

Website: <http://mercercountytiredeea.org>

Contact us at: [mcrea.news@gmail.com](mailto:mcrea.news@gmail.com)

## President's Message

By Cindy Braddock



Dear Members,

"It's a new dawn, it's a new day, and I'm feeling good." Those words sung by Michel Buble capture the new hope and optimism I feel as spring approaches. With many of our members being vaccinated for COVID19, I am hoping for a return to normalcy in the near future and the opportunity to once again meet in person rather than virtually.

Unfortunately, with all the uncertainties related to the virus and group gatherings, we must cancel our May luncheon. Please read 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Sue Karolkiewicz's article about this luncheon and our plans for the fall of 2021.

If you're like me, spring cleaning often seems like an arduous chore, and I struggle with what to keep and what to toss out. We're excited to offer a FREE VIRTUAL WORKSHOP for all members on that very topic on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Please see the flyer and pertinent information for registration. If you don't have access to a computer or iPad, etc., you can still attend by using a smartphone.

It's an honor to recognize two of our members for their outstanding service to our communities and associations. There must be some special attributes in the name Shirley, as both of our recipients Shirley Hicks and Shirley Satterfield, share that name. Please read about their achievements inside.

Hopefully by now, the issues regarding Medicare reimbursement and the error in deductions for non-Medicare retirees have been resolved. If you need further assistance, please contact me.

Elections for NJREA and NJEA officers, along with delegates to the NEA-RA will be held next month. Please consider voting for our MCREA members who are candidates for the NEA-RA Assembly which is being held virtually this year.

Are you a speed reader? Do you just skim the articles? If so, you may want to reconsider, and read the entire newsletter carefully as we have hidden the names of two members in this newsletter. If you find your name, you will win a \$25 Amazon gift card. Just send me an email when you find your name with your contact information, and we will get your gift card to you right away. Happy Searching!

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Throughout the pandemic, your MCREA officers and executive board chairpersons are working constantly to carry on the work of the association. Please take a moment to read about the updates to our MCREA website, the dissemination of MCREA scholarship applications to our local high schools, membership updates, and the upcoming workshop.

As Pablo Neruda said, "You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot keep Spring from coming." You can weaken us, dampen our spirits, and cause an upheaval to our lives, but we are resilient, and just like Spring, we are coming back stronger and ready to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

In unity

## Message about Covid-19 Second Shot

By Dan Goldman and Bette Kirk

I am writing to let you know that OptumRx will be providing our members with a 2nd vaccine dosage outreach program. As you know, the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two doses in order to be effective. Optum is able to identify those that have received the first dose if they utilized their Rx coverage to obtain the vaccine.

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# Scholarship

Fran Whitworth and Mary Jo Klockner

As this new year began, Scholarship met with the MCREA Board of Trustees and formulated a plan to continue aiding our valued, hardworking college bound seniors.

Although our members have missed meeting and greeting with no guarantee for a future gathering, we stand committed and eager to safeguard giving Mercer County public high school seniors a helping hand in securing a college education.

Three scholarships will be awarded in 2021. Applications have been sent to Mercer County high schools. Students may apply for consideration and applications will be reviewed by our Scholarship Committee in the Spring.

Your ongoing support and belief in our mission has furthered the educational goals of countless seniors. We thank you for believing in our committee and for being a part of future endeavors for all our students.

We wish you good health and greatly appreciate your ongoing efforts in assisting these students. They "are" our future and deserve more memories than COVID-19 is offering. We hope all our schools will be safely afforded some type of normalcy and soon.

Thank you.

### MCREA Scholarship Inc. Fund DONATION FORM

Please make your check payable to: MCREA Scholarship Fund Inc. and mail to: Fran Whitworth, 196 Sparrow Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08690

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

I am an \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_ Life member.

