



MTA News

A Message From Your MTA President Christopher White

MTA News

Middletown Teachers' Association

AFT Local 2831

1 Beattie Avenue

Middletown, NY 10940

845-343-1517

845-343-4867 Fax

<http://middletownta.ny.aft.org>

PRESIDENT

Christopher White

VICE PRESIDENT

Kerry Luba

SECRETARY

Stephanie Stopa

TREASURER

Kristine Savarese

© Middletown Teachers

Association. All rights reserved.

The 2015-16 school year has been an interesting year so far. We start every September asking the question: "What is the year going to bring?" As events of this school year have unfolded, though, many of us are now asking ourselves: "What next?! What else could happen?" Listening to various concerns from members, I have noticed one common strand from the beginning of the year to present: WE ARE STRESSED OUT.

Which brings me to write the following: How do we fix the negative feelings that have permeated every aspect of our professional lives? How do we gain strength when we feel so defeated? Sometimes, I question if the union can even fix that. How do you fix a feeling? How do you fix someone's state of mind when we are so spiritually beaten? Some of us want to "shift the monkey" and make it someone else's problem. Some have said, "Road Trip!" Some have even suggested a pep talk from Felicia Watson.

On a serious note, as I ponder this problem, I reflect on my journey through this union. I remember my first rep council meeting, thinking: *What am I supposed to be doing?; Why is there a bus trip, and why is it on every single agenda?; Why do they care about the end-of-year social?* Now that I look back, I believe the answer is quite simple.

The negative aspects of our profession often consume every fiber of our being, and the daily stresses that happen in our classrooms/buildings often overshadow the social aspect of our union. How many of us socialize with members from other buildings? How many of us even know what the situations are in other buildings? Two summers ago, I went to NYSUT Leadership, which took place in Washington DC. It was a week-long intensive training on NYSUT history, the role of unions, and how to be a better leader. Upon arrival, we were forced to partake in an icebreaker of finding individuals that fit certain characteristics. At the time, I thought: *We're adults--why are we doing this?* The presenter then stated that by the end of the week we would have friends for life. I initially scoffed at the idea that I would stay in contact with anyone, but as the week came to a close, I truly felt that I was part of a bigger picture. The stresses that others felt were the same stresses that I felt. Through the social aspects of the union, when I now attend functions, I know that Middletown has support ranging from Buffalo all the way to Long Island.

Newsletter Submissions

Newsletter submissions can be

sent to Jennifer Sitko at

jennsitko@yahoo.com and copied

to Stephanie Stopa at

[ssstopa.mta@gmail.com](mailto:sstopa.mta@gmail.com)

The submission deadline for the

next newsletter is June 3rd.

Please use private emails for
newsletter articles.

Summer Leadership Raises Autism Awareness

~ Lori Price

April is Autism Awareness Month. I'm sure many of you have heard the phrase, "Light It Up Blue" circling around. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is an important condition for educators to understand, as it is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. One in sixty-eight children are affected and boys are four times more likely than girls to have a form of ASD.

I had the privilege of attending the NYSUT Leadership Conference this past summer. While there, I was able to participate in a workshop that focused on autism. This was especially exciting to me because it really hits home. My nephew and the child of one of my close friends are both affected by ASD. This was a huge factor in my decision to take this particular workshop. I wanted to learn more about autism so that I would be able to better understand their condition and actions.

The workshop started off by giving many different facts, figures and information about autism in general and the Autism Speaks organization. One thing that stuck out among these facts was a quote that they shared, "if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism." This is so indicative of the reason why it is so essential for educators to understand the condition; it does not affect people in the same way.

At the end of the workshop, the presenters offered a resource to help aid the school community to understand and support students with autism. I believe this resource to be extremely valuable since the diagnosis of ASD changed from 1 in 106 to 1 in 68 between 2000 and 2010. In the resource, you will find web, print, and video resources, strategies, assessments, and so much more. I urge all of you to take the time to check it out at www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/school-community-tool-kit.

