



# The BEES Beacon

## BEES

### BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

### Union Strong



Volume 33 Issue 3

March/April 2020

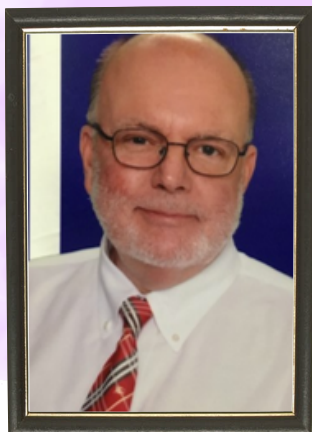
AFT Local 3037/NYSUT Local 22-220

**From the Lighthouse in the East to the Lighthouse in the West**

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# JIM BECK ~ PRESIDENT



## You Are The Union

Hello, my sisters and brothers. Given the continuing effects of the Coronavirus, this will be a somewhat abbreviated version of the Beacon. Well, what can I say? Many of us are reeling at the pace of the changes to our everyday lives in the age of the COVID-19 virus. Not only have our personal lives been upended, but so have the methods with which we deliver our educational and support services.

Firstly, let me say that you have been doing a remarkable job with little to no prep. You have been learning as you go. Not the optimal training that should have been provided, but as usual, you show your professionalism. The speed with which you have adapted to these trying times, with creativity, determination and dedication has been an example to our component districts and to the Agency. You reflect the quality of our membership. The students we serve are lucky to have you in their lives.

One thing we can agree upon is that we all have enough stress in our lives. You are faced with everything from being worried about getting sick or spreading the virus to older family members, to having to take care of your children while trying to juggle your Agency responsibilities, to getting enough food, toilet paper and paper towels. Yes, my friends, these are stressful times and our union has been working double time to pursue all your questions and concerns.





# JIM BECK ~ PRESIDENT

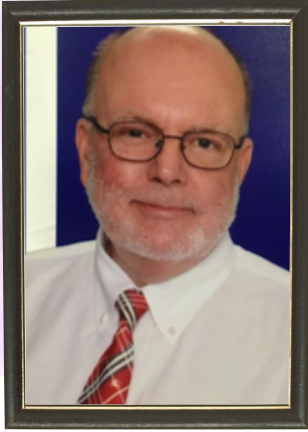


## You Are The Union

Let me assure you that as long as you are fulfilling your daily job duties with due diligence, professionalism and good faith, then you are not liable to any job actions against you. I will tell you that in my daily discussions with different heads at HR, I have never had any inclination that the Agency is being hyper critical or punitive. In fact, I have gotten the opposite impression. That being said, I want to assure you that through your union membership, you are indemnified against actions being taken against your jobs as long as you continue to act in good faith, so take a breath and relax. No one is expecting you to put in 12 or 15 hour work days; you do what you can within a reasonable timeframe. I know many of you have been putting in many extra hours to both complete your workload and to learn new technologies. You should also know that we are working with the Agency to streamline your paperwork load. Much of what is required can be obtained from sources like IEP direct. Asking for duplicates of the same information seems frivolous, wasteful and stressful. After all, why reinvent the wheel? I understand that, and we are working with administration on making things easier to work with. We need to keep things in perspective. We have been on a steep learning curve and by we, I mean both staff and administration. We have been putting in many extra hours. We are learning together. So take a deep breath, take a walk and help keep some of our local food service providers in business.

♥ UNIONS

# JIM BECK ~ PRESIDENT



## You Are The Union

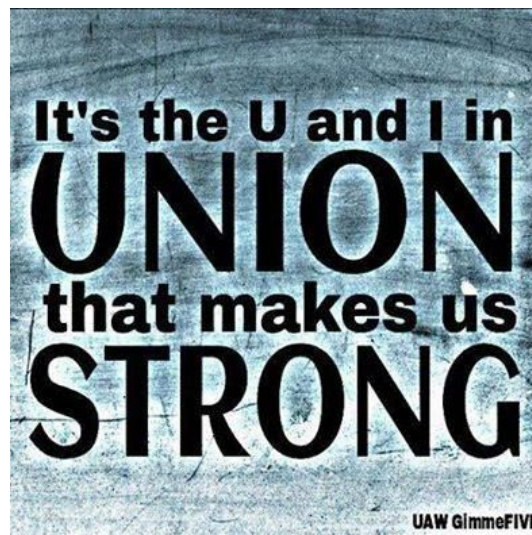
Regarding Spring Break, please see my letter to the members for the specific details (letter on pp. 5-7)

During these hectic times, we continue to work on the regular union issues, including protecting your rights in our contracts. We are now looking towards those things that we anticipate will occur after this crisis has passed. You should know that we anticipated this crisis weeks before many others reacted. The same holds true for our thoughts of the future and planning for different outcomes. We (your union) are proactive, thoughtful and deliberate; we are planning for whatever may come.

