

mrspa

MARYLAND RETIRED
SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

news

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Fall 2025

2025 MRSPA Foundation Scholarship Winners!

Ashley Fisher, Carroll County



I have the privilege of working in a field that fills my heart every single day. As a special needs parent, special education is not just my career, it's my calling. This scholarship will help me to continue this journey as I pursue a master's degree in special education. My goal is to continue growing, learning, and becoming the best educator I can be for my students.

London Rochelle, Howard County



This scholarship is crucial in easing the financial burden I face, especially as I care for my sick son, allowing me to focus more on my education and less on financial stress. It will also enable me to better serve my students, showing them that despite life's challenges, they can achieve anything they set their minds to. By investing in my growth, I can inspire my students to pursue their own dreams, no matter the obstacles they may face.

Jody McMickle, Anne Arundel County



This scholarship enables me to complete my School Library Media certification, advancing from Media Assistant to Media Specialist. This career growth will enhance my ability to support students with dynamic learning resources and innovative technology. By furthering my education, I can foster a more engaging and accessible learning environment, inspiring lifelong literacy and academic success.

Zenovia Cole, Prince George's County



I am so grateful for the MRSPA Scholarship. Winning this scholarship means that I can continue my education without worrying about financial barriers. It shows me that MRSPA believes in my potential and is willing to support my educational goals. This recognition inspires me to stay focused and use my education to make a positive difference in the lives of my students.

Allan Hall, Wicomico County



This scholarship is instrumental in helping me pursue my goals of achieving my master's degree, allowing me to deepen my knowledge and improve my teaching skills. With this incredible opportunity, I can bring innovative strategies and research-based practices into my classroom, allowing my students to be more engaged and to learn more from me. By furthering my education, I will be better equipped to inspire the next generation of learners.

The Scholarship Committee thanks everyone who purchased raffle tickets or made donations to the MRSPA Foundation in support of our scholarship program. Watch future newsletters for the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets. Congratulations to our 2025 recipients!

Congratulations!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Betty Weller

This time of year is so different for everyone! If you're a student, you're headed into a new school year. If maybe it's a new school so you'll have new classmates, new teachers, new experiences. If you're school personnel, you're preparing for new students, maybe a new position, a new work location, new colleagues or perhaps a new boss. Feelings may include curiosity, trepidation, and/or excitement. My fondest hope for everyone is that, whatever your circumstance, it's all good.

For many of us who have retired, it's the time of year when we wake up that first day of the new school year and say, "Oh how wonderful! My alarm didn't go off at 0 dark thirty because I don't have to get up if I don't want to. I don't have to go to work! Gee, I wonder what I'll do today?" Then you remember you can do anything you want, anytime you want, with whomever you want, for as long as you want, anywhere you want. It's a great feeling to know you have opportunities to volunteer with the MRSPA and the locals in your schools, animal shelters, hospitals, libraries and probably a trove of other places. You might get involved in your local retired school personnel association and decide to tell colleagues and friends about the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, asking them to join. You might tell them about the dues deduction discount for people joining and paying by having their annual dues automatically deducted once a year from their retirement/pension check. You yourself might be interested in the gift card you'd get for every new member you recruit that signs up for dues deduction.

At the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, work has continued through the summer. We are continuing with our media campaign to get our name out there and introduce who we are. People don't join if they don't know you exist. We are moving forward with our strategic plan which will help us work smarter not harder. Committees are still meeting and preparing for the work in the coming year advocating for legislation to protect our pensions and the health and safety

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of seniors, serving our communities and connecting with friends, colleagues and retired school personnel across the state. We've been a proud organization for 80 years and want to continue our work with and for retired school employees.

As we welcome the 2025-2026 school year, I want to again thank you for your membership and for your efforts to help us grow our numbers. I believe there is strength in numbers. Thank you for all you do in your communities and for your schools. Thank you for your ideas, creativity, and all you do.

Onward!

**MRSPA: Opportunities to
Advocate, Serve, and Connect**

From the

Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



As I shared in my message this summer, MRSPA is working toward rebranding and planning for the future with the goal of growing our membership and moving MRSPA successfully into the mid-century. We know that most members join MRSPA for the pension protection advocacy. The MRSPA Legislative Committee meets regularly during the General Assembly session, reviews bills, takes positions, and provides testimony or input on bills that relate to our Legislative Priorities.

One of the goals in our Strategic Plan is to create a list of MRSPA members who have a personal relationship with a state legislator, county or city council member or executive, or local school board member. The committee would use this list when they need someone to reach out to a particular official on a particular topic or piece of legislation. Members with personal relationships might be asked to communicate with an official by email, by phone, or in person. Or they may be asked to be part of a panel of members who meet with or provide testimony on a piece of legislation. We are trying to locate two members who have a relationship with each elected or appointed official for our list.

