

State and Local Leaders Meet for Leadership Conference

On September 26 and 27, 2018, MRSPA and local association leaders met at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights for a day and a half training on messaging and communications. The presenters of the conference, entitled “Using the Building Blocks of Communication to Boost Member Recruitment and Leadership,” were Dan Kaufman and Morgan Brill of Widmeyer Finn Partners of Washington, DC. Forty-two state and local leaders attended the conference.

Participants learned *Messaging 101* and worked in groups to create messages for use at the state and local level to recruit, retain, and regain members. Leaders shared activities, events, and media they are currently using and learned how to take those ideas to the next level in recruitment and retention. Engaging sessions on using Facebook and traditional media were also enjoyed by the participants. Leaders left the conference with a greater understanding of how they can better communicate with their current and potential members.



RECRUIT

RETAIN

REGAIN



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Connecting, Protecting, Making a Difference

As we bridge the seasons in this newsletter, reflecting on MRSPA's fall activities and looking forward to the winter work of MRSPA, I'm asking each of us as individuals and as local and state associations to answer a basic question:

How am I/are we putting this year's theme into action? Are we in fact "*Connecting, Protecting, and Making a Difference,*" and are we letting others know about who we are and what we do?

When we connect with retired school personnel in our daily lives, are we encouraging them to join our Associations? Are we keeping up-to-date with what is happening concerning our county insurance issues and the potential decisions that will impact retirees? Do we make our contacts aware that MRSPA and our local units advocate for their defined benefit retirement/pension? Are we making a difference through our volunteerism or contributions to local causes, and do we let others know that MRSPA members are still very active in our communities? Do we have a variety of activities that entice people to join our organizations?

Letting people know about MRSPA and the locals' efforts on school retirees' behalf is essential to gaining new members so that we can continue to protect our benefits. At the September Leadership Conference, we looked at improving our visibility through newspaper articles, social media, etc. We worked on improving our messaging to be "clear, concise, compelling, and consistent," and local leaders shared wonderful recruitment ideas that they are trying. You'll be hearing about some ideas that your presidents brought back to implement. Many of the strategies that were shared involved just

MRSPA News
is published five times each year by the
MARYLAND RETIRED SCHOOL
PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION.

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a new twist on what is done already. In addition, a series of Area Membership workshops is being planned - MRSPA is serious (in an enthusiastic way, of course) about membership growth!

As I travel around Maryland, I am so impressed by the energy and the dedication of so many members and the warm welcome I have received wherever I've gone. Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to seeing you in the future!

Ann Marie Downey
President

***Connecting, Protecting,
Making a Difference***

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 members 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.

From the

Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



At the Annual Business Meeting in May, we challenged the locals to help us “grow” our membership. We instituted a couple of incentives and the locals rose to the challenge. As of the beginning of October, the locals had added over 400 new members to our ranks! And our spring recruitment mailing brought in about 200 more. Congratulations to everyone who is working to recruit members! Your efforts are working!

As President Downey and I visit local associations across the state, it is evident that members enjoy getting together to connect with former colleagues and make new friends. Locals are busy planning trips and activities and working on their community service projects. Local high school students who plan to major in education are applying for and winning scholarships as the locals continue their fund-raising efforts. Members are busy volunteering to help grow their associations and keep them running smoothly to the benefit of all members. We see our members enjoying each other’s company and showing their pride in the scholarships they award and the volunteering they do. Our members are having fun!

I encourage every member to reach out to retired educators who are not members to invite them to join us.

While our recruitment numbers are wonderful and encouraging, we are still losing members because of the nature of our membership and some are simply not returning their dues when billed. It is going to take that personal contact from you, their friend, former colleague, or fellow retiree, to bring them (back) into the fold.