My prayers go out to each of you. Stay safe, practice all of the COVID-19 protocols and know that as long as you are working your jobs in good faith, you can relax.

Unity and strength,

*Jim*





Good morning my Sisters and Brothers. As you know, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order, ordering all districts to remain open.

Districts “must continue to provide remote instruction for students, meals for students, and childcare for essential workers every weekday between April 1, 2020 and April 14, 2020, even if the district is scheduled to be on spring break during that time,” the state Education Department said Monday. It was part of a department clarification on school calendar requirements in light of the executive orders through the governor’s office. Due to this we are required to give up our spring break.

In the interest of full disclosure, I was only notified of this early Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. I received a call from Dr. Lutz in the early afternoon. Up until that time I thought that we were going to have our break. Things changed with the Governor’s executive order. As you may or may not be aware, state law supersedes contractual law. We have little choice but to comply.

I know that many of you have been giving 150 percent to your respective jobs and on behalf of the parents and students of Eastern Suffolk BOCES and the BEES I thank you. Instructional, itinerant and support staff have been doing an outstanding job in this most difficult and challenging of times. I understand that the stresses are tremendous. Many of you are working from 6 am to 6 pm and all this while juggling your own day care issues. Life is hitting us on all sides, family obligations, work related stress and the ever-present worry that there may be a ventilator in our, or a loved one’s future. We all need a break, we know this. I ask that you be mindful when “planning” for this week. Be *creative* in how to have contact with students. Please allow for and understand that many of them

like us, have religious holy days that need to be honored and may be unavailable for daily distance learning at different times between 4/9-4/19.

I understand that we are under intense pressure, but THIS WILL END. We will come through it, a bit worn down but stronger than ever.

I would just like to share my thoughts as to our role in this fight and be assured my sisters and brothers this is a fight against all of the chaos caused by covid-19. The governor has stated the case plainly. We are at war. We are not being shot at or bombed but the effects of this pandemic are as wide ranging and devastating as a shooting war on both the health and economic fronts. Never in our nation's history has our economy collapsed so quickly and widely. In comparison the economy of the United States in the Great depression collapsed in slow motion and was statistically not as high as the numbers we see now. All this has occurred in a mere few weeks. We need to step up and do our part. All of us are on the front lines. No one gets to hide. If we lose our break because of government decree, then that is the way it is. Tens of millions of our fellow citizens are without jobs on this April 1<sup>st</sup>. We are working and being paid. Think of those unemployed as they scramble to pay their bills and survive, and we are worried about our five days. They would view us as petty, ungrateful and short sighted to say the least. And my friends think of how this would be viewed by our component districts that are working, the politicians that normally support us and the Governor in Albany. Make no mistake my sisters and brothers after this is over, we will need friends in districts and in Albany more than ever. It is my opinion that after this crisis is resolved then we will have to face the unfolding effects of the economic disaster.

We have negotiated to obtain two additional PPD's or Pandemic Personal Days for the direct instruction and itinerant staff to be used before we return to school. These days will not carry over to next year. They must be utilized before the shutdown ends and we return to school. That would include the entire blue contract and those Teacher Assistants bumped up to cover their respective classes.



We also will receive an extra personal day next year for **both** the yellow and blue contracts. Julie Lutz and the Agency have shown exceptional leadership in this crisis and remain very sensitive to both what we are going through and where we are headed.

We, my friends are in this fight like it or not. We do not have a choice. It is time to gear up as the soldiers say. I just want you to know how proud I am to represent you and how very grateful for the support that many of you have expressed. For those of you who have been a bit more negative and want to know what the union is doing I urge you to read our Beacon articles online as well as to sign up for our union text blast by texting the word BEES to 33222. We are dedicated to being fully transparent and providing the most up to date information to our members. Also, we are remaining in contact with our LRS, William Oquendo as we attempt to negotiate our MOA's. Our state union is fighting to protect our education budget in Albany and NYSUT is working on planning for the future. It is your responsibility to stay informed especially those who refuse to share their emails.

