



President's Message

Cindy Braddock



Dear MCREA Members,

Congratulations to our newest retirees! We welcome you with open arms-even at a distance-and wish you a relaxing and fulfilling retirement. You certainly spent the last year and a half working under highly unusual and difficult circumstances, dealing with COVID. Kudos to you for a job well done.

Who would have thought when the COVID vaccine was gleefully announced last January that we would still be in the throes of a vicious surge? There was renewed optimism that we would soon crush COVID and resume our normal lives and routine by the summer.

Unfortunately, as I write this message in early August, we are seeing heavy transmission and more severe illnesses with

the Delta variant. Our lives are once again in limbo, with renewed mask mandates and an urgency to vaccinate before COVID mutates again.

Therefore, we are crossing our fingers and saying our prayers that we can finally meet in person for our October 20th general membership meeting and luncheon. Our industrious 1st Vice President Susan Karolkiewicz will continue to closely monitor the COVID mandate and restrictions and set up contingency plans for our luncheon. Updates will be sent out via e-mail blasts and posted on our website at mercercountyretiredea.org. Please read Susan's articles for luncheon details.

The NJREA Convention will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 3rd. You will receive the specifics in the NJREA newsletter. We also want to extend our heartiest congratulations to our newly elected NJREA President Joan Wright, and her precedent setting role as the first person of color elected to this position.

Our MCREA board members have continued to work hard in their roles to ensure our association meets its obligations to our members.

One example is our Scholarship Co-Chairpersons Fran Whitworth and Mary Jo Klockner, who spent countless hours poring over scholarship applications

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and selecting three worthy recipients. I'm sure you will be in awe of these students' achievements when you read their article in this newsletter.

All 120 seats in the NJ legislature are up for grabs along with the governorship. Governor Murphy has made the first full pension payment in 25 years! Finally, a move in the right direction towards financial stability at a faster pace. We may even see the restoration of our COLAs in our lifetimes. His opponent, Jack Ciattarelli, has vehemently stated that he does not support our pension system nor our health benefits, and will make it his focus to downgrade our benefits if elected as governor. To me, the choice could not be clearer. We need to vote in our best interests for our healthcare

and our finances. Your vote is your voice to safeguard these benefits we earned for our years of service. Please read more about the upcoming election and NJEA endorsements inside.

I leave you with this inspirational quote from beloved poet Maya Angelou, "Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, Just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise." We will all continue to hope and rise together in these unprecedented times. Please stay well and safe.

Community Service

Joanne Bruno

PROJECT BUNDLE UP EVENT



Collection dates: September 28 to October 21, 2021

Deliver to: Home of JoAnne Bruno, 35 Argonne Avenue, Yardville NJ, 609-217-0802 or Marsha Caldwell, 39 Van Drive, Bordentown, NJ, 609-298-3390.

For: adults and children – We will be helping collect for *Home Front AND Clara's Heart LLC*

This is the first MCREA annual collection of items to keep those who are less fortunate warm over the coming months of winter. We need items for *all ages (infants to senior citizens), all sizes, male and female.*

Please be sure to donate items that are new or gently used and clean.

Since we are all still mostly home due to COVID 19, it may be a good time to clean out those closets! If you know someone with children who have outgrown last year's winter gear, ask them to donate! Just be sure items are not torn or dirty.

The following is a list of items needed for our collection:

- COATS
- JACKETS
- SWEATERS
- GLOVES
- MITTENS
- EARMUFFS
- HATS
- SCARVES
- BOOTS
- WARM SOCKS
- SLIPPERS
- FOOTWARMERS

Scholarship

Fran Whitworth and Mary Jo Klockner

It is with great pride and pleasure we introduce our 2021 MCREA Scholarship recipients to you. Each candidate who applied from our county high schools was a distinguished scholar and deserving of your praise.

From West Windsor North, we have Shreya Joshi who will attend Johns Hopkins University, intending to study neuroscience and hopes to become a physician. Shreya became mesmerized in neuroscience after walking through a special brain exhibit.

She was captivated by its images as it piqued her interest in brain function.

Also from West Windsor North is Mackenzie Leung. She will attend Rutgers and intends to become a Veterinarian. As a child, Mackenzie began her love of animals, dirt and bugs. Her critter menagerie consists of bees, chickens, a Dutch rabbit and two toads. She breeds her own crickets to sustain the toad's live cricket diet. As a member of the US Pony Club, Mackenzie is committed to farm management, especially as it concerns horses and their equine nutrition.