Any new member who signs up to pay their dues by deduction from their state pension will save over 20% on their dues for the first year. That’s a \$10 savings! Beginning on January 1, 2019, and lasting until June 30, 2019, the \$10 gift card incentive will be reinstated for any member who recruits a NEW member who signs up to pay their dues by deduction! Any member who is currently paying their dues by check or credit card can also save \$10 off the next year’s dues if they **Switch** to dues deduction and **Save**.

Thank you for all you do to help make your local, and thereby MRSPA, a more visible and successful association. Please keep up the great work of recruiting, retaining, and regaining members!

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August 5 - 15, 2020



MRSPA Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame Honorees

Thirteen Maryland Retired School Personnel Association members were inducted into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, which honors senior citizens who have made exemplary contributions to society.

They were among the 45 senior citizens from across Maryland who were inducted during the ceremony on October 25, 2018, at Michael's Eight Avenue in Glen Burnie.

The thirteen MRSPA member inductees were Frances Bond, MRSPA State member; Donna Copenhaver, Baltimore County; Fran Doyle, Prince George's County; Mary Eastman, Baltimore City; Jean Foreman, Kent County; Gretchen Ginder, Cecil County; Joseph Howard, Montgomery County; Alice Hutchins, Caroline County; Mary Gladys Jones, Wicomico County; Susan D. Skinner, Anne Arundel County; Robert Stanfill, Montgomery County; Richard Wiles, Anne Arundel County; and Barbara Woolford, Dorchester County.

Frances Bond and Mary Gladys Jones were both also awarded the prestigious GERI Award during the ceremony. The GERI Award recognizes those honorees demonstrating extraordinary community service and is considered the geriatric "Nobel Prize."

The GERI symbol, an older adult hand holding the hand of a child, signifies understanding and love between generations and the intrinsic value of service to others.

MRSPA President Ann Marie Downey commented, "MRSPA is extremely proud of our member inductees and recognizes them for their caring and volunteer efforts in improving the lives of others. Their names will be recorded in the Archives of the Maryland Hall of Fame in perpetuity."



Pictured front row (left to right) – Gretchen Ginder (Cecil County), Donna Copenhaver (Baltimore County), Susan Skinner (Anne Arundel County), Alice Hutchins (Caroline County), Fran Doyle (Prince George's County)

Back row (left to right) – Jean Foreman (Kent County), Richard Wiles (Anne Arundel County)

Not pictured – Frances Bond, Mary Eastman, Joseph Howard, Mary Gladys Jones, Barbara Woolford, Robert Stanfill



GERI Award winner **Frances Bond** from Montgomery County



GERI Award winner **Mary Gladys Jones** from Wicomico County

Benefit News

Long Term Care Benefits For MRSPA Members



Joseph Barger CRPC, CLTC, CSA and Richard Craft, CFP®, ChFC, CRPC, CRPS from Academy

Financial Inc. work with members to identify potential risks associated with Long Term Care and the most efficient ways to protect assets from these ever-increasing costs in today's environment. The average cost of Nursing Homes in Maryland is \$101,379 per year and the reality is that Medicare only covers a small fraction of the cost for the first several days. Medicaid is a needs-based program that should be considered as a last resort due to having to spend down all or your assets before coverage may be provided. Please contact Richard Craft at 410-372-3229 or Richard.Craft@LFG.com to learn about more details and benefits offered to members.

Dental and Vision Benefits for MRSPA Members



Blue Harbor Benefits and the MRSPA have been working diligently over the past several years to provide the highest quality voluntary dental and

vision benefits at the most affordable prices. We are pleased to let you know that there are no changes to the dental and vision plans for the benefit period November 1, 2018-October 31, 2019. If you are not currently enrolled, and would like to learn more about these enhanced benefits, please visit the MRSPA website (www.mrspa.org) or contact Blue Harbor Benefits at 866-571-5962 or Melissa.Tower@LFG.com.

AARSPA'S FLORIDA GET-TOGETHER



On January 18, 1991, the Anne Arundel Retired Teachers Association (AARTA) held its first "Florida Get Together" in Sarasota, Florida. Fifty-three (53) members of the Association attended.

