



Rush-Henrietta  
Employees' Association  
Teachers Chapter  
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# RH TEACHER

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## PRESIDENTS CORNER

**BY Brad Crooks**

Hi All,

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent you as your president. Over the next couple of newsletters I will share my goals for RHEA as a “Union of Professionals.” For those who don’t know me I am a grade 5 teacher at Leary School. I have been there my whole career. I also live in the district and my 3 children have or still do attend R-H schools. Besides education, I enjoy sports, traveling, and food. So, if any of you have any favorite places or restaurants, please share with me when I am in your building.

Over the summer I had the opportunity to attend the NYSUT Leadership Institute. As a result of that experience, I have become inspired by the topic of Leadership and hope that in my role as Union President I can inspire you, as well. Many of the attributes of being a leader are things each of you do on a daily basis (and may not even realize you are exhibiting these leadership traits and qualities). Things like being **committed**, **honest** and having **integrity**. Having a **positive attitude** and helping to **solve problems**. Being **student focused** and **communicating** with students, parents and colleagues. Coming up with new and better ways to educate our students or **mentoring**, **coaching**, and **collaborating** with our colleagues. I believe all of these things are in our DNA as teaching professionals, whether we realize it or not. I would like you all to continue being leaders by sharing your visions, challenging the process in positive ways and modeling professionalism.

For the past decade since the passage of NCLB, we have been living in a world of education reform. Some has been good and some has been, how shall we say it, ‘not so good’ (hence, “Race to the Bottom” jokes). I do know that if any reform is going to work, it needs to tap into a teacher’s sense of personal purpose. We need to share the learning strategies that emerge from our **own felt sense**, our own lived experiences of the content. We know, as practitioners in the field, what is “Best Practice.” Michael Fullon, in his book *Change Forces*, writes, “Organizations intent on building shared visions encourage members to develop their personal visions. If people don’t have their own visions, all they can do is ‘sign up’ for someone else’s. *The result is compliance, never commitment.*” *The time is right for commitment!* I look forward to seeing you in your classrooms/buildings during my frequent drop-ins, but always feel free to contact me via email anytime.

Professionally yours,

Brad

## 1<sup>st</sup> VP Update

By Marissa Privitere

Hello Colleagues,

It's been quite a year for teaching so far. As we head into negotiations, await word on new teacher evaluation laws from the State and face a slowly growing economy stress levels understandable begin to rise. Here at R-H there are a lot of policy changes with regard to the delivery of instruction and record keeping. New "forms" seem to be growing on trees and landing in our laps everyday!

Here is the good news...*every one of us* has the power to insert ourselves into the decision making processes that impact our daily lives. *Every one of us* can choose to represent the interest of teachers on building committees, district committees, and as union representatives. Our "union ancestors" have made sure that we work in a place where teachers are treated as "stakeholders" and are welcomed on district committees. The current leadership, begun under David Rose and continued now under Brad Crooks, is making it a priority for teachers to have a voice in policy making **BEFORE** the policies are made. What we need is **YOU** to make it happen. If you are currently on a committee, remember that you represent all of us. If you would like to be a voice for teachers, talk with your building representatives to see where we might need more voices in your building. The days of sitting on the sidelines and hoping for someone else to do the work are over. If we are going to be a strong union of teachers and have a voice in defining excellence in education, we all need to be more active to be sure that policy makes sense. Talk to each other, talk to building reps, join committees for the good of all, and you will help to redefine our profession for this generation and the next.

Marissa Privitere  
1st Vice President

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2010 Henrietta Relay For Life

## **The Human Rights and Social Responsibility Committee (HRSRC)**

**By Lea Theuer**

The HRSRC was formed in November 2009 and adopted the following mission statement:

The Human Rights and Social Responsibility Committee (HRSRC) is comprised of members of the Rush-Henrietta Educators Association (RHEA). Our mission is to support and promote human rights and social responsibility within our union membership. We will model social responsibility through active participation in service to the needs of the people in the Rush-Henrietta schools community. We will promote human rights by advocating for equality for all, within our union and our school community.

RH Schools has had a history of strong participation in the annual Making Strides Walk and teacher participation has grown since NYSUT became a flagship sponsor of this event. This past October continued the tradition of RH Schools and Staff supporting the MSW, with RHEA members participating both on an individual and family basis and as Team Leaders for student groups (see photos).

RHEA joined the first Henrietta Relay for Life in 2009 and returned again in 2010. This event provides an opportunity to both engage in community service and to bring colleagues together outside of school for an evening of fellowship. Rush-Henrietta Schools RHEA has fielded several teams in the past 2 years, including the "RHEA Team", "Kimmy KG Team", "Rockin' Rainbow Team", and "Team Kindness". We place luminaria honoring and remembering our colleagues, friends, and family members, walk (and in some cases, run?!) the track, and erect campsites. It is a wonderful way to reconnect with one another, while celebrating lives of special people in our lives. This year's Relay will occur on Saturday, May 14, 2011. SAVE THE DATE!

HRSRC has also created a template for RH teachers to use for advertising and sharing their community service projects with colleagues around the district. The intention is that staff completes this form and then submit it for posting on the RHEA website. ((See attached). In this way, we can all celebrate and support one another's activities!