West Windsor South gave us our final winner, Rut Mehta, enrolling at Rutgers. Rut will study artificial intelligence. Rut's love for knowledge cannot be constrained as was evident in his essay and teacher recommendations. He is an innovative thinker and no doubt will make contact with "others."

Reading all the applicants' essays, their hopes and dreams for the future, including their high school accomplishments, show what they are capable of and the talent they possess.

They've done themselves proud!

MCREA Webpage

Hector and Karen Bravo

Welcome to our returning MCREA members along with those who are new to Mercer

County Retired Educators Association!

The Mercer County Retired Educators' Association Web Page link is

www.mercercountyretiredea.org.

The website is a helpful resource where members can find current information which is updated as needed. Logging in is easy! Just follow the prompts, which are the same as the steps required to sign in to the NJEA

website. Having your NJEA card nearby while logging in will be helpful. When you log onto the webpage, you will be greeted with the most current information, whether it is in regard to medical and pension information, or upcoming workshops. There is a page for the Newsletters and a page highlighting members' awards for their accomplishments. As you continue to look at the website you will also find other important and interesting information. Scroll to the bottom of that page for links to NJREA, NJEA along with NEA Retired and NEA.

Scroll back to the top of that page to see the various other tabs. Take some time to explore the **Home** link. At the bottom of this page there is information directly from NJEA. The Calendar with events such as luncheons, workshops, etc is located on the Events tab. When available, the individual events on the calendar will also provide you with a link to that event.

There are a number of counties in New Jersey which begin with a "M" and believe it or not, other "Mercer" county groups in the country which is why using the web page address provided in this article is the easiest way to arrive at our webpage. Please visit the web page located at www.mercercountyretiredea.org.

Happy September!

NJEA PAC Endorsements

As stated by NJEA Past President Marie Blistan, NJEA members look at results and all the candidates selected by the NJEA's 125-member political action committee have shown their commitment to our shared values. These decisions are not made based on party affiliations but on the candidate's desire to advocate for legislative policies that provide support for students and public education.

In October 2020, NJEA PAC endorsed Governor Phil Murphy for a second term as governor. This quote from BettyLou DeCroce, "*Nothing is more important than educating and preparing our children and their children for the future*"- explains why the following candidates have been endorsed by the NJEA PAC committee. The future of our children, their families and communities are important to the success of our cities and state.

LD 2: Vince Mazzeo (D) for Senate and John Armato (D) and Caren Fitzpatrick (D) for Assembly
LD 3: Stephen Sweeney (D) for Senate and John Burzichelli (D) and Adam Taliaferro (D) for Assembly

LD 4: Fred H. Madden (D) for Senate and Paul Moriarty (D) and Gabriela Mosquera (D) for Assembly

LD 5: Nilsa Cruz-Perez (D) for Senate and William Spearman (D) and William Moen (D) for Assembly

LD 6: James Beach (D) for Senate and Louis Greenwald (D) and Pamela Lampitt (D) for Assembly

LD 11: Vin Gopal (D) for Senate and Joann Downey (D) and Eric Houghtaling (D) for Assembly

LD 12: Ronald Dancer (R) and Robert Clifton (R) for Assembly

LD 13: Vincent Solomono III (D) for Senate and Allison Friedman (D) and Erin Howard (D) for Assembly

LD 14: Linda Greenstein (D) for Senate and Dan Benson (D) and Wayne DeAngelo (D) for Assembly

LD 15: Shirley K. Turner (D) for Senate and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson (D) and Anthony S. Verrelli (D) for Assembly

LD 16: Andrew Zwicker (D) for Senate and Roy Freiman (D) and Sadaf Jaffer (D) for Assembly

Continued on page 4



IN MEMORIAM

Eileen Burke
Bruce Gunther
Robert Oliver
Clara Romeo
Ann Sciarritta
Barbara Sichik
Angela Tarangel

Membership

Iris Tonti

Please save and use this new email address- MERCERREA.MEMBERSHIP@GMAIL.COM- for membership purposes. Membership-related questions or issues are always welcome.

If you are an Annual member and have not renewed your membership for the 2021-2022 year, please do so as soon as possible. August 31st is approaching quickly and that marks the end of this membership term. Many of you have already sent in your renewal payments. And I thank you. Our new membership year begins on September 1st and the members I have not heard from memberships end on that date.

