

The Official Publication of the Wallkill 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

WTA Members,

A lot has happened since March 11th of 2020 when we all had to reinvent ourselves again to face the challenges of teaching during a pandemic. The last 15 months have been extremely difficult for all of us. It is so great getting back to some normalcy in our personal and professional lives. I can't stress enough to take the time this summer to recharge and relax.

As a union over the past 15 months, we accomplished many things for our community, our students and our membership. This would not have been possible without the involvement of our whole unit. We: --

- * Supported our front-line workers by providing dinners for them
- * Worked food pantries and ran food drives
- * Adopted the Plattekill Food Pantry
- * Pulled off a massive book drive for all of our students, complete with delivery service!
- * Did a senior sign surprise last year and this year we purchased the senior signs and distributed them to seniors at the high school
- * Negotiated a stipend for livestreaming and recording lessons for classroom teachers.
- * Settled a 5-year contract that will give us some security in uncertain times.

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All the while, we were all adapting daily, making decisions dealing with the constantly changing COVID environment.

We have several members who were honored for receiving tenure in both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years at the June board meeting. Congratulations to our newly tenured members!

2019-20 school year

Hunter Andrews HS Social Studies
Kyle Ferraiolo HS Science
Shannon LaRocco HS Special Education
Libbie Werlau HS Library Media Specialist
Kerry Baxter MS Social Worker
Keicha Kempsey MS English
Ruby Estrada LES ENL
Erin Brogan OES Special Education
Alyssa Kelso OES Elementary Ed
Rachel Miller OES Elementary Ed

2020-21 school year

AnneMarie Arsanious HS English
Meghan Sternemann HS English
Jordan Taylor HS Science
Megan Lesczynski LES Elementary Ed
Elizabeth Groth OES Music
Jennifer Ippolito OES ENL
Amanda Manner OES Speech
Nicole Passora OES Elementary ED
Chelsea Cozzolino PES Elementary Ed
Alex Danon DO Guidance

We also have several retirees that we celebrated with at the Gardiner Brewing Company.

2019-20 school year

Joy Kolber
Sean Peterson
Joe Zupan

2020-21 school year

Melissa Beecher	Jim Greenhall	Sandra Hecht-Garcia	Margaret Koonz
Tracy Kowal	Elizabeth LaMark	Brian Mahan	Karen Psilopoulos
Craig Ramsey	Alec Scott	Jerry Scully	Robin Stokes
Jeanette Thompson			

I will say it again, make sure you take the time this summer to really relax and enjoy your friends and family and the things that bring you happiness. We all deserve it!!