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

"In Memory Of": \_\_\_\_\_

"In Celebration Of": \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU WISH US TO NOTIFY THE FAMILY OF THIS DONATION, PLEASE PROVIDE THEIR NAME AND ADDRESS.**

# MCREA Webpage

Karen and Hector Bravo

The Mercer County Retired Educators' Association Webpage looks a little different as of the New Year, but it still is a great place to find current information for Mercer County retirees. When you log onto the site you will be greeted with various menus. The "Home" tab will bring you to the Latest News where you can view information regarding important updates. As of this newsletter these updates include the recent changes/concerns with medical and prescription plans, the MCREA Membership Form as well as upcoming workshop forms. There is also a page to celebrate our members' achievements. While spending time on the "Home" tab, make sure you scroll down to find important information directly from NJEA and NEA. A calendar with events and sign up links is located on the "Events" tab. The "About" tab lists contact information for the Leadership and Committees members. There is a tab for the "Newsletter" as well! Please visit the web page located at [www.mercercountyretiredea.org](http://www.mercercountyretiredea.org).

## MCREA Executive Board 2020-2021

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**Editorial**

Pamela D. Washington

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Sue Karolkiewicz

**ESP Liaison**

Shirley Hicks

**2nd Vice-President**

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Lorraine Hall

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Mary Jo Klockner  
Fran Whitworth

**Budget/Finance**

Beth Thompson

**Social**

Karen Aiello

**Community Service**

JoAnne Bruno

**Techology**

Carol Dziedzic

**Constitution**

Frank Harsanyi

**Website**

Hector Bravo  
Karen Bravo



### IN MEMORIAM

Catherine Anzuni  
Jean Brindle  
Samuel Cortina  
Shirley Smith Hancock  
Ted Reed  
Willie Mae Delane Townsend

## MCREA Candidates for NEA Representative Assembly

**Iris Tonti**



I am a candidate to be the NEA-R/NEA-RA representative for MCREA, NJREA and NJEA at the Representative Assembly this summer. As your representative, I will continue to be fully engaged and informed, not deterred from representing your interest during this pandemic and beyond.

I currently serve in the following positions: the MCREA Membership Chairperson, on the NJEA Instruction and LAT Committees and as a member of the MCEA PRIDE. In the past, I served on the NJEA Health Benefits Committee. I have also represented your interest at numerous Lobby Days at the State House.

It will be my honor to represent you, MCREA and NJREA at the Representative Assembly. So, this Spring, your vote will be appreciated.

### October Luncheon/Meeting News

By: Susan Karolkiewicz

Being optimistic, our Spring Luncheon/Meeting was scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>. Executive Order Restrictions such as limiting numbers of indoor participants as well as other restrictions and the unavailability of vaccination appointments has caused us to reconsider. The MCREA Executive Board was polled and the overwhelming majority of the respondents felt that it would not be safe to meet at this time.

As a result, the May Luncheon/Meeting has been **CANCELLED**.

I have spoken with Samantha at Mercer Oaks and have confirmed Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> for our Fall Luncheon/Meeting. Hopefully, the 70% of New Jersey Residents that Governor Murphy has indicated he wants vaccinated will have been completed at that time.

### Our Congratulations to...

We're thrilled to congratulate our MCREA ESP Liaison board member, Shirley Hicks, for receiving the MCEA Distinguished Service Award. Ms. Hicks continues her commitment to both MCEA and MCREA by serving as a member on several ongoing committees, even during this pandemic.

In addition, our congratulations to Shirley Satterfield, the NJEA Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Award recipient for 2021. Ms. Satterfield currently serves as president of the Board of Trustees of Witherspoon-Jackson Historical Cultural Society, which is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of African-Americans in Princeton. We honor both members for their volunteer work and activism.

**Shirley Hicks**



A quick summary of my efforts working in the community, with MCEA and currently with the MCREA.

- Activist in my union and community
- Mercer County Education Association -currently serving on the Human and Civil Rights, Legislative Action Team
- ESP/Membership Committees
- past PRIDE Chairperson
- 2021 recipient of the Mercer County Education Association distinguished service award
- MCREA executive board member as the ESP liaison

I would appreciate your vote to send me to the NEA Representative Assembly as your representative.

