POUGHKEEPSIE, NY--The sixty-some-thin’ sixty-somethin’s at the WCRT Fall Luncheon on October 19 at Christos Restaurant raved about the food, friendships, and the new buffet configurations.

Also the semi-annual event allowed all to catch up on union events, issues, and activities throughout the year from brief reports and updates given by union officers.

Many guests also donated food to a local food pantry.

First timers Martha Bilsback, 30 years at Myers, Betty Dean, 38 years as a Speech teacher retired from Gayhead, with “big sister” Ellen Korz. Notice the smiles.

Retiree Betsy Tripaldi, standing, with her retired physical education teacher, Barbara Webster.

see COVER STORY on page 10

POLITICAL ACTION COLUMN
WCRT thanked for donations
Golf tourney HUGE success for MOW
Dear WCRT Members,

Well, we did it!

We defeated the proposition for a Constitutional Convention. We and all the other NYS unions did it because we were organized. We and many others who thought the cost was way too high, and the money could be better spent in the state. We and many others who thought the amendment process was just fine.

The vote was 83% to 17%. I saw many different “no” signs and only one “yes” sign. We had so much to lose if the Convention had gone forward.

Some of you may have received a letter recently from the Social Security Administration. It listed your new SS monthly payment and your new monthly deduction for Medicare Part B.

If you received one of these letters, you must send a copy to Ellen Hogan at the WCSD. She handles all the insurances for the retirees. If you don’t have a letter on file, your reimbursement might be the same as last year even though the deduction is higher. (25 Corporate Park Dr., P.O. Box 396, Hopewell Jct., NY 12533)

If you did not receive a letter, there will probably be no change in your SS payment or your Medicare Part B deduction.

Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season.

Susan Roger
‘TIS THE SEASON - GIVE THANKS

The holidays are upon us and there is much to be thankful for.

First we’ll bask in the victory at the polls in November. The once-every-twenty-year vote on whether to hold a constitutional convention was overwhelmingly defeated with 83% of the voters filling in the “no” circle. We can put away our road signs and vote “no” buttons until 2037!

Moving in a more positive direction are the learning standards in New York State. We remember the Common Core Learning Standards and the protests which saw many parents pulling their children from the state testing. Things are changing. A quote from the New York State Education Department’s website reads, “The Board of Regents adopted the newly revised English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards on September 11, 2017. The new standards have been the result of over two years of collaborative work to ensure New York State has the best learning standards for our students. Over 130 educators and parents worked together to make recommendations and revise the standards, resulting in a new set of revised English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards.”

Should you be interested in learning more specifics on this, go to your computer and search New York State Next Generation Learning Standards at http://www.nysed.gov/next-generation-learning-standards.

By the way, that is the new name replacing Common Core.

Congress is working on tax reform. We are hopeful there will be tax relief for everyone. In comparing proposals between the existing structure and the changes proposed by the Senate and House of Representatives, we know those filing jointly and making $500,000 a year or more will get a break. Those of us living in the real world of pension benefits will have to wait to see how the restructuring will lower our tax debt. Since we are being positive, we are going to predict a modest decrease in taxes. There, that sounds heartening!

There was also a positive note on the future of Social Security and Medicare, at least for those who are currently under the systems. This quote appeared in the December 1, 2017, issue of the Washington Post, “On the Senate floor Thursday night, (Nov. 30) Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT.) asked Sen Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Sen. Patrick J. Toomey (R-PA.) to promise that Republicans would not advance cuts to Medicare and Social Security after their tax bill. Toomey said there was “no secret plan” to do so, while Rubio said he opposed cuts to either program for current beneficiaries. However, neither closed the door to changing the programs for future beneficiaries.” We will hope the average American will continue to support these positive benefits that each of us have donated to over our working careers.

Locally in Wappingers we have seen generous giving to VOTE-COPE. If you have not contributed for 2017, it is not too late. Send your checks made out to VOTE-COPE to the WCT office.

There is also contract peace for the active teachers. This made a nice welcome for the 31 new educators who joined the active teachers. This made a nice welcome to the ranks of the District in September.

Lastly, in another gesture of giving, the active members of the WCT donated pet supplies to the Dutchess County ASPCA. The items found their way to assist in the feeding and care of animals displaced by Hurricane Harvey.

Yes, “‘Tis the Season” and let’s hope 2018 gives us much more favorable news that we can celebrate. Happy Holidays to all our WCRT members.