Rich Shands

President – Wallkill Teachers' Association

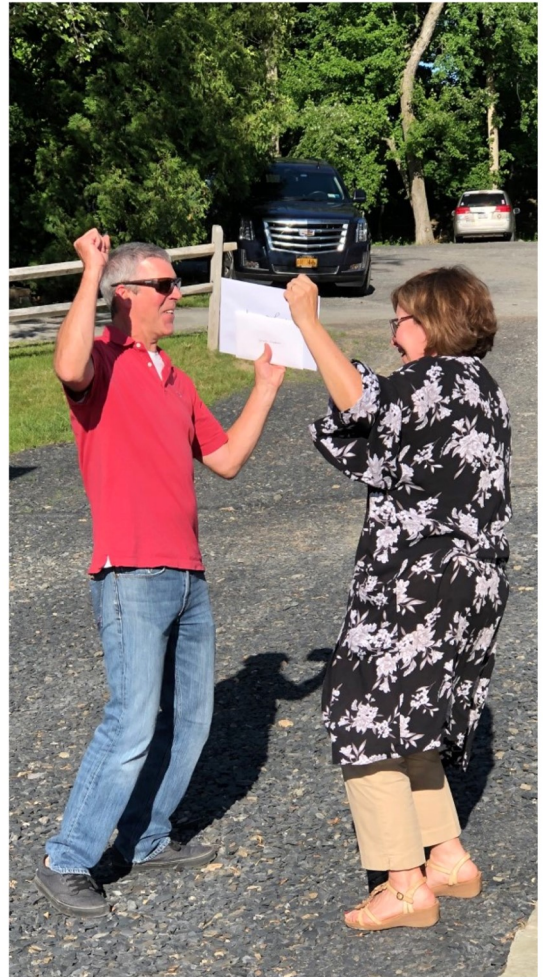
WTA Retirement Party

Submitted by: Katie Lobato











WTA 11th Annual Clean Sweep

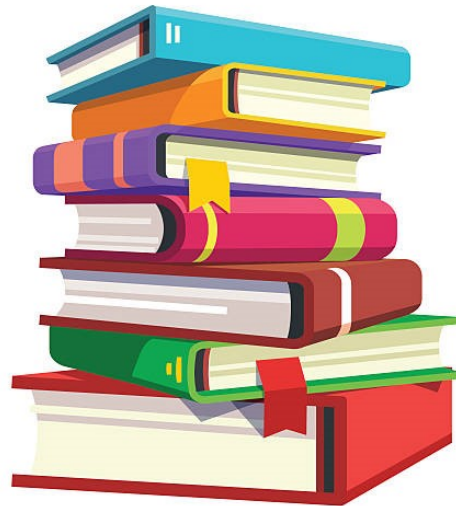
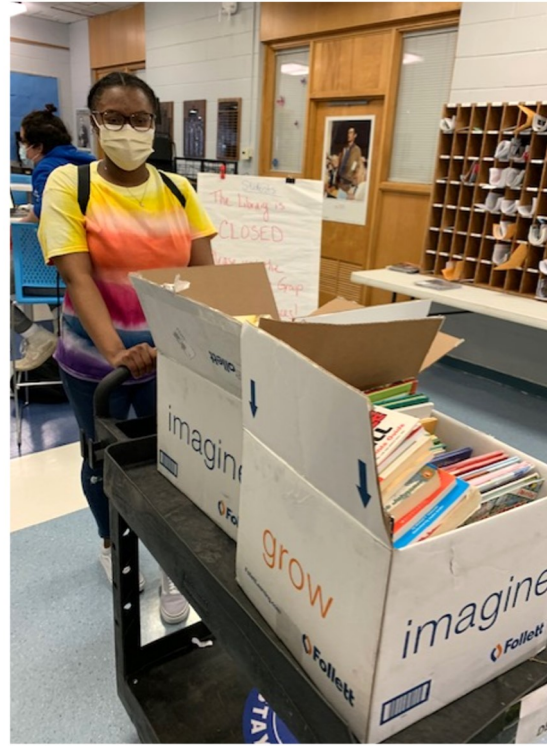
Submitted by: Adam Seelig



HS/MS Book Drive

Submitted by: Libbie Werlau and Debra Rosenfeld

As part of her Senior Capstone project, Naj Hoffman has organized a Middle School/High School Book Club and conducted a book drive to benefit the community. Between the middle school and high school, she was able to collect several hundred books. She worked with a number of local public libraries, daycare centers, senior centers and food pantries to determine their needs.



Adopt-a-Highway

Submitted by: Alex Danon

Thank you to all the
volunteers:

