

THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

December 2013



From the President's Desk...Jeanne W. Bennett

No More Excuses!

Did you wear blue or see someone wearing blue on December 9th? That day was the National Day of Action to Reclaim the Promise of Public Education. During the past few years, educators and retired educators have been publicly bashed, but the tide seems to be turning. There is a growing momentum among parents, community members, businesses

and industry leaders in New York State that the implementation of the new core standards has been a disaster and that the cuts to public education have been draconian and inequitable.

Sandy Bliss and/or I have attended a couple of the forums hosted by state legislators involving Commissioner King. At one event, there were over 1,000 people present, and not one negative comment was made about teachers. Parents have witnessed the stress, frustration, and unhappiness of their children. They see their children being hurt, and they are turning to the educators for help. Why? The answer is because we have credibility. Parents are again realizing what we have always known - educators care deeply for the children they teach and truly want what is best for them. As educators, we know what works best - an emphasis on quality teaching, not testing, and sufficient funding for public education from pre-K through graduate school.

Yes, the tide is turning, and now, we need to keep the momentum going. One way to do this is to participate in coalitions that NYSUT has built such as The Alliance for Quality Education (AQE). These coalitions have been instrumental in getting parents, community members, and businesses involved. AQE is launching a new campaign entitled, "No More Excuses! Educate Every Child!" The focus is the sufficient funding for our schools.

Five years of cuts to education have resulted in the loss of 35,000 teachers, aides, and support staff positions; advanced placement courses; career and technical courses; art, music and fine arts programs;...and the list goes on. The court case on the constitutionality of the tax cap is being heard as this article is written. \$38 million went to Pearson to develop new assessments; it was just "given" to Pearson. New York State needs to change its course, and it needs to educate every student. Studies now conclusively show that children living in poverty are not receiving the resources that they need to be successful in our schools. It's time to stop cutting and start improving education!

On **Tuesday, January 14th, 2014**, join us (AQE, Citizens Action, NYSUT, RC 12) as we rally in Albany for equity, education, and opportunity. The rally will be held at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center. The exact time has not been set, but it will probably be late in the morning. **The Parade for Public Education on March 12th** will also be held in Albany. Exact details will be listed on our RC 12 website or emailed to our subscriber list when they become available. These rallies need to be held during the day when the Governor and legislators are there. Our in-service educators have to be in their classrooms during the day, so attending these rallies is something that we retirees can do to help. Remember: this is an election year for the Governor and all of the legislators. Let's keep the momentum going - No More Excuses! Educate Every Student! One voice together demanding funding for our public schools!

You can make a difference!

By RC 12 co presidents Jeanne W. Bennett & Sandra Bliss

NYSUT policy is basically formed in one of two ways. One way is that the NYSUT Board of Directors establishes policy. The other way is to submit resolutions through a local or retiree council to the Representative Assembly (RA). Resolutions submitted by a local or retiree council must be approved by the local's or retiree council's executive board or approved at a general membership meeting and then signed by the local or retiree council president.

In this article, we wish to highlight two of our members who have shown that by writing resolutions one person can make a difference in the lives of people. The two members are Mary Pritchard, our RC 12 Co-VP in charge of legislation and Judy Schultz, RC 12 past president. Through the years, Judy has written many resolutions including one for the 2014 RA. The resolution that Judy wrote in 2012 has become New York State law! (*continued page 3*)



Mary Pritchard at RC 12 meeting in September

The Outlook

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Thank You for Your Contribution

Listed below are those who have made their \$ 15 contribution to NYSUT Retiree Council 12 by November 30th for the 2013 - 2014 year. Our year runs from July 1 to June 30. The names with an asterisk indicate payment for future years. A name with one asterisk means that member has paid for this year plus the 2014 – 2015. Two asterisks mean you are paid up through the 2015 – 2016 year. The contribution form can be found in this issue. Those that make their donation in the upcoming weeks will have their names listed in future issues of THE OUTLOOK. Look over this list, and if you think I have made an error, please call me at 518-773-7180 or e-mail me at jmazz@nycap.rr.com.

Thanks for your continued financial support.

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Save the Dates



Tuesday, January 14th, 2014 --

Rally for Education Empire State
 Plaza Convention Center Albany

March 12, 2014 Parade for Public Education Albany

March 26, 2014 RC 12 General meeting Cobleskill

May 1, 2014 NYSUT RC 12 Retiree Conference at
 Glen Sanders Mansion

June 4, 2014 RC 12 General meeting Water's Edge
 Lighthouse Scotia

(You Can Make a Difference Continued from page 1)

Mary Pritchard's work as an ombudsman in a local nursing home as well as her personal experience with a couple of generations of family members having Alzheimer's led to the start of a NYSUT resolution. Mary observed through her work with the Alzheimer's Association that treatment has come a long way. However, many skilled nursing facilities still do not deal with mental health issues including Alzheimer's.