We know that some of our members are elected or appointed officials. But we may

not know of others. We know that some of our members taught those officials or those officials' children or even grandchildren. We know that our members go to church or other religious institutions with officials. Our members are also in the same community groups or associations with officials. We just do not know which member and which official.

So, if you are reading this, and you are an elected or appointed official in the county/Baltimore City/state of Maryland, we would like you to let us know. If you taught or are in the same club as or the same church or religious institution as an official, and you would be willing to contact them about a legislative issue, we want to know. If you worked with any current official and are willing to possibly contact them for MRSPA at some future time, we want to know.

If you are willing to help MRSPA and our Legislative Committee to contact elected or appointed officials that you know personally, please send an email to mrspa@mrspa.org and tell us your name, the name of the official(s) you know, what their title/position is, and their email address, if you have it. We would also like to know how you know the official (work, church, taught, etc.) or if you are the official.

Thank you in advance for helping us create our list of contacts for county/city/state officials!

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.

MRSPA Legislative Report

Your Legislative Committee is already preparing for the 2026 Maryland General Assembly session. We have met and revised our Legislative Priorities for 2026. Please check the Legislation page of the MRSPA website at www.mrspa.org if you would like a copy of our brochure which details our priorities. We will continue to work for legislation that protects your pensions, enhances your health care, helps fight abuse and neglect of seniors and vulnerable adults, enhances public education and promotes lifelong learning, promotes access to the latest technology for seniors, and encourages and protects civic participation. As usual, we will hold our annual Legislative Workshop in January, meet every other week during the session, and keep you informed of actions of the Maryland General Assembly. The Legislative Workshop will be held on January 27, 2026. Our committee is also exploring ways to more actively involve MRSPA members in our advocacy.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive,
Frederick County; Tom Slater, MRSPA;
Governor Wes Moore



Tom Slater
MRSPA Legislative Committee
Chair



Delegate Jason Buckel, District 1B,
Allegany County; Tom Slater, MRSPA

Benefits of a MRSPA Membership



**MEMBER ONLY
BENEFITS**

Did you know that MRSPA offers a variety of benefits at discounted rates? Whether you became a member 20 years ago or last month, as a member of MRSPA, you have access to some fabulous benefits.

If you like to travel, not only do we offer international and domestic trips, but we also offer discounted parking at BWI at Fast Park and Relax. A wide range of services and products are discounted through the AMBA Passport Program, including rental cars, Dell computers, Skechers, dining, hotels, amusement park tickets, movie tickets, Costco memberships, and so much more. If you live near a BJ's Wholesale Club, we offer a discounted membership there.

Maybe you are thinking of downsizing or need to clean out the home of a loved one. Stress Free Solutions for Seniors can help with downsizing, packing, and moving to a new location. Oasis can help you locate a senior living community or assisted living facility in Maryland. If you are in need of dental, vision, Long-Term Care, medical air transport, life or other insurances, or hearing aids or an audiology appointment, AMBA, Academy Financial, and TruHearing are here to help.

Find more information about these benefits and more on our website at www.mrspa.org, click Benefits and/or Travel.

Local Association Community Service Awards

During the Annual Business Meeting each May, the MRSPA Community Service Committee recognizes local associations for work they do in their communities. A winner is selected from each of our three membership categories, small (1-199 members), medium (200-899 members), and large (900+ members). There were no nominations submitted by a small local association this year, so the committee selected two winners in the medium local category. Winning locals receive a certificate and \$150 to spend on continuing the work on their project. Awards were presented on May 6, 2025, by Kathy Campagnoli, MRSPA Community Service Committee Chair.



Our large local association winner was *Shepherd's Cove Shelter* project by Prince George's Public School Retirees Association (PGPSRA). Local association members provide hour long monthly informational sessions for the women and children at the center. The approved sessions for children include reading, math, science, and social skills. While adults focus on financial literacy, self-esteem building, yoga, goal setting, and mindfulness, among others. PGPSRA collaborates with other community organizations to provide the needed informational sessions.



One-Room Schoolhouse project was selected as a winner in the medium local category. Charles County Retired School Personnel Association (CCRSPA) has worked for decades to preserve the One-Room Schoolhouse in Port Tobacco. Members do everything from cleaning to roof repair. They serve as docents when the Schoolhouse is open to the public while also working to ensure the Schoolhouse is safe and clean for the second graders from CCPS who visit each year.



Washington County Retired Educational Personnel Association (WCREPA) was also selected as a winner in the medium local category for their *Adopt-A-Road* project. WCREPA members gather on MD 63 between Huyetts Crossroads and I-70 four times annually to clear the roadside of unsightly and unsafe trash. Members enjoy working together and their time outdoors beautifying the roadway. The honks and thumbs up from appreciative passers-by are a big perk of the service activity!