### Message about Covid-19 Second Shot

Continued from page 1

Here are more specific details about the program:

- \* To support our members and ensure appropriate adherence, OptumRx will generate a single telephonic intervention for each member that has missed their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. OptumRx will begin generating these interventions starting Feb. 15, 2021.
- \* The intervention will remind the member that the second dose is available for them and for the vaccine to be effective, the member must complete both doses.
- \* As noted above, this program can outreach only to members whose vaccines go through the pharmacy benefit.
- \* This program and outreach is at no cost to the state or our membership.
- \* During the member outreach, one telephonic outbound IVR call will be generated with one call attempt. The caller ID will state "Your Health Plan." A sample script is shown below:

"Hello, this is OptumRx calling [NameFirst] [NameLast] with an important refill reminder."

Once member has authenticated then the following message will play: "Thanks, I'd like to remind you to call your pharmacy and refill your prescription for [PFIZER VACC INJ COVID-19/MODERNA VAC INJ COVID-19] soon. To make it easy for you, I can connect you to the [[Pharmacy Name]] where you filled your last prescription. A pharmacist can also answer any questions you may have. If you'd like me to connect you to this pharmacy now, say "yes" if not, say: "no".

## Unlocking Your Member Benefits

By Terri Purcell and Cindy Braddock

If you are a discount or bargain hunter, the hope is you are taking advantage of the numerous options we have for saving money through NEA/NJEA Member Benefits. Here are just a few of the savings you can receive:

- Buyers Edge- best prices on major purchases
- NEA Members Insurance Trust- for term life insurance and Accidental Death
- Optical Academy for lowest prices on eyewear
- NEA Hear in America and NJEA Hear USA- Hearing Aids at a 30% discount
- NJEA Travel NJEA Member Discount Program
- ACCESS Discounts-nationwide for restaurants, hotels, etc.
- NJEA Legal Services- You are entitled to two (2) 30-minute consultations per year regarding home buying, writing a will, resolving matrimonial matters, defense on traffic violations, etc. You also receive a 30% discount on personal legal services.

Happy shopping!

Additional information from Member Benefits

### \$2,500 Educator Jackpot

- California Casualty, our only NEA and NJEA Auto and Home Insurance Program, is giving you a chance to win one of several \$2,500 jackpots! Use the money for whatever you may need (or want)! No purchase necessary and you do not need to be a current policyholder of California Casualty Auto and Home Insurance. Enter today at: [WinWithCalCas.com/NEA](http://WinWithCalCas.com/NEA).

### Upcoming Webinars

- NJEA Member Benefits offers workshops year-round to help NJEA members maximize the benefits of their membership and gain financial literacy to meet long-lasting financial goals. Sign up for one of these upcoming webinars:
- [Feb. 10 @ 5pm](#) NJEA Homebuyer's Webinar- Register at [www.njea.org/mbwebinars](http://www.njea.org/mbwebinars)
- [Feb. 17 @ 5pm, 7pm](#) Degrees Not Debt Student Loan Debt Relief Webinar Register at [www.njea.org/dndwebinars](http://www.njea.org/dndwebinars)
- [March 18 @ 5pm](#) Accessing Your NJEA Member Benefits Webinar Register at [www.njea.org/mbwebinars](http://www.njea.org/mbwebinars)
- [April 14 @ 5pm, 7pm](#) Degrees Not Debt Student Loan Debt Relief Webinar Register at [www.njea.org/dndwebinars](http://www.njea.org/dndwebinars)
- [May 17 @ 5pm, 7pm](#) Degrees Not Debt Student Loan Debt Relief Webinar Register at [www.njea.org/dndwebinars](http://www.njea.org/dndwebinars)

You may be able to get the details of the Feb 10 & Feb 17 webinar topics you missed from the NJEA website.

## Membership

By Iris Tonti

Union membership is one of the best investments a retiree can make, especially in the current political climate. As a member of MCREA and NJREA, you have access to a variety of resources to get the most of your membership, as well as peace of mind knowing there are people working on your behalf to protect your rights and benefits. Your unified membership also includes membership to NJEA, NEA and NEA-R and access to their websites.

