre-existing MyNYSTRS member

- \*Under the "My Retirement" dropdown click on "Beneficiaries"

- \*Make any changes you wish to make



## Coaches vs Cancer: WSHS vs. JGBMS Faculty Basketball Game

Submitted by: Stacey Wager



Over \$1200 was raised for Coaches vs Cancer. Special thanks to AJ Higby and Michael Latino for organizing .



# Check out all your union membership has to offer!

## LEGAL SERVICE PLAN

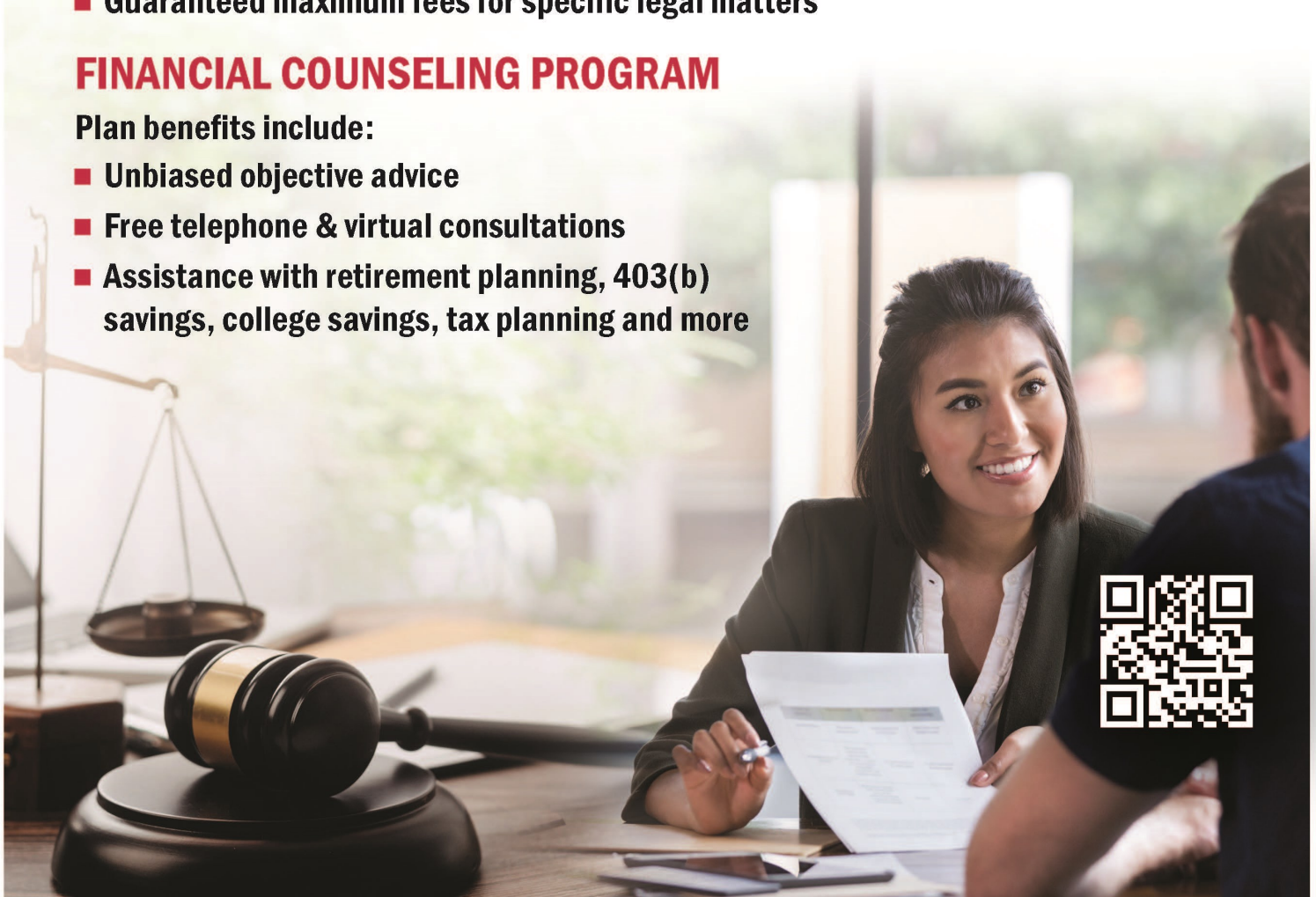
Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

## FINANCIAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the right,  
visiting [memberbenefits.nysut.org](https://memberbenefits.nysut.org)  
or calling **800-626-8101**.

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