

2023 Scholarship Winners Honored

For the second time, four scholarships were awarded to outstanding applicants! Typically, only three have been awarded, but due to the overwhelming need demonstrated once again by the applicants and the generosity of our donors, the MRSPA Board of Directors approved an additional scholarship this year.

This year's scholarship recipients included the following:



Zachary M. Dodson is a sixth-grade science teacher at Havre de Grace Middle School in Harford County Public Schools. Although he was hired provisionally, he plans to pursue a Master of Arts in Teaching degree with a secondary science certification. Zachary hopes to "create unique experiences for my students in the future and truly make my classroom one where students can explore their curiosities in ways that elevate their experiences." His background as a meteorologist has enabled him to provide these experiences to his students thus far.



Harper W. Gambill is a special education teacher at Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts (#430) in Baltimore City Public Schools. He holds a conditional certification at the present time, but he plans to pursue a Master's degree with a secondary ELA and Special education 6th-Adult certification. Harper states, "One of my biggest strengths is my ability to connect with individual students and let them know that I am personally invested in them by tailoring lessons to meet their specific interests and needs." Harper's students have unique needs and face a myriad of barriers that he hopes he can help them overcome.



Amanda Glenn MacKenzie is an art teacher at George Washington Carver Elementary School in St. Mary's County. While she currently holds a conditional certification, she is enrolled in a Post-Baccalaureate Certification in Teaching program. She also plans to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree in order to be certified to teach art and stay in her current position. Her passion for art is evident in her application as she stated, "Art is powerful in so many ways. Art supports social emotional learning and self-expression. Art can be completely frivolous or totally functional. Art encourages and develops creative problem solving. I teach art because I believe in the importance of art ..."



Shaniqua N. Thompson is a Behavioral Support Specialist at Gov. Thomas Johnson Middle School in Frederick County Public Schools. She holds a Master's degree in social work, but is currently pursuing teacher certification in the area of special education. She believes that this "will contribute to my goal of growing in my current position and will further equip me with the skills that are paramount to teaching our students the necessary behavioral interventions and socio-emotional skills that can be a contributing factor to the improvement of not just their education and scholastic abilities but their overall quality of life, especially for our underprivileged and oppressed populations of students."

We congratulate each of our scholarship recipients! Funds for these scholarships were raised through raffle ticket sales and envelope donations. Additional funds are raised through the returns on the scholarship fund investments in the MRSPA Foundation. The Scholarship Committee would like to thank those who purchased raffle tickets and/or made monetary contributions.

Dr. Debra Chance, Scholarship Committee Chair 2022-23





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Carla Duls

Even though I've been retired for 23 years, I still find myself getting caught up in the excitement of an upcoming school year! I vividly recall my father taking my brother and me to the local business supply store in Cumberland to purchase goodies to carry in my shiny new pencil box. Many years later, there were quick dashes to the college bookstore to buy the tomes that would introduce me to new ideas and worlds. For 30 years, Office Depot was the go-to place for double edge tape, bulletin board decorations, and cardboard file boxes.

Although no Amazon Prime school purchases were made this year, I have been busy preparing for another year of MRSPA activities. Local presidents met in July, while the Board of Directors met in early August. There were many new faces in attendance! We welcomed President-Elect, Betty Weller, Kent County; Secretary, Sharyn Doyle, Anne Arundel County; and Area III North Director, Dr. Debbie Chance, Talbot County. Five new Committee Chairs were introduced: Bylaws, Patrycia Pickett, Baltimore City; Legislation, Thomas Slater, Frederick County; Member Benefits, Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Prince George's County; Public Relations, Lynn Cox, Calvert County; and Scholarship, Dr. Carol Visintainer, Caroline County. In addition, Ayana English-Brown was appointed to the Board as the new State Retirement/Pension System Trustee. Many committees have already met to plan their work for 2023-2024, and my calendar is filling up with dates for visiting with local associations as well as dates for attending the AARP Andrus Awards event and the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame program. Yes, another year has begun!