I wish you all continued good health. Be kind to each other. Take a deep breath and let's be thankful for all we have. Know that we (your union) are here to support you both now and in the future and to protect you in the work you do. Unity and strength,

*Jim*

# ASHA MAZZA-SHAW ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



## Separate but Together

Mr. Rogers once said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" I have been in awe of all of you during this unprecedented time. When all the world was looking for the "helpers", it was all of you who showed up. You showed up not really knowing how you were going to make it work, and despite all of your own anxiety, stress and responsibilities. You balanced it all, more steadily each week, and I am absolutely honored to represent such a dedicated group of people.

Rest assured that we have been listening to all that you have been doing, to all the hurdles and hoops you have had to jump over and through to get where you needed to be for the students you care so much about. We thank you for taking the time to write such heartfelt emails to us and talk to us for additional time on the phone after you put in extra hours trying to reach every parent on your call list. Without the information coming in from each of you, we would not know which direction to go, which issues to pursue and how to make a road never traveled, a little less bumpy. Each of you are the cogs that make the union wheels turn, without its members, the union would not exist. I thank you for the continued opportunity to represent you, especially during the more difficult times like these.

The Executive Board has met and will continue to meet for weekly video conferences to address the most pressing issues. We are also meeting with the building representatives via video conference and are encouraging the building representatives to hold union meetings with the members in the same way. Please make sure your building representative has your contact information, if you want to be included in any upcoming virtual meetings. We have been sending out emails, text blasts, social media updates and alerts on our webpage to do our best to get information to all our members. Please make sure you check at least one of these resources for the most up-to-date union information. You can see where to locate or join these resources on page. 23 of this issue.

By now you know that we are working through our spring break. This was an Executive order issued by Governor Cuomo which superseded any contractual language we had previously negotiated as state law overrides local language. In an effort to represent our membership, we quickly negotiated concessions with the agency in the form of Pandemic Personal Days. Effective immediately, certificated employees covered under the Blue contract and teaching assistants "bumped up" to temporary teaching positions will be granted two Pandemic Personal Days (PPD's). These days may be used anytime, without reason, during the remainder of the 19/20 school year while distance learning is in place. These days will NOT carry forward at the conclusion of distance learning or carry over into an individual's sick bank. Effective July 1, 2020, ALL unit members covered under the Blue and Yellow contracts will receive an additional PPD to be used, without reason during the 20/21 school year. This additional day will not carry forward or be accumulated into an individual's sick bank at the end of the year.

If you don't use these days, you will lose them. At this time, any Blue contract member who wishes to use a day during distance learning will only need to notify their administrator, do not enter it into Aesop/Frontline. In addition, any teacher assistant who was in a bump up position prior to the start of distance learning, will continue to be paid for that bump up during the distance learning period. If you need to take other days in addition to the PPD days, those should be done as usual, however, there will be no substitute or bump up coverage for any days taken.

# ASHA MAZZA-SHAW ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



## Separate but Together

At this point in time, the NYS tests for grades 3-8 and the NYS Regents Exams have been cancelled. The Board of Regents has provided some guidance on a series of emergency regulations in the wake of the pandemic. Please see the links below for a summary of the Amendments and how regents' credit will be granted without testing:

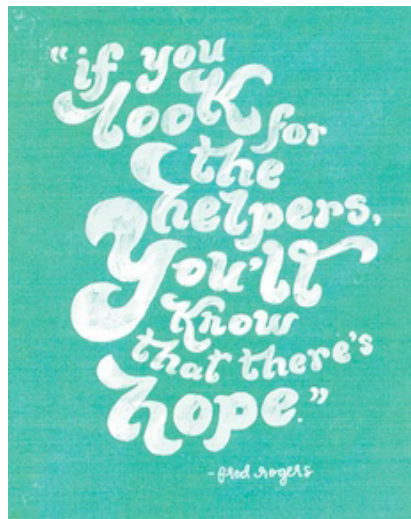
<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/board-regents-acts-series-emergency-regulations-ease-burdens-educators-students-and>

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/coronavirus/nysed-covid-19-regents-grad-req-faq.pdf>