Because she is an ombudsman, Mary received a telephone call from the family of a woman who was in the late stages of the disease. The woman was asked to move out of the facility since it had no program to meet her needs. She was going to be sent to Massachusetts, even though she had an elderly husband and sisters who visited her often. The Ombudsman program and the family had to appear before a judge to try to keep her and her Medicaid dollars in New York State. They lost to the facility. However, the Ombudsmen coordinator was able to get the woman into the Albany County nursing home so she did not go out of state.

Mary then wrote a resolution for the NYSUT RA (Representative Assembly) in hopes of changing the law to keep people in late stage of Alzheimer's in New York State with programs to address their needs. This resolution passed the Representative Assembly in April of 2013. Now that Mary's resolution is NYSUT policy, it means that NYSUT will support legislation and/or state regulations to achieve Mary's goals.

In the fall of 2013, Mary heard about the CONFERENCE FOR CARE-GIVERS sponsored by AARP. She spoke to the group about her experiences in writing the resolution. A newspaper reporter for the Schenectady Gazette was present and picked up the info and put it into the newspaper on the morning of September 17th, 2013, which happened to be the day of our RC 12 general meeting. Mary brought the article to the meeting to show how a resolution can start from an experience and go through the channels to become part of the NYSUT legislative plan.

It is Mary's hope that the governor will do something about Medicaid dollars leaving New York State and improve programs for people with late stage Alzheimers.

Judy Schultz is a long-term advocate on health care issues. In fact, in early 2000, she was part of a contingent of NYSUT retiree leaders trained to provide workshops on Medicare. When she learned about the hospital observation status issue, she delved into the details and wrote a resolution for the NYSUT RA that has become NYSUT and AFT policy. Also, Judy understands the need to work with coalitions to achieve our goals so she went to NYSARA (New York State Alliance of Retired Americans), legislators and other labor federations to ask for their support. She spoke at the April 2012 meeting of NYSUT Retiree Councils presidents to explain seniors being denied subsequent rehab and skilled nursing expenses paid by Medicare if they were placed in the hospital under observation status rather than inpatient. In October of 2013, Governor Cuomo signed into law A. 7257-A/S. 3926-A, a bill that was unanimously adopted by the New York State Senate and Assembly.

Please read the article that Judy has written on page 4 and look at the federal implications. For the next issue of the Outlook, Judy will outline what needs to happen federally.

Our retirees should be very proud and appreciative of the work that Judy has done on our behalf to obtain all of the Medicare benefits for which we have paid.

Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

Name _____ County _____

Address _____ City _____ Year Retired _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Original Union Local _____ You may share my email with AFT _____

My Assemblyman _____ My NY State Senator _____ My US Representative _____

I would be willing to work for my fellow retirees in the area of:

___ Legislation ___ Social Committee ___ Newsletter

**\$15.00 yearly contribution requested send to
John Mazur, 176 West Bush Rd, Gloversville, NY 12078 518-773-7180
Make check payable to NYSUT Retiree Council 12**



**December 2013
Issue
RC 12 Outlook**



Medicare Observation Status, Where Are We?

by Judy Schultz, RC 12 past president

New York has done its part by passing legislation, signed by Governor Cuomo on October 21, 2013, The law amends the public health law and will require general hospitals to notify patients or patient advocates when the hospital has placed the patient into observation services. This notification, both oral and written, must be done within the first 24 hours of observation placement and an explanation of the implications of the status must also be given at that time.

The law takes affect after 90 days to allow the NYS Commissioner of Health to prepare the proper forms and for hospitals to get up-to-date on the procedures. The statement that must be signed by the patient or the patient’s legal representative, “...shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- (A) A STATEMENT THAT OBSERVATION STATUS MAY AFFECT THE PATIENT’S MEDICARE, MEDICAID/AND OR PRIVATE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE CURRENT HOSPITAL SERVICES, INCLUDING MEDICATIONS AND OTHER PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLIES, AS WELL AS COVERAGE FOR AND SUBSEQUENT DISCHARGE TO A SKILLED NURSING FACILITY OR HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED CARE AND
- (B) THAT THE PATIENT SHOULD CONTACT HIS OR HER INSURANCE PLAN TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF BEING PLACED IN OBSERVATION STATUS.” A07257A/S03926-A

Will the federal government do their part and pass H.R.1179/S.569 “Improving Access to Medicare Act of 2013-2014” which would do much to relieve the financial burden on patients and allow Medicare coverage for skilled nursing homes for those on observation services? More on this later.



Judy Schultz at the September RC 12 Meeting at the Otesaga