MRSPA News

is published five times each year by the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

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Debbie J. Hance

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- President.....Carla Duls
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- Vice President.....Nancy Gordon
- Secretary.....Sharyn Doyle
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This past year, the *MRSPA and the Locals Care* initiative proved without a doubt that our members give generously of their time, talent, and treasures to provide assistance to their communities and education. If we are going to be able to continue this culture of giving, both the state and local associations need to develop effective strategies to reach the tech savvy retirees of today. To this end, the virtual Leadership Workshop held on September 26 focused on **Engaging Current and Potential Members** electronically, including emphasis on slogans or mottos, getting to know current retirees, the importance of a local website, *(Continued on page 4)*

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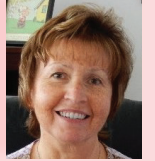
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From the

Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



As most of you know, summer is when MRSPA processes membership renewals for the new membership year, in addition to many other tasks. We appreciate that so many of you have sent your dues payments for the 2024 membership year and encourage those of you who have not yet to do so as soon as possible. We cannot survive and continue our work without you and your financial, physical, and moral support.

Recently, a couple of members asked us what they get for their dues and why our dues are so high. Generally, your membership dues provide pension protection and legislative advocacy, access to a variety of member benefits at discounted rates, opportunities for leadership development, social and travel options, and access to the latest MRSPA information.

Following is a partial list of how your \$45 annual dues are used to further the mission of MRSPA.

- An all-volunteer Board of Directors, Executive Committee and 11 Standing Committees (and the accompanying preparation and follow-up work)
- A rented office in Odenton
- Office machines/equipment, internet, office supplies, phones, computers
- Excellent customer service—all emails and calls are answered promptly
- Membership renewal processing and monthly membership reports to locals
- Dues payment processing to local associations monthly
- Five editions of the *MRSPA News* newsletter (paper and electronic copies)

- Six bi-monthly editions of the *Consumer Connection* (electronic)
- Annual Business Meeting; Leadership and Legislative Workshops; 2 Local Presidents' Meetings; 2 food bank, a school supply and a Toys for Tots drives
- *MRSPA Foundation* raffle including staff created gift basket prizes
- Legislative Aide, a registered Maryland lobbyist, who works directly with the Legislative Committee, creates the Legislative Update shared with members, lobbies legislators and provides testimony on bills before the legislature
- Create, publish, and distribute thousands of brochures, fliers, applications and folders including the new member and pre-retirement folders of information
- Create and mail 2 billing notices, along with 2 blind recruitment mailings
- Create, publish and distribute the Annual Meeting Program, Memorial Booklet, and Leadership Manual
- Maintain and update our MRSPA website and Facebook page
- Provide salary to 2 full-time and 2 part-time staff who carry out the work of the association, along with our IT, bookkeeping, and CPA contractors, among others

MRSPA does all of this and much more on a \$500,000 annual budget. I hope this summary helps you see the value in your \$45 annual dues. We truly cannot do any of this without you and we sincerely thank you for your membership and support.

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.

2023 Individual Community Service Awards Presented

Capping off our yearlong focus on our local associations and the many community service activities they support was the selection and presentation of our 2023 Community Service Awards during the May 7, 2023, Annual Business Meeting.

This year's nominees for individual recognition were Wanda Molock, Caroline County; Anne Humphrey, Cecil County; Kathy Burtman, Dorchester County; Debbie Thackston, Frederick County; Terri Mullikin, Kent County; Debbie Banister, Washington County and Allen Brown, Wicomico County. The MRSPA Community Service Committee thanks and congratulates all the nominees for their many and varied accomplishments!



Allen Brown, Wicomico County, was selected as the Outstanding Individual Award winner. Mr. Brown's dedication to his community is evidenced by over 160 hours a month volunteering in many civic and non-profit activities. Allen is a member of the Rotary Club where he helps select scholarship winners, delivers dictionaries to schools, and reviews requests from others for grants, while also delivering for Meals on Wheels. He works with Parks and Rec to provide afternoon programs for at-risk youth, and helps building wheelchair ramps and other small house repairs that are completed with the Chesapeake Housing Commission. Allen is also a member of the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, reviewing applications for

financial assistance, conducting field visits, and making recommendations for support. Allen serves on several other Boards, assisting youth and others in need. On the Wor-Wic Community College Board, Allen helps oversee the budget, assists in developing programs and fundraisers. In WRSPA, Allen is the pre-retirement chairperson sending welcome letters to new retirees encouraging membership. He is active in collecting for the United Way and many other aspects of his local association.



