

The Official Publication of the Walkill 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

Dear WTA Members,

A friend of mine once told me about the trap door below rock bottom. Well my friends, I think we found that this school year. This was the hardest message I have had to formulate. I have started multiple times, but couldn't finish it. Those of you that know me, understand how much I try to find something relevant to write, that acknowledges the challenges of our profession, while still finding the positives of why we do this. Although we are still doing all we can to make the best out of this incredibly difficult year, you can't help but think this time how could it actually get worse? Speaking with many colleagues, no one can quite put their finger on one thing. Certainly we are all under a lot of pressure in our profession, while still trying to navigate the challenges in our personal lives. This has to be acknowledged, because we still have to rise up and move through this. I am amazed everyday how people are struggling, but put it aside everyday and provide the best instruction and support for all of our students.

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## President's Message Continued

Please remember the importance of taking care of yourselves. Lean on friends, family and colleagues and be there for them as well. As a union, we remain strong. Don't hesitate to reach out to building reps and officers with any questions or suggestions. That is what we are here for. As we move forward in 2022, let's do our best to bust through that trap door and put all of this behind us. Be well and Happy New Year!

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:

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



### Thanksgiving Food Bank Fundraiser

Submitted by: [Libbie Werlau](#)

We raised \$350 through our annual Thanksgiving Food Bank Fundraiser. Money was brought to the Loaves and Fishes Pantry in Wallkill and the Plattekill Food Pantry, the two organizations that provide snack packs to all the buildings and distribute holiday baskets to families in our district. Thank you for your support!

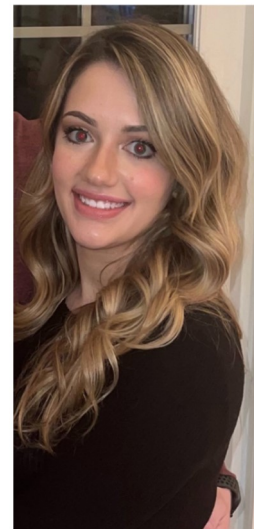
## New Member Spotlight

Hello! My name is **Amanda Grogan**! (Ostrander Elementary) Prior to being hired at Wallkill, I was working as a General Education teacher in the Bronx for the past 4 years, teaching 5th and 6th grade. I recently got married over the summer and got to enjoy a wonderful Honeymoon in Cancun with my husband! I am a lover of all dogs, especially pugs! I have two dogs at home, one a pug named Gizmo and the other a Shepherd mix named Chip. Just this month we also found out that we have triplets on the way so we will have one busy household next year!



Hello! My name is **Yuni Hahn** and I am the new Social Worker at Leptondale Elementary School. I graduated from NYU with my Masters in Social Work in May 2021 and previously worked at Orange Ulster BOCES as an intern and a Summer School Social Worker. In my free time I like to travel, read, and try new foods. I'm very happy to be here and I'm thankful to be part of such a welcoming community!

Hi! My name is **Marissa Traina** and I am from Warwick, NY, but I recently moved to Newburgh, NY this summer. I graduated from SUNY New Paltz with my BS in Childhood education B-6 and my MS in Literacy education B-6. I have been teaching for almost 3 years in 1st and 5th grades, through leave replacements in districts in Orange County. I am enjoying my first year at Leptondale teaching 5th grade Math and ELA. I enjoy spending time with family and friends in my free time!



## WTA Scholarship

Submitted by: Kathy Winter

The WTA Scholarship Committee is proud to announce the 3 recipients from the class of 2021. They were Marcus DeCoeur, Dylan Jowell, and Vic DeStefano. We wish them well as they start their college education. Members, thank you for your support of the scholarship with your payroll deductions. If you would like to join the committee, reach out to Kathy Winter. Your role would be reviewing scholarship application letters in the spring. Also, remind seniors of the scholarship in the early spring. We only had a few applicants in the past couple of years. It is open to all college-bound students in any field of study.



## Eye Care Coverage

Submitted by: Kathy Winter

The WTA Benefit Trust also offers amazing eye care coverage through Davis Vision. Please take advantage of all of the benefits for you and your family. This benefit is also a "calendar year" benefit. Here is a link to find a provider in your area. Your membership number is your SS#.