Lastly, I would like to also remind you all to please make sure your beneficiaries are updated in your respective retirement systems. You can make an account for both NYSTRS and NYSLRS/ERS online where you can access your information. If you haven't done it yet, now is a good time. I know this has been an unprecedented time for all of us, and it is likely that we know someone who has been touched by this pandemic. We have struggled through the anxiety, through fear, through exhaustion, through tired eyes, through worry and some of us through loss. Yet through it all, we have continued to be a light in our students' days, a reliable source of comfort when things around them seem so uncertain. I applaud each and every one of you for getting up each day and making that happen. I hope that the union is a source of comfort for you, knowing that you have people on your side who want to make sure your best interests are protected. We care about each of you, and we sincerely hope you and your families are all healthy and safe. Thank you for your continued support; I hope to see you all soon.

In solidarity,

*Asha*





## Union-endorsed benefits designed for NYSUT members

Whether it's our endorsed homeowners or auto insurance plans, life or disability insurance, financial or legal service plans, or any of our travel, entertainment or shopping offerings, NYSUT members have the "Power of the Union" behind them when participating in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

There's no need to go it alone when Member Benefits has your back! Member Benefits acts as your advocate for any program you participate in, and we'll do our best to quickly resolve any issues or concerns you may have.

**The following is just a sampling of the dozens of endorsed programs & services available to NYSUT members and their families:**

- Auto, Home & Life Insurance
- Vision & Dental Plans
- Legal & Financial Services
- Hotel & Vacation Discounts
- Member Shopping Program
- Car & Truck Rental Discounts
- Competitive Savings Rates
- Retail Store Discounts
- Sports & Concert Tickets
- Theme Park Discounts
- Car Buying Service
- Heating Oil & Propane Savings

**We encourage you to take the time to explore the Member Benefits website by scanning the QR code to the right. Find out all we have to offer NYSUT members!**

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



# RAY STENBERG ~ FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



## Close Encounter

Friday the 13th was one of my favorite horror movies as I was growing up. I remember taking my girlfriend to see it and having to deal with her anger afterwards for taking her to see such a frightening, violent film. She probably would have preferred a romantic comedy. Little did I know that so many years later, Friday the 13th would re-enter my life. If you recall, on Friday, March 13th, 2020, we all entered our classrooms and offices and did what we do well each and every day. We had no idea that when the students left for the weekend, our lives and their lives would change in ways that nobody would ever think of. Schools began to shut down by the dozens, and eventually local and state government officials shut down schools countywide and then eventually, statewide. We reported to work on Monday and Tuesday and worked feverishly to make the transition to remote instruction. We did professional development "on the fly", called parents, and worked out a system of getting a laptop or iPad to our students. This was and still continues to be a challenging endeavor. But we are doing it and, under the circumstances, we are doing it well. I want every BEES member to know that under the leadership of our President, Jim Beck, we are working day and night to make sure that our members are not being harmed in any way because of this public health crisis. Teachers and Paras are working together to make phone calls and photocopies to help deliver instruction. Related service providers are making sure that students and families are being supported as they themselves struggle with this overwhelming feeling of despair. Rest assured knowing that the BEES Executive Board is frequently meeting via Zoom to discuss and work out all of the logistical problems that we are encountering on a daily basis. Please be patient and do the best that you can to help students learn and families survive.

# RAY STENBERG ~ FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



## ***BEE Informed***

Now for some lighter news...

By now, you all should have received the 2020 Census in the mail. Please make sure you take 5-10 minutes and complete this most important document. Not only does it determine congressional representation, but it also determines how much money we get for education. Now more than ever, we need as much as we can get, especially since the Governor recently announced that he may have to make drastic cuts to education to offset the costs associated with the Coronavirus.

On February 26th, our dedicated BEES members once again volunteered to take students from both Special Ed. and CTE up to Albany for BOCES Advocacy Day. Our staff and students were afforded the opportunity to meet with our locally elected state representatives to advocate on behalf of BOCES in an attempt to move forward a pro-BOCES agenda. I whole-heartedly thank those who woke up at 4:00 AM to catch the bus up to the capital. A week later, I went back up there for the Committee of 100, lobbying on behalf of NYSUT. Little did I know, I'd be sitting in a room a few feet away from an Assemblywoman who tested positive for COVID-19. That was on March 3rd, and despite an unsuccessful bid at trying to get tested, I'm still feeling great. I consider myself lucky!