In early March 2018, over forty (40) members of the Anne Arundel Retired School Personnel Association (AARSPA) once again met in the Sunshine State for fun, food, and fellowship at the 28th Annual Florida Get Together. This year's destination was The Villages where an evening social event was held in the home of member Terry Zablonksi on March 9. The general meeting and luncheon was held on March 10 at The Waterfront Inn.

In March 2019, AARSPA members will meet in Mt. Dora to once again continue the Florida Get Together tradition. This event continues to be a meeting place for our Florida resident members, snowbirds, and Marylanders seeking a relief from the winter!

MRSPA Newsletter Deadlines

Issue	Deadline
February 2019	January 3
Spring 2019	March 4
Summer 2019	May 24

Email your articles to: Wanda Twigg, Executive Director, at wtwigg@mrspa.org or mail them to MRSPA, 8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A, Odenton, MD 21113-1508

Why wait for the mail?

Receive MRSPA News up to two weeks earlier with email delivery!

If you'd like to receive MRSPA News via email, just let us know, and we'll

Add you to our electronic distribution list. You'll receive the publication faster AND help us reduce printing costs. **Email your request to: mrspa@mrspa.org and put "Newsletter by Email" in the subject line of the email and please include your full name and your email address.**



Raffle Tickets Available Now For MRSPA Scholarship Fund

MRSPA is currently selling raffle tickets (1 for \$2 and 3 for \$5) to assist with its Scholarship Fund.

The first-place prize will be \$300, second-place will be a Regions of Maryland basket worth \$150, and other various baskets for the drawing will be valued at \$75 each.

A profound thank you to all of our regular fundraising participants and past donors and to all who will be donating for the first time.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Uncertified teachers, teacher assistants, teacher aides, substitute teachers, certified teachers enrolled in programs to become school counselors, speech and language pathologists, physical or occupational therapists, school social workers, media specialists, school psychologists, or administrators may apply for one of the three \$2,000 scholarships.

Teachers who are currently certified are not eligible for this scholarship unless they are working toward certification in one of the specialties above or are pursuing certification in a different teaching area (content or grade level).

Applicants must already be enrolled in an accredited program leading to certification in teaching or in a specialty area at the time of application.

To apply for a scholarship, individuals must set up an online account and secure a copy (official or unofficial) of their college transcript. The name of the institution must be clearly visible and a minimum 2.5 GPA at the time of application is required.

Additional information is provided by logging onto website: www.frederickcountygives.org. The application form is included at this website.

Scholarship applications can be submitted from January 1 to January 31, 2019.

You are strongly encouraged to help us in our endeavor by continuing to donate to the fund and to increase your donations to the fund in memory of a loved one, or in lieu of a gift to a person who has all they need.

*Matilda Barckley
Scholarship Committee Chair*

Outstanding Retired Educational Personnel Award

Karen Teach, MRSPA member and retired Washington County educator, was presented with the Outstanding Retired Educational Personnel Award during the fall luncheon of the Washington County Retired Educational Personnel Association (WCREPA).

Teach taught for 19 years at North Hagerstown High School, 19 years at Clear Spring High School, 22 years at Hagerstown Community College and served as a teacher trainer for 17 years.

She now volunteers in her daughter's classroom at Potomac Heights Elementary one day a week.

Among many other pursuits, Teach serves on the executive board of WCREPA and is editor of the WCREPA newsletter. She has represented Washington County at three state conferences of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.



Karen Teach, center, was presented the Outstanding Retired Educational Personnel Award. At left is Tena Lane and at right is Belinda Rupp, both of whom are on the awards committee.

2018 Andrus Award Recipient

Shari Ostrow Scher, retired teacher from Frederick County, was awarded the AARP Maryland Andrus Award for Community Service at a ceremony held at The Gathering Place in Clarksville, Md., on September 26, 2018.