President's Message Continued

continued from page 1

As members of the Middletown Teachers Association, we need to be unified. We need to stand together. We need to know that we are not alone. Undoubtedly, there will always be members who take issue with some decision or stance of the union, but by talking through our differences we can ultimately strengthen our union. Social functions like DARE Day, manning the OC Classic water stop, even the annual NYC bus trip, all serve a purpose. They help alleviate the stress of our jobs while fostering positive connections with members from other buildings, as well as members of our community. Therefore, I ask each of you to reach out and to get to know other members from our schools. Attend a social gathering. The community benefits when they see their teachers smiling as they scoop ice cream, or handing out supplies. Another benefit: it actually helps alleviate the stress of the day!

I look forward to seeing you out there.

New or New to You

~ Stacey Atlas

We are all in different places when it comes to applying for our Professional Certificate or recording our 175 hours of PD. Below are some links to help assist you in the process.

Please reach out to me with any specific questions as I will continue to look into assistance when applying for certification.

Applying for Certification:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/pathways.html>

Certification Questions:

<http://eservices.nysed.gov/teach/certhelp/CertRequirementHelp.do>

Types of Certificates:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/typesofcerts.html>

PD (175 hrs) Requirement for Certification:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-prof.html>

School District Responsibility:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-sd.html>

Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faq.html>

How to keep your professional account updates on PD:

1) All **coursework PD** must be recorded on My Learning Plan (MLP). There is a place where you can **add** courses outside Middletown School District (grad, conferences, etc.). All coursework must be on MLP.

2) All **PD meetings** (faculty, M-I, department, grade level/cluster, etc.) must be recorded on the PD sheet that the district created (PD sheets can be found on the District website).

3) All PD Record Sheets must be sent to the Personnel Department at the Board of Education Office before the end of the school year.

Note: Personnel will upload all PD meetings to your account. However, they only do this once a year, at the end of the school year, so please be sure to have your PD record sheet in on time in order to receive credit for the PD you accumulated over the school year.

If you need additional assistance with inputting courses into MLP, please go to the district website:

*click on Staff Resources,

*scroll down to My Learning Plan; you will see links to assist you.

The MTA Helps Our Community

The MTA works tirelessly throughout the year to help not only our members, but also members of our community. From June 2015—June 2016, the MTA has put nearly \$8,000 back into the community. From monetary aid in scholarships, charities, and supplies, to time and manpower volunteered by our members, the MTA continues to be a strong presence in the community. Here are just some of the ways we have helped over the 2015-2016 school year:

Summer 2015

- College scholarship raffle/awards, Sports Camp tuition for eight students, MTA book bag giveaway, Orange Classic water stop, Run for Downtown, New Teacher Orientation, Marching Band donation

Fall 2015

- John Bringham Scholarship Concert program ad, Making Strides (\$1,700 was raised!)

Winter 2015/2016

- Grace Episcopal Church donation, MMS playbill ad, Hudson-Catskill Central Labor Council Scholarship, AFL-CIO

Spring 2016

- Twin Towers Drama Club donation, MHS Scholastic Bowl Team Scholarship for the National Academic Championship in Washington, D.C., Middletown Little League team sponsorship, Sports Camp tuition for six students, teacher appreciation, MTA social, College scholarship raffle/awards.

Dates to Remember

5/2 Rep. Agenda and Budget

5/3 Teacher Appreciation Day

5/4 Exec. Board

5/5 Board of Education Meeting

5/11 Rep. Council

5/17 Budget Vote

5/18 Board of Education Meeting

Exec. Board

5/23 Rep. Agenda and Budget

5/27-5/30 Memorial Weekend

MTA Benefit Fund

- Tom Blon

MTA Benefit Fund chairperson

MTA Benefit Fund Manager Needed

Position to commence July 1, 2016, stipend provided.

Responsibilities include:

-Review vision and legal plan eligibility lists.

-Review monthly billings.

-Prepare quarterly financial reports.

-Coordinate yearly Benefit Fund tax audit .

-Organize and distribute yearly tax liability notices.

-Assist Benefit Fund trustees in carrying out their duties.

Contact chairperson Tom Blon (tantblon@gmail.com) for details.