As we get through this terrible time, we can only think about the warm months ahead and the end to this disaster that is plaguing the country. Keep plugging along, enjoy what life has to offer, and always do what you do best here at Eastern Suffolk BOCES - take care of our students and most importantly, take care of yourselves and your family.

*Ray*

# PATTI RICHARDS ~ AREA V.P. FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



## *We Are Listening*

How fortunate do I feel to represent such an amazing group of professionals. Just the other week we were all delivering instruction to our diverse populations within the comforts of our well-stocked classrooms. Today, our roles are completely, but temporarily, redefined. Now we are remote teaching through Zoom, many of us are providing tech support to parents, working well beyond our normal workday, all in hopes that the days ahead will become easier.

As we move forward, please remember the following:

- Keep a communication log, highlighting all interactions with parents/guardians whether by phone or email. Logs should include attempts to make contact.
- Include classroom staff on lessons when possible – TA's and IA's
- Keep a work activity log – lesson planning, correspondence, Google Drive/Classroom activities, etc.
- Monitor students' progress- on all platforms being used

All of these are suggestions and vary based on your building's needs. Remember that BOCES is aware we are all learning as we are going along, and understands we are doing our best. Please do not listen to gossip or jump to conclusions on any subject; if you have a question, please ask. Remember, your union is working very hard for you. Stay safe!

If you do not receive our text blasts -Text BEES to 33222 to get the most up to date information our union offers!

*Patti*

# KRISTIN ERICSON-ABRUZZESE ~ AREA VP. FOR SAS/ITINERANTS



## Communication is Key

Well, what can I say..... I am proud to be an Itinerant / Related Service provider. Words cannot speak to how we all pulled it together at a moment's notice; we learned how to use new apps, remote video sessions and many of us, Google programs. We did all of this, while still taking care of our own families, teaching our own children and venturing out to find some food to stock our own homes, oh and don't forget the toilet paper; I'm still not sure about that one, but I did grab a large pack from Costco myself! I also want to thank the many members who voiced their concerns about all these new ways to provide services to our students. The Executive Board appreciates hearing from you; that is why you have elected us into these positions to hear your concerns and try to negotiate the best possible outcome for all those parties involved. I do feel the need to address one thing; we want to hear from each and every one of you, and we respect you and we feel we deserve the same in return. I know these past several weeks many of us have been experiencing some emotions we may have never felt so extremely before. Maybe you are feeling anxious, angry and/or depressed, but remember we are all in this together. The Executive Board, along with ESBOCES, is trying to navigate a situation we never imagined we would be in. Both parties are trying to stay on top of a situation that continues to change moment by moment. With all those changes, there have been many directives and ways to handle our services, but again we all stepped it up and tried to go with the flow. We have just finished our third week of distance learning, and it seems like we are still working through a few kinks, but the union is working on helping us through them. Although this probably will be ongoing, it seems like most of us have worked out some systems to provide our services. We know that this task seemed daunting at first, and we were all asked to try our hardest to make it work with minimal preparation. In the spirit of the ESBOCES family way, we are all getting through this together, by learning together and working together. Be kind to one another and share with your coworkers any tricks of the trade that have worked for you.

The most important thing is that we have been there for our students and, we all know that you can really feel when someone truly cares about your wellbeing. This has been the sense I have gotten from my colleagues from day one. I'm sure from the time I write this article to when you read it, things will have changed again; I am hoping for the better. Stay safe, hug your loved ones and take care of yourself, even if it involves taking a few deep breaths, taking a walk in the sunshine or just losing yourself in a good book.

The next related service and itinerant meeting will be April 29, 2020 at 3:30 at the union office

\*pandemic permitting - Other arrangements will be made if necessary\*

Thank you for all your help and support. You can reach me at SHS@Pat-Med H.S.

218-5411/beesvpitin@gmail.com \*Please note this is a new email.

*Kristin*



# COVID-19 Resources for Members

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/coronavirus-toolkit>

<https://www.aft.org/aft-top-asks-congress--covid-19>

<https://www.uft.org/your-rights/safety-health/coronavirus>

<https://www.esboces.org/Page/2791>

<http://www.beesbeacon.org/coronavirus-info.html>

# New York Retirement News

The Official Blog of the New York State & Local Retirement System

Employees' Retirement System | Police and Fire Retirement System



## Filing for Retirement Benefits During the COVID-19 Emergency

[Leave a reply](#)

The unfortunate reality of the COVID-19 emergency is that some NYSLRS members may become seriously ill and some may die from the disease. That is why it is vitally important that members understand how to apply for retirement benefits, if they need to take that step.

