

Montgomery County Public Schools Retirees Association, Inc.



P.O. Box 4367 Rockville, MD 20849-4367

www.mcpsra.org

Volume 2024-25, Issue #4

April, 2025



PRESIDENT'S

MESSAGE

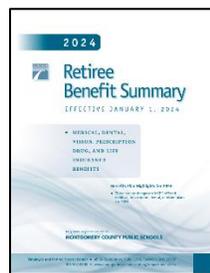
Dr. Debra Munk
President - MCPSRA

Dear Members:

Spring weather and increasing daylight are a welcome relief from the

gloom of the winter months.

In writing this message, I looked back at my last year's message. At that time, we were focusing on issues related to retiree benefits, including parity of coverage with active members, accurate calculations of the cost of retiree benefit plans, and premium holidays that were afforded to active members but not retirees. To address these concerns several board members testified before the Board of Education in February 2024 and met with the Board President and Vice President to express our concerns and ask for an investigation into the health plan calculations.



A meeting with the MCPS auditor last March, resulted in her investigating the issue and issuing a report. As a result of her report, we received assurances that discrepancies in benefit costs for retirees and actives would be corrected moving forward. There would be no more premium holidays for actives or retirees. And we were promised that regular meetings would be held with MCPSRA Board and MCPS financial staff to ensure that promises are kept and we are fully aware of any new developments, including the

result of negotiations. Finally, at a follow-up meeting with Superintendent Taylor, we were promised that our dental coverage now includes dental implants, and in FY26, hearing aids for pre-Medicare retirees would be covered. A lot has changed since my April 2024 message. MCPS is keeping its promises, and I am extremely proud of our work and the benefits we have assured for our members.

Our Retiree Homecoming Party on March 7, 2025 was a huge success. All retirees, regardless of membership in MCPSRA, were invited



March 7, Homecoming Party

to reconnect with their former colleagues. Refreshments, raffle baskets, and conversation corners were part of the program. There was a lot of hugging and laughter! We MCPS retirees have so much in common – having spent much of our adult lives working in the district. We hope to make this an annual event. You can see more pictures taken at the homecoming on page 10.

Our luncheons moved to Argyle Country Club this year. Argyle has offered better food, and thanks to our program co-chairs, we have featured wonderful speakers including Dana Hedgpeth, a Washington Post reporter and former Sherwood graduate.

(Continued on page 4.)

MCPSRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

Officers:

President	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Vice President	Reginald J. Ott	301-452-5449
Immediate Past President	Dr. Carol M. Dahlberg	301-253-2212
Parliamentarian	Fred S. Evans	301-706-3993
Recording Secretary	Marla Caplon	240-793-8288
Treasurer	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969

Committee Chairs:

Archives	Marti Gray	301-641-8896
Budget Development	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969
Community Service	Judy Mills	240-223-7271
Consumer Education	Deb Berner	301-455-8608
Financial Review	Bill Gregory	410-241-8731
Hospitality/Luncheons	LeeAnn Kaye	301-598-5480
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Insurance and Benefits	J. Thomas Hickman	301-929-9660
Legislative	Fred S. Evans	301-706-3993
MCPSRA Projects	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Membership	Marti Gray	301-641-8896
--- Co-Chair	Becky Hubbard	240-643-8610
--- Co-Chair	Galit Zolkower	301-570-6424
Newsletter - Editor	Dr. Russell G. Wright	301-806-7252
Nominating	Dr. Carol M. Dahlberg	301-253-2212
Political Action	VACANT	
Public Relations	Dr. Dick Lipsky	301-318-0613
Recognition	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
Scholarships (MCPSRA)	Bill Stief	301-956-5891
Social Media	Christina Sutter	301-471-3637
Trips	Bernadette Rager	301-774-0345

February Luncheon: A Home Run!!



The February Luncheon/Business meeting was a winner! Over 100 retirees attended. The meeting began with School Board President Ms. Julie Yang sharing things happening in MCPS. After lunch, retirees heard Dana Hedgepeth, an MCPS graduate from Sherwood High School, talk about her experiences as a journalist and her stories of Indian boarding school survivors. Several of Ms. Hedgepeth's former teachers were present. Smiles and fond remembrances were shared.

