

## 2023 Annual Business Meeting

### Celebrating Community Contributions

The 2023 Annual Business Meeting was held on Tuesday May 9, 2023, at Valley Mansion in Cockeysville. One hundred seventy-four of the 188 registered delegates and guests attended. Tillie Barkley presented the Memorial Service, including a video and poem in honor of our members who passed away this year. There was also a brief video memorial in honor of MRSPA Past President Frances "Fay" Miller.

New officer, Sharyn Doyle, Anne Arundel County, was elected secretary, and non-board members of the Nominating Committee, Lorraine Johnson, Prince George's County, and Richard McNeal, Queen Anne's County were elected by acclamation. All three will serve a one-year term. The election for president-elect was held with Elizabeth "Betty" Weller of Kent County winning the position. Betty will serve a one-year term as president-elect before becoming president in July of 2024.

Returning officers Carla Duls, Anne Arundel County, President; Nancy Gordon, Frederick County, Vice President; and Dr. Stephen Raucher, Montgomery County, Treasurer, and new officers were installed by current Area II North Director, Charlie Gable, Jr.

Individual and Local Association Project Community Service Awards were presented during the meeting. A video with examples of all 24 local associations' community service work was also shared and can be found on the MRSPA website [here](#).

National Retired Teachers Association Senior Legislative Representative, Adam Goldberg, shared information about NRTA legislative priorities and the relationship between NRTA and AARP Maryland. Martin Noven, Executive Director of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, shared remarks about the stability of the system and spoke of possible improvements to benefits for some active employees that will require legislative approval.

Three of our MRSPA mini grant winners shared messages of gratitude and explained how the grants enhanced classroom instruction. One of our scholarship winners shared his sincere thanks and appreciation via [video](#) reminding us that he was at work while we were enjoying our event. Additional information about the scholarship and mini grant winners can be found on page four of this newsletter.

The 2024 Annual Business Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2024.



Carla Duls, President; Charlie Gable, Area II North Director; Elizabeth Weller, President-Elect; Nancy Gordon, Vice President; Dr. Stephen Raucher, Treasurer; and Sharyn Doyle, Secretary



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Carla Duls

The theme of this year's MRSPA Annual Business Meeting, held on May 9 at Valley Mansion in Cockeysville, was *Celebrating Community Contributions: MRSPA Benefits Many*. Our celebration was the culmination of a yearlong project shared with attendees at the Local Presidents' meeting in July 2022. Each was invited to track contributions made to their community and education over the course of the year and to share their findings prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Their submissions proved what I already knew - that MRSPA and the Locals did indeed care in 2022 - 2023.

Collectively, \$75,700 was awarded in scholarships to high school seniors beginning their college studies and to those already working in public school systems pursuing further certification or degrees. MRSPA and the locals awarded over \$6,000 to teachers in the form of mini-grants, providing funds for special school or classroom projects not funded by their schools. Across the state, over \$40,000 was donated to 58 charities and community organizations. National organizations including the United Way, Salvation Army, Alzheimer's Association, Meals on Wheels, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Boys and Girls Clubs, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, CASA, Partners in Care, and Comfort Cases, as well as state and local food banks, schools, animal shelters, literacy councils, hospices, senior centers, social services, assisted living and nursing homes, and many other concerns, all benefitted from the generosity of MRSPA and local members.

Statewide, we **assisted** those in need with over 352 food items donated; **preserved** history in five one room school houses; **entertained** with performances by two

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Debbie J. Hance

*Officers*

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 Vice President ..... Nancy Gordon  
 Secretary ..... Sharyn Doyle  
 Treasurer..... Dr. Stephen Raucher

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choruses and donations of over 192 toys; **educated** with books in 29 Little Libraries as well as school, community, and laundromat libraries; **supplied** students with over 1200 donated school supplies; **assisted** school health rooms with over 450 items donated. We **volunteered** at a county fair and a conference; **crocheted** 16 waterproof mats and 18 tote bags; **made** 50 no-sew blankets, and **gifted** 123 pairs of gloves and mittens. The list does go on, and since many locals did not submit specific data, actual donations were much higher than these numbers suggest.