NYSLRS members who become seriously ill from COVID-19 may wish to file for a disability retirement benefit so their beneficiary may be eligible for a continuing pension, rather than a one-time in-service death benefit, if the member dies.

These members, or their employer on their behalf, need to file the disability retirement application that is appropriate for them according to their retirement plan.

Please visit our [Disability Benefits page](#) and select "Find Your Application" to help you find the right application. Additionally, the member, or the member's spouse, should file a [pension payment option election form](#) to identify a beneficiary to receive the continuing benefit. An option election form cannot be filed by the employer. A continuing benefit cannot be paid to a beneficiary unless we receive an option election form.

Applications and option election forms can be [emailed directly to NYSLRS' Disability Processing Unit](#). If the member dies after applying, the disability retirement application would be effective upon death. If the member recovers, he or she would be allowed to withdraw the disability retirement application.

Eligible members may also file for a service retirement. However, a service retirement must be on file with NYSLRS at least 15 days before your retirement date, and a service retirement cannot be canceled if your retirement date has passed. You can file a disability and a service retirement application at the same time. Service retirements can be filed electronically using [Retirement Online](#).

Please call our Contact Center at 866-805-0990 if you have questions.



# COVID-19

## Update

This is just a quick note to assure you that NYSTRS remains committed to serving your needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The list on the right summarizes the various ways we're here for you. We encourage you to review our [FAQs](#), as answers to many common questions are addressed. We update these as new information becomes available, so check them regularly.

During this unprecedented time, with most staff working from home, we strive to maintain normal operations. Despite current market volatility, the fund used to pay benefits remains strong as we manage our portfolio prudently. As always, benefit payments have been, and will continue to be, made on time. Retirement and loan applications, direct deposit changes and death benefit claims are among the member transactions we are prioritizing. In short we plan to continue providing the exceptional customer service you have come to expect of NYSTRS.

We wish continued good health for you and your families.

### NYSTRS' Customer Service Initiatives

- We are prioritizing time-sensitive transactions such as pension payments, direct deposit changes, disability retirements, death benefits and loans.
- Our phone lines remain open to help you at (800) 348-7298 and we are still receiving mail.
- We urge you to stay connected via [MyNYSTRS](#) to submit forms, review your information and message us securely.
- We posted [FAQs](#) that answer the questions many members have been asking us.
- We are providing our [benefits consultations](#) by phone.
- We recorded and posted our [PREP seminar modules](#) on NYSTRS benefits, so you can view them at your convenience.

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# ROSARIA BROESLER~ AREA V.P. FOR ACADEMY/SCC



## *Everyday Heroes*

As a CTE work experience coordinator and union leader, Rosaria and her 84 year old mom spent countless hours contributing to hospitals in need. Hospitals near and far were the recipients of their hand-sewn protective masks. In a time when personal protective equipment or PPE, is hard to come by, these everyday heroes took it upon themselves to make almost 1,000 masks! Our brothers and sisters on the frontlines need our help. They need PPE as they continue to help COVID-19 patients. You can be an every day hero, too: call your legislators and tell them to get the PPE to the people who need it the most!





# Member



# Benefits

The **NYSUT Member Benefits Trust** endorses a number of quality, competitive insurance programs that are available to NYSUT members. Some of these programs are also available to or cover spouses/domestic partners of members, dependent children, dependent parents, and grandparents.

**These endorsed programs include:**

- Term Life & Level Term Life Insurance
- WrapPlan II Universal Life Insurance
  - Auto & Home Insurance
  - Disability Insurance
- Long-Term Care Insurance
  - Dental Plan
  - Vision Plan
  - Pet Insurance

## Legal & Financial

NYSUT members can get quality legal and financial planning assistance for themselves and their families by purchasing the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed **Legal Service Plan** or NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed **Financial Counseling Program**.

**LEGAL SERVICE PLAN (EXPERT LEGAL ASSISTANCE)** Did you know that NYSUT Member Benefits offers expert legal assistance that can assist you with everything from preparing crucial estate planning documents to dealing with traffic violations? The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed **Legal Service Plan** -- provided by the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. -- offers access to a national network of attorneys that deal with personal legal matters.