Leo Sladewski

Libbie Werlau

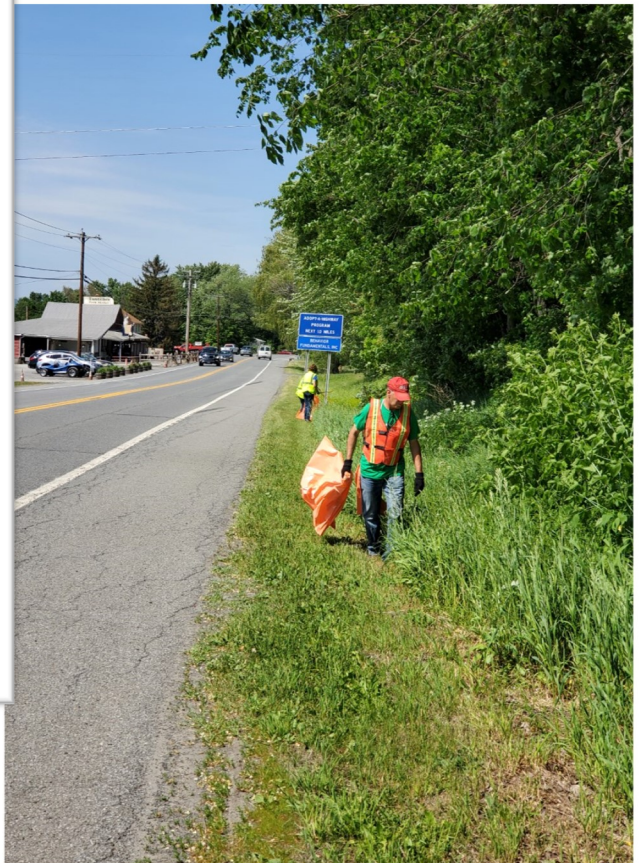
Lee Ann Pazoga

Adam Seelig

Marie Mazza

Margaret Koonz

Kyle Bird



Links and Resources from May

Submitted by: LeeAnn Pazoga

1. Please let us know if you have received unemployment information Report fraud to this link and contact Brian Devincenzi's office
<https://webapps.labor.ny.gov/dews/ui/fraud/report-fraud.shtm>
NYSUT will be offering ID Theft webinars. We will send more information when the next webinar is scheduled or send the link to the recorded webinar when it is available.
2. There is still time to submit your RC13 Grant application. Please email Rich Shands for the application.
3. We are looking for members to participate in the Upper Hudson Central Labor Council (CLC). If you are interested in helping to build coalitions with other locals, as well as make sure educators voices are heard at the table, please reach out to Marie Lysandrou @mlysandrou@msn.com to get involved. The CLCs will be interviewing local candidates for upcoming elections.
4. Health & Safety Conference: Please register here: <https://nysutlp.com/health-and-safety>
Walkkill members will work as a team. All Health & Safety Committee members should consider registering as a team. Please reach out to Karen Bayer for more information.
5. Vote Cope drive happening soon! Be on the look out for information from Amanda Murphy
We will be doing an online Drive this year.
<https://www.nysut.org/resources/specialresources-sites/legislation/vote-cope>
6. NYSUT's Many Threads One Voice is hosting it's next webinar on "Having Courageous Conversations. Link to register: <https://www.nysut.org/news/2021/april/many-threads>
Please use this link to see the resources and past webinars:
<https://www.nysut.org/resources/specialresources-sites/social-justice/manythreads%23:~:text=Launched%20in%20the%20summer%20of,justice%2C%20diversity%20and%20equity%20issues.>
7. With Tax time – don't forget to take all of your exemptions – including PPE
8. Any member who is struggling with student debt please use this link to get more information about NYSUT's student debt clinics:
<https://studentloans.nysut.org/>
9. If any of our members have had to deal with or know people that have had to deal with the death of a family member due to Covid, there is assistance available to them through the recent Federal Relief Bill. Have them look here for more information: <https://www.nysut.org/news/2021/april/nysut-disaster-relief-fund-sharesnews-of-fema-covid19-funeral-benefit>
10. NYSUT has continued through this time to help out our members who are frontline workers. If you would like to help please consider a donation to the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund: <https://www.nysut.org/resources/specialresources-sites/disaster-relief/make-a-donation>

Backpack Program/Payroll Deduction Update

Submitted by: Libbie Werlau

A huge thank you to all of the WTA members who continue to donate to the Backpack Program fund through payroll deductions! Because so many of you have committed to helping out, contributions of even \$2-5 per paycheck allow us to make a big difference in our school community.

As a result of your generosity, the program has been able to fund the following for our students in need:

- Supplement Thanksgiving baskets for district families
- Supply/supplement Snack Packs to our schools in conjunction with our local food pantries
- Stock a supply of personal hygiene items for students in each school
- Provide school supplies for students
- Purchase gift cards for the Social Workers and Guidance Counselors to distribute to students during the holidays and to help district families in emergency situations
- In addition, we have been able to buy a large supply of emergency clothing to keep in the nurses' offices at the elementary buildings next year.

If you are not contributing and would like to next year, simply complete the attached form and return it to Sue Hansen at District Office or to one of your Building Reps. Thank you for making a difference!



Plattekill Food Pantry : Payroll Deduction Authorization

Name: _____ Building: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Deduction Amount: I authorize \$_____ to be deducted from each pay from October to June.

Deductions are taken out monthly from both checks from October to June (i.e. 18 total deductions).

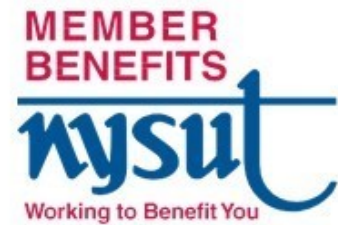
Fill in the amount per pay above that you wish to have deducted from each check. (\$1 x 18 checks = \$18, \$5 x 18 = \$90)

This deduction will continue until district office receives written authorization to discontinue.

RETURN THIS FORM TO: Sue Hanson D.O. or a building representative.

Not sure where to start with your summer to-do list?

Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.



Scan the QR code below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.

Saving you money: MB Discounts & Deals

With the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program, NYSUT members can save up to 50% at more than 700,000 merchants nationwide (including thousands throughout New York State). Save on groceries and food delivery; restaurant dine-in or takeout; gasoline, oil changes and vehicle maintenance; clothing and shoes; and much more. You can even request that your favorite merchant join the network.

Saving you money: Every \$\$\$ counts

Whether your summer plans include home renovations, replacing or upgrading appliances, getting a new car, stocking up for the return to school, or even just hanging out and enjoying some time off, Member Benefits has a variety of endorsed programs -- **Purchasing Power, Buyer's Edge Inc., Office Depot/OfficeMax, Bose, Powell's Books** -- that might be able to minimize the impact on your wallet and maximize your enjoyment of the all-too-fleeting summer months.



Protecting your family: Insuring yourself and your family

Member Benefits endorses a number of competitive insurance programs that are available to NYSUT members. These include **auto/home/renters, life, disability, long term care, dental, vision**, and even **pet insurance**. Some of these programs are also available to or cover spouses/domestic partners of members, dependent children, dependent parents, and grandparents. Most offer payroll & pension deduction as payment options.

Planning for the future: Have a plan for wherever life takes you

It's never too early or too late to make a plan. Just starting a career or looking at retirement? Beginning to pay off loans or building a nest egg? Looking to buy a new home or refinance the one you're in? Welcoming a new child or adopting? Now would be a good time to look into the ways to put a plan in place or make adjustments to your existing one. Explore the **Member Benefits Financial Learning Center** for assistance; while you're there, check out our **Legal Service Plan** and **Financial Counseling Program**.

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:



DINING & SHOPPING DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL & TOURS



CAR & TRUCK RENTALS



LIFE INSURANCE



AUTO & HOME



LONG-TERM CARE & DISABILITY

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit **memberbenefits.nysut.org**, call **800-626-8101** or scan the **QR code** above.

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