(Continued on page 4)

**Why wait for the mail?**

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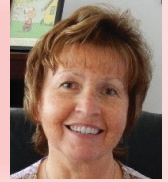
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From the

## Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



MRSPA accomplished much during our 2023 membership year, but we also experienced a great loss. Past MRSPA President, Frances “Fay” Miller passed away in April after a severe stroke and just a month before her 84th birthday. Many of you who attend your local association meetings likely recall Fay telling stories and encouraging you to “Each One Reach One” during her tenure as president.



Fay joined MRSPA in the fall of 2010 at the suggestion of her sister, Ann, following her retirement after 48 years with Kent County Public Schools. Never one to sit on the sidelines, Fay quickly became involved at the local and state level. Having loved to swim all her life and being a physical education teacher and swimming instructor, she jumped into MRSPA with both feet.

By 2012, Fay was the MRSPA Finance Committee Chair, eventually becoming MRSPA Treasurer, President-elect, and then President in 2016. She also chaired the Bylaws Committee. Fay was devoted to the MRSPA scholarship program and served on that committee until her passing. She was instrumental in increasing the number and amount of our scholarships awarded annually.

When Fay took over as MRSPA president in 2016, the long-time executive director was retiring and a new director was hired. As it turned out, the new director left after six months with the organization. This meant that many of the duties of the director fell to Fay. She ran the road back and forth from her home in Cecil County to Odenton several times a week for months, all while continuing her visits to local associations, running or participating in all the MRSPA meetings, and generally being the listener in chief as problems arose and were resolved. She was hands on in planning and holding all the meetings including the 2017 Annual Business Meeting. Fay helped hold the organization together during a very trying period and true to form, she did it with compassion, humor, the experience of a seasoned administrator, and the exceptional interpersonal skills we all came to love and respect.

Fay held high expectations for everyone and it was a pleasure meeting those expectations to make her happy and to know that if you did, then the job was done right. She knew exactly what she was doing, what she wanted, and how she wanted to get it done. Fay strongly believed in the mission of the association and shared that belief with everyone she met. Her kindness and commitment were undeniable. Fay Miller was the consummate leader and a truly genuine and caring human being. MRSPA is better and stronger because of you, Fay, and we miss you.

### Vision Statement

*The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association inspires the dedication, commitment, skills and abilities of its members in service to fellow retirees and the entire community in an ever-changing world.*

### Mission Statement

*The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association is a nonprofit organization comprised of retired school system personnel. It serves as an advocate for retirees and provides expanding services to members, empowering them to enrich the quality of their lives. The Organization is dedicated to excellence in education and life-long learning. It promotes community service by its members through a myriad of volunteer activities.*

### Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

*We, the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, are evolving to reflect the goals and aspirations of a contemporary organization. Through our shared values, we create an environment where all members are included, respected, and appreciated.*

## MINI GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS RECOGNIZED DURING THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The *MRSPA Foundation* again supported four active school personnel in their quest to continue their education. Four \$2,000 scholarships were awarded thanks to contributions to the *Foundation* through the purchase of raffle tickets and other donations, which also support our mini grants.

A special thanks to Scholarship Committee members Tillie Barckley, Nancy Gordon, and Caroll Visintainer for their review of 331 applications! The four individuals selected this year are: Zachary Dodson, Harford County, currently a grade 6 science teacher, pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching; Harper Gambill, Baltimore City, currently a provisionally certified special education teacher pursuing an ESOL and secondary education certificate; Amanda Glenn MacKenzie, St. Mary's County, currently a provisionally certified art teacher, pursuing secondary certification and a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Teaching; and Shaniqua Thompson, Frederick County, currently a middle school behavioral support teacher, pursuing a Masters in Social Work.

While none of the scholarship winners attended the ABM in person, Harper Gambill sent a lovely video expressing his heartfelt thanks for the scholarship that will help him become a better

teacher for his students.