Our next luncheon is April 24th. The speaker will be MCPS Superintendent Dr. Thomas Taylor. Dr. Taylor is a graduate of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

The MCPSRA service project supporting elementary school health rooms is progressing well. Bring your donations of new boys' and girls' underwear, socks, leggings, sweatpants to drop off at the April 24 luncheon. More details can be found on the MCPSRA website: <http://www.mcpsra.org>.

Also, continue to save bottle caps and bring them to support the Toolkits project. (Related article on page 3.)

If you have not yet attended an MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting, now's the time!! Come join the fun, find out what's happening, meet new people and renew friendships.

See the menu for the April 24 luncheon on page 11 of this newsletter. Reserve by April 16.

After the April luncheon there is only one left for this year; mark your calendar for June 12.

Hope to see you soon!

LeeAnn Kaye

Welcome New Members

Joined in January 2025

Eileen D. Lisker	110 S Jefferson St., Middletown, MD 21769	240-355-8453
Shirley A. Woody	505 Stockdale Dr., Lafayette, IN 47909	301-503-0359

Joined in February 2025

Cheryl A. Clark	11430 Neelsville Church Rd., Germantown, MD 20876	240-388-7690
Annette (Ann) Conley	19937 Stoney Point Way, Germantown, MD 20876	240-477-5483
Robert Gibb	605 Concerto Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20901	301-525-8066
Sandra Jacobs	605 Concerto Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20901	240-688-0281
Colleen Loomis	16242 Whitehaven Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20906	301-570-0873
Terri C. Zeigler	12312 Clement Ln., Silver Spring, MD 20902	301-593-3850

(President’s Message continued from page 1)

At the upcoming April luncheon, our new Superintendent (Dr. Thomas Taylor) will address us. You won’t want to miss this event!

MCPSRA is changing. Not only are we representing retirees by fighting for benefits issues, now we are focusing on getting folks together – both virtually and through activities...such as luncheons, service projects, happy hours (see picture on the right), virtual presentations, and parties. In other words, leaving MCPS does not have to mean the end of our relationships.



Thanks for being a member. Hope to see you at the April luncheon.

Warm regards,
Debra Munk

Don’t Miss Future Email Blasts!

Members, please monitor your spam/junk folders periodically so you won’t miss timely or important information through the Constant Contact email service we use. Also, if you unsubscribe from the Constant Contact list you will no longer receive newsletters and important announcements.



Consumer Education for April-May 2025 by Deb Berner

Happy spring! As the weather warms and summer approaches, flowers begin to bloom, and more people, animals—and unfortunately, scammers—are out and about. Below, you'll find important tips to keep in mind for travel planning, spring cleaning, and energy savings.

*Smart Travel Planning: Safe and Budget-Friendly Tips for Seniors

With warmer weather, many of us plan trips to visit family, enjoy a vacation, or explore new places. However, travel scams and unexpected expenses can turn a dream trip into a costly mistake.

- Book with Reputable Sources – Use trusted travel agencies, airlines, and hotel websites. Be wary of deals that seem too good to be true.
- Avoid Travel Scams – Watch out for fake vacation rental listings, unsolicited “free trip” offers, and high-pressure time-share sales. Always verify bookings directly.
- Know Your Travel Insurance – Read the fine print on travel insurance policies. Ensure coverage includes medical emergencies, trip cancellations, and lost luggage.
- Be Aware of Hidden Fees – Airlines and hotels may charge for baggage, seat selection, or resort fees. Review total costs before booking.
- Secure Important Documents – Carry copies of passports, ID, and emergency contacts. Use a hotel safe for valuables.
- Stay Alert Online – Avoid using public Wi-Fi for financial transactions or entering personal information while traveling.
- Watch for Senior Discounts – Many airlines, hotels, and attractions offer discounts to seniors—ask before booking.

*Energy-Saving Tips for Warmer Months: Lower Bills & Avoid Scams

As temperatures rise, so can energy bills. Here's how you can stay comfortable while keeping costs down:

- Use a Programmable Thermostat – Setting the AC to adjust automatically can save money while maintaining comfort.
- Seal Drafts and Close Blinds – Keeping blinds closed during the hottest part of the day and sealing gaps around doors/windows can help reduce cooling costs.
- Beware of Energy-Saving Scams – Scammers may pose as utility companies, offering fake discounts or requesting payment in gift cards—always verify directly with your provider.
- Look for Legitimate Rebates – Some energy companies offer rebates for installing energy-efficient appliances—check official websites, not unsolicited offers.
- Unplug Unused Devices – Electronics and appliances still draw power even when off. Use power strips to switch off multiple devices easily.