<https://idoc.davisvision.com/DavisVision.Member/SessionTimeout/Index>

## Delta Dental Reminder

Submitted by: Kathy Winter

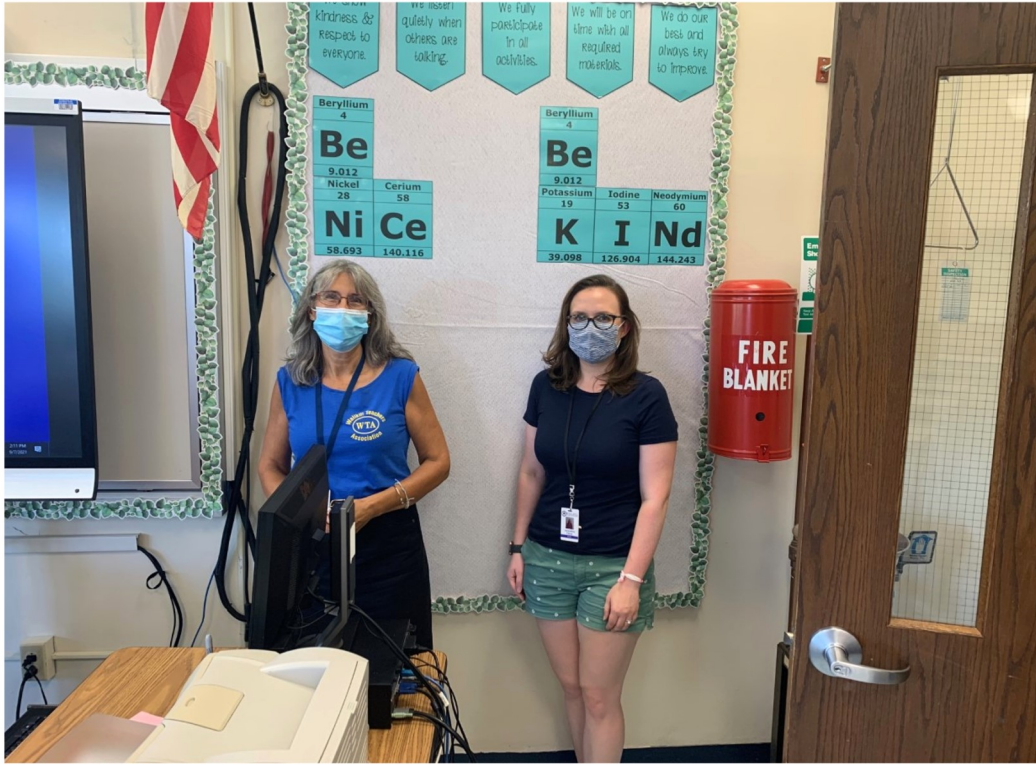
Just a reminder that our Delta dental plan allows for 2 preventative visits per calendar year. You do not have to separate them by 6 months and 1 day. You can choose a Delta provider to use your benefits to the fullest, but it is not required. In most cases, if you choose a dental provider outside of their network, you will have to pay upfront and wait for reimbursement from Delta.





# 1st day of School Pictures









## WTA Retirement System Update

Submitted by: John Bohan

I am your friendly WTA rep for the NY State Retirement System. I just attended the yearly NYSTRS meeting representing our union and have some useful information to share. Most of this will interest those who are nearing retirement but there is also material that everyone might find useful.

\*Link to the system website (where you also sign up for a MyNYSTRS account): NYSTRS | New York State Teachers' Retirement System | NYS Pensions <https://www.nystrs.org/>

\*Link to their PREP Module Videos (NYSTRS Benefits and Retirement Process, the Social Security System, Financial Planning, and Estate Planning): PREP Module Videos | NYS Teachers' Retirement System (nystrs.org) <https://www.nystrs.org/Library/Videos/PREP-Modules>

\*Link to the US Social Security site (where you also sign up for a personal account): The United States Social Security Administration (ssa.gov) <https://www.ssa.gov/>

By creating accounts, you can track your salary and benefits history and estimate future payouts upon retirement. You can start this process early on to make sure all of your data is correct.

## WTA Happy Hour @ Gardiner Brewing Company



## JGBMS Food Drive

Over 1000 items were donated to the Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry. Special thanks to Colleen Keesler for organizing





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

Submitted by: Stacey Wager and Deb Rosenfeld



\$1500 was raised for Coaches vs Cancer. Special thanks to AJ Higby for organizing .





# Trunk or Treat Fundraiser

Submitted by: Colleen Keesler, Stacey Wager and Deb Rosenfeld

\$700 was raised for the Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry. Special thanks to Colleen Keesler for organizing



## Hearing Aid Discount

Submitted by: Kathy Winter



Discreet models to fit every lifestyle.


Receive a \$200 mail-in-rebate after purchase!\*

Breakthrough technology opening up the world to you.

## Hear better and save more

### Exclusively for Davis Vision members:

- Save up to 40% on digital hearing aids
- 4 year limited warranty
- 4 year FREE battery supply
- 60-day satisfaction guarantee and a \$200 mail-in-rebate on top-rated hearing aids\*

Hearing health care services administered by 

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Visit [davisvision.yourhearing.com](https://davisvision.yourhearing.com) or call 1 (888) 809-0044 for more information and to book your free hearing exam.

\*Limited time offer. Certain restrictions apply. Call for details.

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1 (888) 809-0044

[davisvision.com](https://davisvision.com)

VH-MKGD20-0606-001 PDF 12/2020



## Home Covid Test Kits

Submitted by: Rich Shands

If you have health insurance through the district, you can sign up for the App below to get free COVID tests sent to your home. It is easy to do and they say delivered in 1-2 days. I was told that with increased demand that may end up being 3-5 days. It took me about 10 minutes to confirm my information, sign up for the app and order tests for my whole family.

If you need to be tested, use your smartphone camera to scan this QR code and order your at-home test kit.



You can also order a test kit by downloading and logging in to the Sydney<sup>SM</sup> Health mobile app and going to the *COVID-19 Resources* page. Find Sydney Health on the App Store<sup>®</sup> or Google Play<sup>™</sup>. If you don't want to wait for a kit to come in the mail, check your local pharmacy for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests. These tests are available at your expense.

# Check out all your union membership has to offer!

**INSURANCE YOU CAN COUNT ON.**

**PROVIDERS YOU CAN TRUST.**

**VALUE-ADDED EXTRAS YOU CAN'T GET ELSEWHERE.**

**SOMEONE WHO HAS YOUR BACK.**

## NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

When it comes to protecting yourself, your loved ones, your income or your most valuable possessions, NYSUT Member Benefits has insurance programs that fit the bill. Whether you are looking for **auto & home, life, disability, long-term care, dental, vision, or pet insurance**, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org). There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics.

Member Benefits also endorses several discounted shopping programs that can help you save on both everyday and more expensive purchases. Finally, if you ever have an issue or problem when using a Member Benefits program, our staff take great pride in their ability to quickly assist members with any concerns that may arise.

Visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call **800-626-8101** to learn more about the endorsed programs and services available to you through your union membership.



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



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

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