Frances “Fay” Miller, MRSPA Immediate Past President, introduced Ms. Scher and presented her with the Andrus award at the AARP luncheon.

The AARP state community service award is named for Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP’s founder and is presented annually. Ms. Scher was nominated by the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

Ms. Scher, a member of MRSPA and Frederick County Retired School Personnel Association (FCRSPA), also won the individual Community Service Award from MRSPA in May.

Shari Ostrow Scher volunteers over 120 hours a month at COIPP – Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, an organization she created to help children whose parents are in jail. Shari has been supporting inmates, children, caregivers, and their families through COIPP for over 15 years.

Over the years, the scope of volunteer work has grown to include children’s activities and resources, to caregiver support and scholarships, to direct work with current inmates and those newly released. The volunteers ensure that children are not alone in this journey.

“Many retired school personnel volunteer countless hours in their communities continuing to serve as they did when they were employed,” says MRSPA President Ann Marie Downey. “Ms. Scher exemplifies selfless service to her community and is most deserving of this prestigious award.”



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) award winner: Shari Ostrow Scher (2nd from right). Also pictured: MRSPA Immediate Past President Fay Miller (second from left). AARP Maryland State President, Jim Campbell (left) and AARP Maryland State Director, Hank Greenberg (right)

Dear MRSPA Members:

As you know, membership recruitment is an ongoing effort and is very important to the ability of MRSPA to sustain itself as a viable value-added organization. Likewise, communications aimed at creating partnerships with MRSPA allows MRSPA to continue to provide excellent membership benefits to you. As a means of marketing the organization to our members and prospective members, MRSPA uses photographs of members in materials and social media platforms.

Of course, MRSPA respects the privacy concerns of its members. Should you wish for photographs of you to not be included in MRSPA marketing materials, social media outlets or other communications, MRSPA will adhere to your wish. Any member who wishes to opt out of appearing in such MRSPA promotions may do so by contacting MRSPA by email at mrspsa@mrspsa.org or by telephone at (410) 551-1517.



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MRSPA CALENDAR

- December 5 Board of Directors Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office
- December 24-January 2 ... MRSPA Office Closed
- January 9 Executive Committee Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office
- January 15 Legislative Committee Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office
- January 21 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
MRSPA Office Closed
- January 29 Legislative Committee Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office

MRSPA 2019 TRIPS

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Best of Africa: South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana
1-800-322-6677 (Vantage Travel) | January 3 - January 19, 2019 |
| Kingdoms of Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos
1-800-848-3273 (Collette) | February 18 - March 9, 2019 |
| London Explorer
1-800-848-3273 (Collette) | March 23 - 31, 2019 |
| From the Alps to the Adriatic: Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia
1-201-228-5228 (Adventura World) | April 1 - 9, 2019 |
| America's Music Cities: New Orleans' Jazz Fest, Memphis, and Nashville
1-800-848-3273 (Collette) | April 26 - May 3, 2019 |
| France Culinary Delights: Paris to Normandy Cruise
1-800-322-6677 (Vantage Travel) | June 18 - July 1, 2019 |
| Best of Chile and Argentina During the Solar Eclipse
1-201-228-5228 (Adventura World) | June 30 - July 11, 2019 |
| Best of the Canadian Rockies: Calgary to Vancouver
1-800-221-2610 (Grand Circle Travel) | July 25 - August 8, 2019 |
| Viking River Cruises "Romantic Danube": Nuremberg, Krems, Vienna,
and Budapest
1-301-384-3402 (Beyond the Sea Travel) | October 6 - 13, 2019 |
| New England and Cape Cod Autumn Foliage
1-810-797-5710 or 1-443-904-4540 (Mayflower) | October 8 - 15, 2019 |
| Imperial Cities with Oberammergau Passion Play: Budapest, Vienna,
and Prague
1-410-296-8330 (Collette) | August 5 - 15, 2020 |