Three of our twelve 2022-2023 mini grant recipients were able to attend the ABM and share the successes that our mini grants helped bring to life in their classrooms. The three attending winners were Amberly Karacz, Washington County, *Guided Walk Posts*; Liliia Khmarskaia, Wicomico County, *Noise Patrol*; and Amy Mangold, Harford County, *Little Rooms*. Ms. Mangold also shared the *Little Room* that was created and built for her special needs students with funds from our mini grant. All three winners were most appreciative of the grants they received!



Kathy Campagnoli, Community Service Committee Chair; Liliia Khmarskaia, Wicomico County; Amy Mangold, Harford County; and Amberly Karacz, Washington County

*(President, continued from page 2)*

The video presentation highlighting these accomplishments is available to view on the MRSPA website under "[ABM](#)."

MRSPA and the locals have surely made an impact in our communities! However, if we are to continue this culture of caring, we must concentrate on improving our membership numbers. As we move forward this year, we'll be looking at the importance of reaching out to our tech savvy prospective members in creative and engaging ways. I hope you will join with MRSPA as we continue our integral role as contributors in our schools and communities by

exploring new and exciting means to increase our visibility and membership.



## Automatic Annual Dues Deduction and COLA

Annual MRSPA dues of \$45, plus your local dues amount, will be deducted from your July 31 retirement/pension check for members with authorized automatic dues deduction.

This year's cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) rate from the Maryland State Employees and Teachers Retirement System of 8.003% exceeds the statutory COLA rate caps that apply to all or a portion of the allowance payable to many payees. In addition, because the System's total investment performance for the calendar year ending on December 31, 2022 (-8.94%), did not equal or exceed the 6.8% assumed rate of investment return established by the Board of Trustees, the statutory rate cap for the portion of an allowance based on creditable service earned on or after [July 1, 2011](#), is 1% for many payees.

The information below summarizes the COLA that generally applies to payees of the various State systems beginning in July:

### Employees' and Teachers' Pension Systems

- 3% on the portion of the allowance based on creditable service earned before July 1, 2011, and 1% on the portion earned on or after July 1, 2011.

### Employees' and Teachers' Retirement Systems

- For payees subject to Selection A (Additional member contributions) or who separated from service on or before June 30, 1984, the COLA is 8.003%.
- For payees subject to Selection B (Limited COLA), the COLA is 5%.
- Payees subject to Selection C (Combination formula) are subject to the following COLA rates:
  - o For payees who were subject to Selection A before electing Selection C, the COLA is 8.003% on the portion of the allowance based upon creditable service earned before electing Selection C and 3% on the portion earned after electing Selection C.
  - o For payees who were subject to Selection B before electing Selection C, the COLA is 5% on the portion of the allowance based upon creditable service earned before electing Selection C and 3% on the portion earned after electing Selection C.
- See the April 18, 2023, [MSRA Press Release](#) for more COLA information.

## A Heartfelt Thank You!

The MRSPA Community Service Committee sends a heartfelt thank you to our generous members and friends who donated \$2,579.00 to the 2023 Annual Business Meeting food drive for the Maryland Food Bank! This year's food drive theme was MRSPA Benefits Many! While the amount was short of our \$3,000 goal, we sincerely appreciate every dollar donated to help food insecure families across Maryland.

Additional thanks are due to all those who purchased raffle tickets or made a donation to the *MRSPA Foundation* this year. Even with some confusion in check payments, we raised a whopping \$6,539.00! This support allows us to continue to offer mini grants and scholarships to active school employees. See more information about our winners throughout this newsletter.

We knew our members and friends were awesome, this just proves it once again!





## THE SUMMIT SCHOOL

*Serving bright students with dyslexia  
and other learning differences*

# ATTENTION RETIRED TEACHERS

## ***Do you miss the classroom and connecting with students?***

**The Summit School has small class sizes where you can make a true impact.**

### Full-time and Part-time Positions Available

The Summit School educates bright students with dyslexia and other learning differences in grades 1-8. Founded in 1989, the school enrolls approximately 110 students each year. Class sizes are small (4-6 students) for Language Arts, English, and Math. When there are larger groups for Science and Social Studies, teachers are paired with a co-teacher or a teaching assistant.