- Service Your AC Unit – Regular maintenance helps improve efficiency and extends the life of your air conditioning system.

***Key points for Spring Cleaning Scams:**

- Fake Cleaning & Repair Services – Scammers may offer home cleaning, gutter repairs, or driveway sealing at low prices but take payment upfront and disappear. Always check credentials and reviews before hiring.
- Pressure Tactics for Unnecessary Work – Be cautious of unsolicited workers claiming you need urgent repairs. Get multiple estimates and don't feel pressured to make quick decisions.
- Donation & Junk Removal Scams – Fake charities may collect unwanted items or money for a "good cause." Verify organizations through sites like Charity Navigator before donating.
- Identity Theft Risks – Shredding old documents is smart, but be wary of fake shredding services that may steal personal information. Use a reputable company or a home shredder.
- Phony Air Duct & HVAC Cleaners – Some scammers exaggerate problems in your HVAC system to overcharge you. Always research companies and get a second opinion.
- Bogus Pest Control Services – Fraudsters may offer fake extermination services, especially for termites. Verify licensing and get written agreements before paying.

*Please check out the recent **Consumer Connection** newsletters on the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association site at <https://mrspa.org> for more updates and information.

(GARDENING... Continued from page 3)

You were given the skills and tools necessary to become a master at your trade. Over the years you fed and nurtured these seeds in the students you taught and marveled at the results of your efforts as the children blossomed into young adults equipped for success in the future that lay before them. What a thrill it is when students return to let you see the adults they've become and to share with you the results of your hard work. These beautiful "blossoms" will outlive any flower or tree you planted in your yard! They will prosper and continue to grow in their own lives and careers, and just think, you planted the seeds to help them do that. So, yes, you can be proud of the "gardener" you were and continue to be for so many children.

Just as gardeners need the right tools, children need essential supplies to reach their full potential. For 20 years, our **Toolkits Project** has made a difference in the lives of thousands of needy children, and with your support, we will continue this mission. Kindergartners deserve the tools to begin their journey toward knowledge. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to keep this vital project going. Complete the form on page 3 and send it with a check payable to **MCPS Educational Foundation**. Help a child grow and thrive—thank you for being a lifelong gardener of learning in children!

Joan Donovan

Proposed Budget FY 2026							
ACTIVITIES:	Budget FY23	Actual FY2023	Budget FY 24	Actual FY24	Budget FY 25	Projected FY25	Proposed FY 2026
Archives	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Auditing/ Finance	\$1,400.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$19.05	\$150.00	\$50.00	\$100.00
Budget	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Committee for Montgomery	\$1,150.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Community Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$50.00)	\$500.00
Donations/Contributions from MCPSRA	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Hospitality	\$300.00	\$271.48	\$100.00	\$371.48	\$500.00	(\$300.00)	\$250.00
Insurance & Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Interfaith Works	\$2,000.00	\$1,200.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$1,000.00
Legislative	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Membership	\$1,000.00	\$759.49	\$1,500.00	\$2,259.49	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Newsletter	\$10,000.00	\$8,902.20	\$10,000.00	\$4,291.70	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Political Action	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Program	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Recognition	\$100.00	\$81.73	\$100.00	\$181.73	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Scholarship	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
Special Projects - Toolkits	\$2,500.00	\$104.99	\$2,500.00	\$226.00	\$1,000.00	\$250.00	\$250.00
Trip Committee	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Website	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Officers	\$500.00	\$344.82	\$500.00	\$844.82	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Contingency	\$150.00	\$387.61	\$950.00	\$1,337.61	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Total	\$32,500.00	\$25,252.32	\$32,000.00	\$12,831.88	\$34,500.00	\$29,250.00	\$30,000.00
Income/ Revenue/Transfers							
Advertising	\$0.00	\$510.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Membership Dues	\$32,500.00	\$31,670.00	\$31,500.00	\$33,055.00	\$34,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Total	\$32,500.00	\$32,180.00	\$32,000.00	\$33,555.00	\$34,500.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00

MCPSRA 2026 Budget Notes

The budget as presented above is balanced between anticipated revenue (dues) and projected expenses. The total of \$30,000 has been reduced from \$34,500 to reflect actual revenues received in the past 2 years and actual expenses. The only changes in the budget are an increase of \$500 in funds for our Community Services projects and a decrease in matching funds for Interfaith Works to reflect actual experience in FY 24 and FY 25.