**Financial Counseling Program** -- provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. -- offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation. The full-service program provides you with up to six hours of objective toll-free telephone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor.

**NYSUT** members are eligible to receive free, no obligation, debt and students loan consultations with one of **Cambridge's certified counselors**. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-Endorsed **Cambridge Credit Counseling** program can assist NYSUT members with better understanding their student loan re-payment options and/or debt consolidation.

## Shopping, Travel and Personal Discounts

**These endorsed programs include discounts on:**

- Exclusive member only saving up to 50% at 700,000 locations nationwide
  - Buyer's Edge Inc.
  - 1800Flowers.com
  - Office Depot/Office Max
  - Member buying programs
  - Car/truck rental discounts
- Orlando attraction discounts
  - Grand Circle Travel
    - BOSE
  - Powell's Books
  - American Solar
    - Tankfarm
    - Heat USA
- Online Defensive Driving

**Visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org) for more information**



## Google Educator certification

Receive discounts on Level 1 (60%) and Level 2 (75%) Google Educator certificates. Available to AFT members only (requires registration) through July 2020.

## Free college

The Union Plus Free College Benefit can help you (and your family members) afford a college education without piling on thousands of dollars in student debt.

## Robert G. Porter Scholars Program

This program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members.

## Union Plus scholarships

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.3 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education.

## Student debt clinics

As a union, we are fighting to make college affordable and student debt manageable. However, 44 million people in the United States are saddled with student loan debt. We offer ways to help our members and affiliates.

## Identity Theft Protection

Identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in America. All members, including retirees, can obtain an ID Threat Score as well as assistance in the event you are a victim of identity theft.

## Credit and Budget Counseling

Free consumer credit counseling, budget advice and discounted debt-management services are available 24 hours a day to help members with confidential financial guidance.

## Credit Card

The AFT + credit card program offers three credit card options that AFT members and their families can apply for.

## Assistance in time of job interruption

In tough times, a variety of AFT + Member Benefits programs, through Union Plus, offer tools to help stretch your household budget and in some cases, offer direct financial aid.

## Mortgage programs

AFT has two mortgage options available to members, Union Plus Mortgage Company and Amalgamated Bank Mortgage. Note: These programs are not licensed in all states. Please see program website for more information.

## Moving Van Discount

Enjoy a stress-free and affordable experience with Union Plus discounts on full-service moving vans through the leading national moving brands, Allied Van Lines and North American Van Lines.

## Truck Rental by Budget

Make your do-it-yourself move cost even less with a discount at one of the nation's largest truck rental facilities. Union families save 20% off normal Budget truck & van rental rates for a local or one-way move, with advance reservations.

## Real Estate Program

Save hundreds, even thousands of dollars, on your next home sale or purchase. Earn \$50 cash back after closing for every \$10,000 in home sale or purchase price when you work with highly qualified, pre-screened, SIRVA-approved real estate agents.

## Save My Home Hotline

A dedicated Save My Home Hotline staffed by HUD-trained counselors is available free to all AFT members to discuss mortgage issues. The service is provided through the nonprofit Money Management International, which is accredited to provide counseling for union members facing foreclosure.

## Home Security

Protecting your family has never been easier or more budget-friendly. SimpliSafe is an industry leader known for its competitive pricing, no long-term contracts and easy-to-set-up, state-of-the-art systems. Plans start at only 50 cents a day, and AFT members also have access to other special-value offers from SimpliSafe.

Visit [www.aft.org/member-benefits](http://www.aft.org/member-benefits) for more information

# DANIELLE IRBA ~ SOCIAL CHAIRPERSON



## Let's BEE Socially Distanced

Hello Friends.

I hope this article finds you all safe and well! This last month has been such a learning experience for all of us. We have all come together to take care of our families and our students. I am so proud to know and work with all of you. We will all make it through this together.

With much deliberation and heavy hearts, we are announcing this years BEES Honorary has been canceled due to the pandemic Corona Virus. The good news is all of our retirees will still be honored! We will be sending them something special by mail and they will be invited to be honored at next years celebration as well. We are so thankful that they have supported our union during their careers at ESBOCES; your service and support will never be forgotten.

As of this writing, the Ducks' game is still on for May 16, 2020. Please check our BEES Beacon website <http://www.beesbeacon.org/> for any changes.