Finally, the committee members have discussed ways in which RHEA can be openly supportive of human rights and social justice. In addition to engaging in socially responsible service activities, we encourage our membership to be informed about NYSUT and AFT socially responsive political action efforts. This includes, but is not limited to the support of free trade products, environmental stewardship, and advocacy for equal rights and benefits for all, including our LGBT colleagues. It is our sincere hope that RHEA can someday say that all of our members have equal access to employment related benefits.

The committee meets in person on a quarterly basis, and virtually, on-line, on a monthly basis. Membership is open and we are looking for representation from around the district! 2010-2011 Committee Membership includes Jessica Burdick-Giordano (Co-chair), Cathy Fager, Joanne Fusare-White, Lea Theuer (Co-chair), Josh VanLare, and Doris Waud.

Please contact Lea at <hltheuer@frontiernet.net> for more information!

# R-H Schools Caring in Action

Name of event:	
Purpose:	
When:	
Where:	
What:	
Sponsor: (Group/ Organization)	
Contact Individual:	
How to Help:	

R-H Schools Caring in Action

## Are you up to the challenge?

If you're like most people, you make New Year's resolutions only to break them soon after. NYSUT Member Benefits challenges all NYSUT members to make and keep this one resolution: I resolve to draw up (or update) my will.

The importance of having a will to protect your loved ones and your wishes cannot be stressed enough. This is especially true if you have children under the age of 18. A will allows you to name a legal guardian(s) for your children. It also ensures that your estate will be distributed according to your desires. Without a valid will, these very important, personal decisions are made by the state.

The Legal Service Plan endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust is a convenient vehicle to help you meet this challenge. It provides one simple will or update, free. A simple will provides for the proceeds of one's estate to be distributed to specifically named beneficiary(ies), with an alternate distribution plan in the event the primary beneficiary predeceases the writer of the will. With a simple will, proceeds are to be distributed outright with no conditions attached. Placing a condition on a bequest requires a trust, which can be obtained from the Legal Plan for a fee.

In addition to the simple will, you'll receive a durable power of attorney, living will and health care proxy, all important documents to have in place *before* the need for them arises.

The plan also gives you access to unlimited, toll-free legal advice from plan attorneys. These attorneys will make phone calls and write

third-party correspondence, at no charge, to resolve personal legal situations on your behalf before they become major problems. In addition, when you enroll in this plan, you receive two coupons for free, hour-long consultations with a plan attorney.

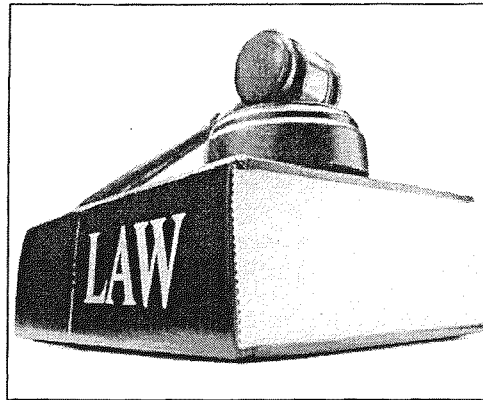
Is there a real estate transaction coming up in your near future? Do you have any traffic violations? You can receive legal assistance on a variety of personal legal matters when you enroll in the Legal Service Plan. If the matter can't be resolved over the phone or with a letter, you will be referred to a plan attorney in your area, who will charge you \$200 an hour or 40 percent off the usual hourly rate, whichever is lower. Optional riders for Elder Law services and for business protection can be added to your legal plan coverage.

Don't put it off any longer! Draw up your will. Enroll in the Legal Service Plan and use its service to help you, or do it

another way, but just do it! The peace of mind you'll have once you know you have taken care of your loved ones far outweighs any unpleasantness associated with making up your will.

If you happen to belong to a local association that provides a group legal service plan to you through the local or its benefit fund, remember to take advantage of the plan's benefits.

If not, you can enroll in the voluntary plan online at [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org), or view and print a descriptive brochure and enrollment form online. You can also call NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.



*The Legal Service Plan provided through Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 33.33% of annual participation fees received for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.*

Jan./Feb. '11



## GRIEVANCE UPDATE

By Jon DelVecchio

### What is your time worth?

As teachers, we know our job is never really “done”. Throughout the day we work with students and prepare for or review those interactions while they are elsewhere. Outside school hours we also perform teacher duties through volunteerism, coming in early or staying late. Some of our extra-curricular activities do provide financial compensation, but if you break down the hourly rate for many of these stipends you might find you are working for less than minimum wage. Again, as teachers we are always on the clock—it is in our DNA.

Recent budgetary concerns have caused the district to seek out ways to save money. It has been brought to the RHEA’s attention that various stipends are being removed or reduced without negotiations. Unfortunately, we often find out about these pay violations long after the 15-day grievance-filing window is closed. If you or someone you know has seen a reduction in stipends, contact a building representative as soon as you can and explain the situation.

Many teachers choose to supervise extra-curricular activities because they enjoy working with students and the Rush-Henrietta community. Proof of this is when our teachers continue to do the same work without pay once they have been denied it. However, the RHEA has negotiated stipends for these duties and they should be paid without debate.

What is your time worth? Probably more than you get paid to supervise an event. However, most teachers will tell you they are not in this career for the money, but what you do extra is valuable and you should be compensated as negotiated in the contract.

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RHEA Office – Sr. High School  
 334-1000 or x5291  
 Fax: 334-1000

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