Located eight miles south of Annapolis on 15 beautiful acres, The Summit School is ideal for retired teachers who are seeking opportunities to work in a supportive environment.

We are hiring for the following positions:

- Full-time & Part-time Teachers
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Physical Education Teacher
- Teaching Assistants



#### Summit Teachers Enjoy:

- Making a true impact with their students
- Small class sizes
- Students dismiss at 12:30pm on Wednesdays for teacher training & child-centered discussions
- Peer mentorship and collaboration
- Evidence-based teaching methodologies consistent across curriculum and grade levels
- Active partnerships with school leadership staff
- A supportive community of families & peers
- Outstanding training opportunities
- Strong work-life balance
- Teacher school year ends second Friday in June
- Full array of benefits
- Our beautiful 15-acre campus

***Our students learn differently so we teach them differently***

[www.thesummitschool.org](http://www.thesummitschool.org)

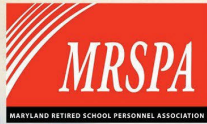
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# Attention MRSPA members: Your passport called— it wants new stamps for 2024!

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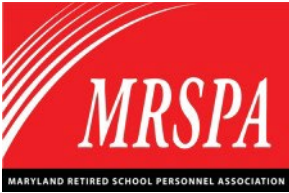


## NAEP is hiring

In-school data collectors are needed for  
national assessments of grades 4, 8, and 12,  
January 29–March 8, 2024.

Enter your contact information at  
<http://www.WorkNAEP.com> to be notified  
once applications are available.





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**MRSPA CALENDAR**

- July 1.....New Membership Year Begins  
*MRSPA Office*
- July 4.....Independence Day  
*MRSPA Office Closed*
- July 25.....Presidents' Meeting Hybrid  
*MRSPA Office*
- August 8.....Board of Directors Meeting Hybrid  
*MRSPA Office*
- September 4.....Labor Day  
*MRSPA Office Closed*
- September 26.....Leadership Workshop  
*TBD*



**MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL  
 2023-2024**



**Iceland, Land of Fire**, October 11-17, 2023, (Mayflower Tours), Contact Debbie Martinez at 810-797-5710 or [debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com](mailto:debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com)

**Australia's Outback to New Zealand's South Island**, February 21 - March 11, 2024, (Collette via Travel Leaders/ Action Travel) Contact Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887 or [leigh\\_ann@actiontraveltours.com](mailto:leigh_ann@actiontraveltours.com)

**Normandy, Paris & Seine River Cruise**, April 16 - 24, 2024, (Premier World Discovery) Contact 877-953-8687, <https://res.premierworlddiscovery.com>

**Montana and Glacier National Park**, July 13 - 20, 2024, (Mayflower Cruises & Tours), Contact Debbie Martinez, 810-797-5710 or [debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com](mailto:debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com) or Liz Unger 443-904-4540

**Rivers & Rails of Texas**, September 15 - 29, 2024, (Mayflower Cruises & Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel) Contact Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887 or [leigh\\_ann@actiontraveltours.com](mailto:leigh_ann@actiontraveltours.com)

**The American West: Cody, Yellowstone, & Jackson Hole**, September 3 -11, 2024, (Grand Circle/Overseas Adventure Travel) Contact 800-221-2610, MRSPA Code: G4-28192

**Essence of Panama**, October 3 -10, 2024, (Mayflower Cruises & Tours) Contact Debbie Martinez, 810-797-5710 or [debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com](mailto:debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com) or Liz Unger 443-904-4540

Check our website at [www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org), click **Travel** to locate more information on trips.

All MRSPA trips are open to MRSPA members, their family and friends. Please use **Code: G4-28192 anytime** you travel with Grand Circle Tours to access a special deal for you and MRSPA, even if it's not a MRSPA sponsored trip.