Members who are only members of MCREA, Mercer County Retired Educators' Association, unfortunately are not able to access the NJEA, NEA and NEA-R websites. Some lifetime members are only members of the county MCREA and have access to the MCREA newsletter and events with limited access to the MCREA website.

While the MCREA membership is wonderful understand there is a difference between unified and county membership.

It is always a good practice to log into the NJEA site and check your profile to be sure your information is current there. Your member id number is the same number you had as an active member. Any current or future retiree with questions regarding membership may email [njea@njea.org](mailto:njea@njea.org). Come join Linda Griffin and the other 1279 MCREA members.

## March Workshop Registration Details

By Vanessa Richardson and Cindy Braddock

MCREA is providing you with two options for registration. Please select ONE of these options. The workshop will last one hour, from 2:00-3:00 PM. There is a 100 person maximum allowed to attend this virtual workshop. So, please don't delay and sign up today for an entertaining and informative time!

### Option 1

Here is the registration link. Please type or copy and paste it into your browser.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsc-ihqDgoHtGnc8m2U282rk1K4tp-H5xk>

Registering with the link will allow us to keep a running list of those planning to attend and we can send a reminder to just those people who registered.

We will also send you the Zoom meeting link and meeting ID, so you can login to the workshop on March 18th.

### Option 2

You can register for the workshop by emailing Vanessa Richardson at [vricha1007@gmail.com](mailto:vricha1007@gmail.com) or Cindy Braddock at [mcrea.president@gmail.com](mailto:mcrea.president@gmail.com). I will then register you and provide you with the link and meeting ID, so you can login to the workshop on March 18th.

This information will also be available on our website: [mercercountyretiredea.org](http://mercercountyretiredea.org). Looking forward to "seeing" Patricia Schaaf and you on March 18th.

# MCREA Virtual Workshop

Thursday, March 18, 2021



Mercer County Retired  
Educators' Association

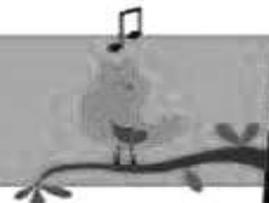
## Declutter this Spring Using the Secret of *10 & 10 Organizing*

### Thursday 3/18 at 2pm

If you have too much stuff and not enough time to go through it all, this is the workshop for you!

Join bestselling author and organizing humorist Jamie Novak when she shares her secret of 10 & 10 Organizing. Enjoy a few laughs while making a plan to get your decluttering done.

Overwhelmed by paperwork? Want to get the car in the garage? Saving treasures for the next generation? Closets overflowing? Stop saying someday; get organized today!





**If you have made any changes** to your contact and mailing information, please send your name, address, phone number and email to [iristonti@msn.com](mailto:iristonti@msn.com). **Especially** if you have updated your NJEA profile.

**OPT OUT**

It's not too late .... if you are receiving both the printed and email versions of the newsletter, please consider switching to "Email Only". It will save printing & production costs, assembling time and more.

Email us at [iristonti@msn.com](mailto:iristonti@msn.com) and tell us you would like to OPT OUT of the print versions.

**MCREA Contact List**

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Membership to:  
Iris Tonti  
[iristonti@msn.com](mailto:iristonti@msn.com)

**We're on the Web!**

Visit us at:  
<http://mercercountyretiredea.org>

**Save the Date... Details inside**

\* Virtual Winter Workshop, March 18, 2021.

**MCREA Scholarship Inc. Fund DONATION FORM**

"In Memoriam" or celebratory donations can be made to the MCREA Scholarship Fund Inc. at any time. Please make your check payable to: MCREA Scholarship Fund Inc. and mail to: Fran Whitworth, 196 Sparrow Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08690

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
I am an \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_ Life member.  
PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
AMOUNT Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
"In Memory Of": \_\_\_\_\_  
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