Community Service Update by Judy Mills

Your continuous and generous donations of Elementary School children’s new underwear, socks, leggings and sweatpants are what continues to build the success of this year’s MCPSRA Service Project! We received a number of items during our February Luncheon and we’re hoping to take these items to an elementary school once identified through principal feedback. If you haven’t already, please mark your calendars now and plan a donation during our April or June luncheons. Or, mail a check to MCPSRA, PO Box 4367, Rockville, MD 20849. Please note “Service Project” on the memo line and we will do the shopping for you! (Also note, your contributions are not tax deductible for this service project.) Thanks to Javell, Kay K., Beth H. and Tom for your monetary donations to help round out our garment needs!! We’re so grateful for your participation!! The current donation is being provided to Glen Haven Elementary School.

In February, in spite of the frigid weather, several MCPSRA members visited Interfaith Works in Rockville, MD to sort and hang donated clothing. The group enjoyed visiting while helping others. Interfaith Works will value a few hours a week of your time sorting and hanging clothing or shelving canned and non-perishable foods. All are welcome, please join us at a future event. Also, if you're interested in being the on-site coordinator on a future date, please contact me so we can set the date and I will notify our members.

We're sorting together again and you're invited! MCPSRA [Toolkits Project](#) meets weekly and is looking for volunteers to work on toolkits assembly. We're currently sorting and bagging thousands of donated plastic bottle caps of all shapes and sizes to be included in the kits! This task is enormous and volunteers will fill about 4000 self-close bags with bottle caps! Our team of volunteers will assemble about 2000 kits for distribution to incoming kindergartners who participate in the [Title I Extended Learning Summer Adventures In Learning \(SAIL\) Program](#) at select MCPS elementary summer school sites. **Want to help with kits assembly?** Send your name, phone number and email address to Pam at pame2k1@aim.com

The Truancy Prevention Program (TPP) is actively recruiting volunteers! As a part of the crime prevention initiatives established by the MD State's Attorney's Office, TPP works to improve attendance in MCPS by discovering the root causes of truancy and assisting students with issues that impact attendance. The program serves 26 MCPS schools and additional Volunteers are needed to expand our Program! Serving as a volunteer Mentor or Facilitator is a rewarding way to utilize your expertise. The program recommends a ten-week commitment of 2-3 hours a week. Volunteers meet with students who are chronically absent, helping students set goals to improve their attendance. Students who complete the program successfully are invited to a graduation ceremony at the end of each semester. You can see the impact to students and their proud families as they gather to celebrate their successes. For more information, please contact Rebecca Marcolini at 240-777-7370 or email Rebecca.Marcolini@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov

The King Barn Dairy MOOseum, located in South Germantown (Maryland) Recreational Park & SoccerPlex, is looking for adult volunteers who enjoy working with children and adults. Become a docent leading school groups touring the center in the spring, and/or work on weekends when the MOOseum is open to the public. Other volunteer opportunities include helping with office paperwork, researching local history and creating exhibits and crafts. If you enjoy working with people and learning local history, it is not necessary to have background in farming and cows, the MOO is a place for you. Please contact Peg Donnellon at email margaretdonnellon@yahoo.com or call/text 301-254-6575.



It's Grand to be 55+ in Montgomery County, MD! Be sure to check out classes, offerings and multiple volunteer opportunities across Montgomery County, but specifically please check out the numerous opportunities at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD 20906. At Holiday Park, Seniors 60 or over can register to sign up for lunch! Please call for more information, (240) 777-4999, or visit the web at www.mocorec.com for information and more.