Many retirees are taking phone calls from members of NJEA and the 200k group. I've been making these phone calls for over a year. They are wellness check-ins and we are gathering data about any concerns or issues our members may have. Many retired and active members are sharing their experience and wisdom from their lifetime in education as well many other interesting and informative stories. If you get a phone call from a person saying they are from the NJEA and the 200k group, you might want to take a few minutes to let them know what you have to share.

Thank you for your continued partnership and membership. We all do our best to maintain solidarity even in retirement.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

MCREA Executive Board

2020-2022

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Terri apurcell

Scholarship

Mary Jo Klockner
Fran Whitworth

Social

Karen Aiello

Technology

Carol Dziejcz

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

Let your voice speak volumes at the polls in this and all future elections.

Pac Endorsement continued from page 3

LD 20: Joe Cryan (D) for Senate and Reginald Atkins (D) and Annette Quijano (D) for Assembly

LD 21: Jon Bramnick (R) for Senate and Anjali Mehrotra (D) and Nancy Munoz (R) for Assembly

LD 22: Nicholas Scutari (D) for Senate and Linda Carter (D) and James Kennedy (D) for Assembly

LD 23: No endorsement

LD 25: Anthony Bucco (R) for Senate and Aura Dunn (R) for Assembly

LD 26: Christine Clarke (D) for Senate and Pamela Fadden (D) for Assembly

LD 27: Richard J. Codey (D) for Senate and Mila M. Jasey (D) and John F. McKeon (D) for Assembly

LD 28: Ronald Rice (D) for Senate and Cleopatra Tucker (D) and Ralph Caputo (D) for Assembly

LD 30: Edward "Ned" Thomson (R) and Sean Kean (R) for Assembly

LD 34: Nia H. Gill (D) for Senate and Thomas P. Gibilin (D) and Britnee N. Timberlake (D) for Assembly

LD 40: Kristin Corrado (R) for Senate and Kevin Rooney (R) and Christopher DePhillips (R) for Assembly

MCREA Fall Meeting/Luncheon
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Mercer Oaks Golf and Country Club
725 Village Road West Windsor, NJ 08550
Cost is \$20.00 per person

Latest updates on pension, health benefits and other important information from NJEA and NJREA representatives may be in person or virtual.

Doors open at 10:00; registration until 10:30. This meeting is open to MCREA members only. Lunch will begin at approximately noon.

Registration deadline is SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2021.

Menu includes a Fall Salad, family style pasta, twice baked potato, vegetable and a CHOICE of PRIME RIB, CHICKEN PARMIGIANA, or BROILED SALMON and cheesecake for dessert. A CASH BAR will be available. GLUTEN FREE and VEGETARIAN meals available.

Please mail this form with a CHECK for \$20.00 payable to MCREA by October 10, 2021 to: SUSAN H. KAROLKIEWICZ at 38 LONG ACRE DR. CREAM RIDGE, NJ 08514. Questions 609-223-2570.

Member name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Email address _____

I am an ANNUAL_____ LIFETIME_____ MCREA MEMBER_____

MENU CHOICE:

CHICKEN PARM_____ PRIME RIB_____ SALMON_____

MCREA will follow NJ state executive orders related to Covid and in accordance with Mercer Oaks Country Club's seating/ spacing guidelines. Masks should be worn except when eating. MCREA assumes no liability. Seating may be limited, and will be first come, first served based upon receipt of your registration form and payment.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU PROVIDE US WITH YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS.



MCREA News is published four times a year.

Sept Dec

March June

OPT OUT

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

Email us at mercerrea.membership@gmail.com and tell us you would like to OPT OUT of the print versions.

If you have made any changes to your contact and mailing information, please send your name, address, phone number and email to mercerrea.membership@gmail.com.
Especially if you have updated your NJEA profile. Thanks!

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.mercercountyretiredea.org

Facebook: Mercer Retired Educators' Association (MCREA)

Contact Cindy Braddock for permission.

Save the Date... Details inside

* MCREA Fall Luncheon/ Workshop, October 20, 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": _____

"In Celebration Of": _____

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



Mercer County Retired Educators' Association
Iris Tonti, Membership
68 Belle Meade Dr. Hamilton NJ 08691-3332