Welfare: In the event that a member suffers a death in the family, a bereavement card will be sent if it is a member's spouse, parent, child, or sibling. In the case of a member passing, special circumstances will then apply. The procedure for a bereavement card to be sent is as follows: Members should contact their building representative as soon as they believe a member meets the above guidelines and a bereavement card should be sent. The building representative then should contact me via email at [daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com](mailto:daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com) with the member's name and address and the name and relation to the deceased. In most circumstances the card will be sent as soon as I receive the information from the building reps.

If you need more information, see your building rep, check out our BEES website or feel free to send me an email. My email address is: [daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com](mailto:daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com)

Thank you and stay healthy,

**Danielle**

# TERRY KALB ~ RETIREE CHAIRPERSON



## Honoring Retirees

Hello to BEES already retired, and those who hope to be future retirees!

If you are approaching retirement, congratulations! Your union involvement does not end on your last day of employment- to keep our benefits and security as seniors, we will continue to need the strength of our union voices. Be sure to give me your non-BOCES email before you turn in your BOCES ID so you can maintain your union status! As an extra gift to our 2020 retirees, who will not have an honorarium this June, your \$35 2020-21 retiree dues will be covered by our union.

A heartfelt thank you to the overwhelming majority of retirees who renew your BEES retiree membership annually by sending in your \$35 dues each autumn. On your calendar, mark Labor Day as your dues reminder- celebrate by supporting our union! If you have forgotten, it's not too late- just make that small \$35 check, written out to BEES, and send it to, PO Box 798, Wading River, NY 11792. You must maintain your membership status for all union events, NYSUT benefits, and to join or remain in our closed BEES Retiree FaceBook group. If you do not have a current union membership card, go to [nysut.org](http://nysut.org) and you can print out your card from there!

**DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR CENSUS FORMS today! EVERYBODY COUNTS!**

### \*\*\*\*\* UPCOMING UNION EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

Our BEES Retiree Spring Meeting, which was to be held on **TUESDAY MAY 19th** at 10AM at our union office will be postponed to a later date. Our election will also be postponed.

At this time, next **RC-22 (Retiree Council) Meeting** is still scheduled be held on **WEDNESDAY JUNE 3**, at 10AM, also at our BEES union office. Elections will be held for RC-22 President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Please stay tuned for an update - this too may be postponed.

The **HONORARIUM 2020**, which was to be held on Wednesday, June 10th, has been **CANCELLED**. The union will honor this year's retirees in an alternate way, and all 2020 retirees will be invited to attend the 2021 Honorarium as special guests.

Wishing everyone a safe and healthy spring, despite the pandemic impacting our way of life and threatening our lives. I hope all will stay at home, maintain social distance and take universal precautions.

Terry Kalb  
BEES Retiree President

# Helpful Links - Follow Me!

Help us help you! Click the link to take a quick survey on union connectivity -

[Click here for union connectivity survey](#)

<http://www.beesbeacon.org>

<https://memberbenefits.nysut.org>

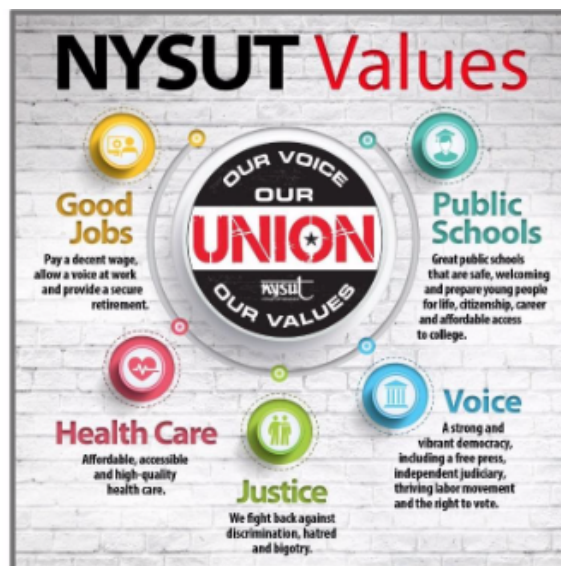
<https://www.aft.org/member-benefits>

<https://www.ny.gov/programs/2020-census>

<http://www.nysed.gov>

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/>

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Join our text  
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33222



# BEES

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