Wanda Molock, Caroline County, won Honorable Mention for her 170 hours a month of volunteering. She also volunteers an additional 200 hours a year as the volunteer coordinator of the MLK, Jr. Day/Unity March/Day of Service. This county-wide event honors Dr. King and is designed to unify the community. Partnering with the Lockerman School Association Wanda and her co-coordinator plan and hold the event with the help of elected officials and civic organizations. Wanda also created Angels in Service, a volunteer medical transportation ministry driving people to appointments, the bank, grocery store, or pharmacy four days each week. She also oversees the entire scholarship program of the Lockerman School Association while serving as a community health outreach worker assisting seniors and others in accessing services. Wanda is also an active member of many other church and civic organizations.

Watch the next edition of *MRSPA News* for our local association project winners!

(President, continued from page 2)

and how to start a Facebook group. The presenter was Amina Makhdoom Lynch, President, Fresnel Consulting. For those who were unable to attend the workshop, it is available on the MRSPA website. I encourage chapter presidents, membership chairs and those in charge of local websites and/or Facebook pages/groups to review the content and formulate a plan of action to meet the needs and interests of the current retirees. In addition, members of the Public Relations Committee, under the leadership of Lynn Cox, are available to assist locals in setting up websites and/or Facebook groups. Contact the MRSPA office for additional information.

MRSPA has most definitely and enthusiastically begun another year of serving its members! I invite you to become an active member of your local association and encourage you to join the MRSPA excitement by participating on a state committee! New faces and ideas are always welcome! As always, each of us is a member of the membership committee at large. Do your part to encourage recent retirees to become a member of both your local and the state association.



Foundation Raffle Winners Announced

Following the 2023 Annual Business Meeting and Program, winners of the *MRSPA Foundation* raffle were drawn. Prizes were awarded by then Scholarship Committee Chair Dr. Debbie Chance and Community Service Committee Chair Kathy Campagnoli. First prize was \$300 cash, second prize was a \$150 Maryland themed basket, and five third place prize baskets of various themes valued at \$75 each.

Congratulations to all the winners!

- First prize – Duncan Adams, Harford County
- Second prize – Janice Lindsay, Montgomery County
- Cooking basket – Judith Davis, Prince George’s County
- Sports Lovers basket – Max Muller, Anne Arundel County
- Movie Night basket – Crystal Francis, Baltimore City
- Spa basket – Lillian Hasbro, Montgomery County
- Wine Lovers basket – Addie Hill, Prince George’s County

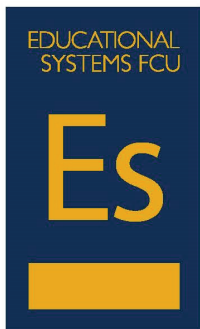


Max Muller, Winner
and Dr. Debbie Chance



Lillian Hasbro, Winner

Raffle tickets for the 2024 fundraiser will be available beginning with the next *MRSPA News* in December. Thank you in advance for your support!



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MRSPA CALENDAR

- October 2-5.....NRTA Advocacy Conference
Washington, DC
- October 19.....MSCHF Induction and Luncheon
Clarksville, MD
- November 10.....Veteran's Day Observed
MRSPA Office Open
- November 23-24.....Thanksgiving Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- November 28.....Giving Tuesday
Virtual Food Bank Drive



**MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL
 2023-2024**



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

Normandy, Paris & Seine River Cruise, April 16 - 24, 2024 or October 29 - November 6, 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 or Liz Unger 443-904-4540

Rivers & Rails of Texas, September 15 - 22, 2024, (Mayflower Cruises & Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel) Contact Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887 or 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 or Liz Unger 443-904-4540

Check our website at www.mrspa.org, click **Travel** to locate more information on trips.

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