[Interfaith Works \(IW\) https://www.iworksmc.org/](https://www.iworksmc.org/) There are multiple ways to serve this multifaceted organization. Interfaith Works (IW) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides emergency shelter, supportive housing, essential needs, and employment programs to over 35,000 residents of Montgomery County, MD, every year.

[Montgomery County, MD: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/) Discover opportunities to serve in MoCo. Out of County opportunities appear on this site, too.

[Montgomery County Public Schools https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-leadership/volunteer/](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-leadership/volunteer/) Volunteering isn't just for parents and caregivers of MCPS students.

[Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission MNCPPC https://www.mncppc.org/197/Volunteer-Opportunities](https://www.mncppc.org/197/Volunteer-Opportunities) Help out at local County/State Parks across the DMV.

MCPSRA encourages members to participate in community service and ensures appropriate recognition for your community service work, please tell us what you're doing! The need for volunteers has never been greater and your service does not go unnoticed. We appreciate all you do for the greater good.

MCPSRA Election of Officers

The election of MCPSRA officers will be held at the April 24, 2025, luncheon. Positions to be filled are president, vice-president, and secretary. (These positions are two-year positions.)

The following are the nominations for president, vice-president and secretary:

- President: Bill Gregory
- Vice-President: Marla Caplon
- Secretary: Ranona Heller

Bill Gregory, former MCPS principal, currently serves as the MCPSRA chair of the Financial Review Committee. His interests include organizing social groups in Frederick, wellness and travel.

Marla Caplon, formerly MCPS Director of Food and Nutrition Services and of Student Wellness, currently serves as secretary of MCPSRA. She is involved with Manna Food Center and Montgomery County's Food Bank where she formerly served as Board Chair.

Ranona (Ronnie) Heller retired from MCPS in July 2018 after 40 years of service as an instructional assistant, a high school teacher and administrator. She continues to serve MCPS as an administrative substitute. Ronnie is a product of MCPS (K-12), as well Montgomery College, University of MD, and Hood College. Currently she is enjoying traveling and making memories for and with her six grandchildren.

In Memoriam

We are unable to include our usual list of MCPSRA members who recently passed away. The MCPS Employee and Retiree Service Center failed to provide that information by our publication deadline.

More Photos from the March 7th Homecoming



MCPSTRA LUNCHEON AND BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, April 24, 2025
Argyle Country Club
14600 Argyle Club Road
Silver Spring, MD 20906

If MCPS is closed, luncheon is cancelled. Delayed opening, luncheon is held.

Gathering: 11:00 a.m. Business Meeting: 11:30 a.m. Luncheon: Noon Program: 1:00 p.m.

Menu Choices

Grilled Salmon with Lemon Dill Sauce
Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables \$40.00

OR

Chicken Marsala with Mushroom Wine Sauce
Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables \$40.00

OR

Battered Eggplant Parmesan Napoleon w/
Marinara, Ricotta, Parmesan and Mozzarella \$40.00

Entrees include: Appetizer, Dessert,
Rolls and Butter, Coffee, Hot and
Iced Tea, Lemonade
Appetizer is Crispy Fried Ravioli w/
Tomato Basil Sauce and Shaved
Parmesan Cheese

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Thursday, April 24, 2025

Circle Entrée Choice

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Chicken Fish

Email address: _____ Vegetarian

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Chicken Fish

Email address: _____ Vegetarian

Total amount enclosed: _____

Reservation form and check must be received by Wednesday, April 16, 2025. Make check payable to

MCPSTRA. Mail to:

LeeAnn Kaye

3210 N. Leisure World Blvd. #306

Silver Spring, MD 20906

For information: LeeAnn Kaye 301-598-5480 or Trish Bendler 301-540-5160

geolakaye@gmail.com

ANY FOOD ALLERGIES? PLEASE LET ME KNOW!!!

Montgomery County Public Schools
MCPS Retirees Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4367
Rockville, MD 20849

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 201
Suburban, MD

DATED MATERIAL



**MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting
ARGYLE COUNTRY CLUB**

**Gathering: 11:00 a.m.; Business Meeting: 11:30 am.
Luncheon: 12:00 Noon; Program 1:00 pm.**

Next Luncheon Date April 24, 2025

The MCPSRA Newsletter is published in October, December, February, April, and June.
This is the April 2025 issue.