The MRSPA Community Service Committee applauds all our local associations for all they do in the community and encourages more local associations to submit nominations in 2026. Congratulations to all the winners!

MRSPA Help Wanted!

MRSPA's Standing Committees are looking for a few new faces. Meetings are held on Zoom, so no travel is required, even for members living out of state.

Standing Committees

- Bylaws
- Community Service
- Consumer Education
- Legislative
- Member Benefits
- Membership
- Public Relations
- Scholarship
- Travel



Please contact us at mrspa@mrspa.org or call 410-551-1517 with questions or to volunteer.

MRSPA Foundation Raffle Winners 2025

Winners of the 2025 *MRSPA Foundation* raffle were drawn following the May 6, 2025, Annual Business Meeting Program. Baskets were again created by Frankie McDonnell, MRSPA Secretary with included items fitting each basket theme. Tickets were drawn and baskets were awarded by Kathy Campagnoli, and Caroll Visintainer, Ed.D., Chairs of the MRSPA Community Service and Scholarship Committees respectively. First prize was \$300 cash, second prize was a \$175 Maryland themed basket, and five third place prize baskets of various themes valued at \$125 each.

Congratulations to all the winners!

- First Prize – Mary Lappe, Anne Arundel County
- Second Prize – Kathleen Hutner, Baltimore County
- Sports Lover Basket – Barbara Meyers, Baltimore City
- Bookworm Basket – Ronnie Bohn, Howard County
- Summer Picnic Basket – Dr. Debbie Chance, Talbot County
- Game Night Basket – Alicia Hardisky, Anne Arundel County
- Wine Lover Basket – Susan Rudy, Frederick County



Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets this year to support the *MRSPA Foundation*! We cannot continue providing scholarships and classroom grants to active school employees without your support and generosity. Raffle tickets for the 2026 *MRSPA Foundation* fundraiser will be available later this fall. Check the December 2025 edition of the *MRSPA News* for the form. Thank you in advance for your continued support!



Dr. Debbie Chance, Summer Picnic Basket;
Kathy Campagnoli, Community Service
Committee Chair



Alicia Hardisky, Game Night Basket



Susan Rudy, Wine Basket

MRSPA Masthead Winner!

The MRSPA Public Relations Committee congratulates Heidi Rothert for winning the *MRSPA News* masthead competition held this spring. You can see Heidi's winning masthead entry on this edition! Many thanks to Heidi and everyone who submitted a masthead for the competition!

"It's simple. At Osher, I learn new things from excellent instructors and make new friends with similar interests. What could be better?"

DEBBY VIVARI



"I belong to Osher at JHU because I like nurturing my mind and interacting with peers who share my interests. Through Osher, I'm exposed to different viewpoints from people locally, and from as far away as California... and even England!"

BILL LEWIS



"In-person classes provide an invigorating opportunity to socialize with other members, not only in class but over lunch or coffee. The Zoom classes are convenient and allow us to learn from instructors who are outside the Washington metropolitan area—as far away as Pennsylvania and California."

MILLIE ROGERS

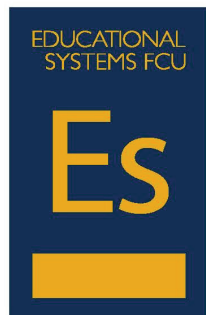
The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins offers enrichment classes, field trips, and travel opportunities for adults. Memberships include one, two, four, or six classes per semester. Keep your mind active and have fun like these members do.

For program details, visit osher.jhu.edu, call the staff cell phone at 240-595-2219, or email osher@jhu.edu.

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MRSPA CALENDAR

October 8.....AARP MD Andrus Awards
Kurtz's Beach, Pasadena

October 16.....MSCHF
*Ten Oaks Ballroom,
Clarksville*

November 11.....Veterans Day
MRSPA Office Open

November 27-28....Thanksgiving Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed

December 9.....Board of Directors Meeting
Hybrid



MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL 2025-2026



Spotlight on London, March 27, 2026, Collette Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel, Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887.

British Landscapes: England, Scotland, Wales, April 14, 2026, Collette Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel, Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887.

Canadian Rockies via Rail, June 17, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687,
<https://res.premierworlddiscovery.com>.

Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice, August 7, 2026, Mayflower Cruises & Tours, Liz Unger at 443-904-4540, or Tim Landoli at 386-569-7365.

Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, October 2, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687,
<https://res.premierworlddiscovery.com>.

Canada & New England, October 8-17, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247.

Hawaii, October 31– November 7, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247.

Check our website at 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: G5-28192 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.