Notify these groups of an address change or death of a member:
■ WCRT office, 280 New Hackensack Rd. Wappingers Falls, N.Y. 12590 (845) 227-5065 wct@frontiernet.net
■ WCT, same as above
■ NYSUT, 800-342-9810 800 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Latham, NY 12110-2455 www.nysut.org
■ NYSTRS, www.nystrs.org 800-348-7298 x 6250 10 Corporate Woods Drive Albany, NY 12211-2395
■ WCSD, Human Resources 25 Corporate Park Dr. P.O. Box 396 Hopewell Jct., NY 12533 845-298-5000 x 115

Directions to new WCT office
280 New Hackensack Rd. across from the Dutchess County Airport
From Vassar Rd: Jackson Rd. (County Rt. 110), left onto New Hack Rd. toward Rt. 376.
From Rt. 9 Wapp. Falls: take County Rt. 104 at Dunkin Donuts and Perkins on New Hack Rd.
From All Angels Hill Rd: (CR 94) north to NHRd, west to 280 NHRd.
From Red Oaks Mill: Rt. 376 south past DC Airport, right onto NHRd. 280 on left.

Make out a check to VOTE/COPE and mail it to:
Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
280 New Hackensack Rd
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

NOTE: If you are aware of a member’s illness, or the need to send a condolence card, please contact Ruth Ehlers at 831-6390 or ruthellene1@icloud.com
Here’s how to register your email with the website:

1. Go to www.wcteachers.org
2. On the right-hand side, go to the “Member Login” module
3. Click on the “Click Here to sign-up” link (It is yellow)
4. Enter all of your information on the form. This is the information that we will use to maintain our records and to send email and/or text notifications. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.
5. Click submit
6. Review all of your information
7. Click Submit again
8. Wait 24-48 hours for us to verify your membership. You will receive an email advising you that you are good to go. At this point, you can come back to the website and login.

Hope this helps. Thanks, Nancy

TOM DERITO
WCRT Treasurer

Financial Report available

As a service to any interested WCRT member, our union’s financial report is always available upon request.

Address your questions or concerns to tderito@verizon.net and we’ll make arrangements to satisfy your numerical curiosity.

We provide communicative services to our former colleagues, philanthropic support through student academic scholarships, and donations to community libraries and Meals on Wheels.

www.wcteachers.org or tderito@verizon.net

JANE STOCKSLAGER
WCRT Constitution, By-Laws

CONSTITUTION ON WCT WEB SITE:

The WCRT Constitution/By-Laws is now available on the WCT website under the Retirees section.

This is the Constitution that was voted on at the May 2015 Spring Luncheon.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the address below.

www.WCTeachers.org or sundancewf@aol.com

Enjoy some of what NYC has to offer. Sign up to receive the monthly Plum Benefits Guide. Send an e-mail to jtkorz@optonline.net to be added to our list. Ellen Korz

WCRT by the numbers:

WCRT membership as of Nov., 2017:
634 WCRT members
186 yearly members
386 Lifetime members
58 Complimentary Lifetime members
13 Complimentary members
63 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
29 about to be deleted from our files for not paying dues this year.
*149 members receiving publications & notices by U.S. mail down from
*232 members postal subscribers
486 members email subscribers.
4 2017 retirees wisely chose copay Lifetime

*Notice the reduction in printed newsletters. We encouraged members to “go green” and help us save on mailing costs. We all benefit from their cooperation.

Register on the website wcteachers.org
If you know a retiree who is not a member, please encourage them to reconsider joining WCRT/NYSUT for their benefit and ours.

Membership letters mailed in September. Make checks payable to WCT by November 15.

BABY BRYNN FIGHTS CANCER

October 19, 2017 Update

At the October 19 Fall Luncheon, several WCRT members expressed concern about the donation website not working. They checked and discovered an error.

Here is the correct website: youcaring.com/sashaabrahamsonandjopieurtjens-773809

Below are excerpts from two previous articles offering readers important background information to contribute to expenses involved with Brynn’s care and treatment.

Brynn Geurtjens, granddaughter of Hannah and Mike Abrahamson (RCK 2008 and 2005) was diagnosed at age 9 months with rhabdomyosarcoma in her brain and spinal cord. This is an exceedingly rare occurrence (one in a billion) with no known protocol for treatment.

Brynn is at Seattle Children’s Hospital where mom and dad took up residence at the nearby Ronald McDonald House, along with three-year-old brother Eli and Hannah and Mike.

Despite the side effects, Brynn continues to be a brave and sweet little girl. She is loved more than words can say, and her family asks for your prayers of healing.

Rhabdomyosarcoma is a soft tissue cancer generally found in people middle aged and older, rarely in babies, and it is even more rare to find it in the brain or spinal cord (only 40 known cases worldwide).

Because this is so rare, there is no treatment protocol. Doctors treat it aggressively, given Brynn’s age, combining treatments used for brain cancers as well as for more typical rhabdomyosarcomas found in soft tissue cells.

More information and/or to contribute to expenses for Brynn’s care and treatment can be found in paragraph two above in bold italic print.
WCRT's watchdog about “insider information” affecting WCSD retirees

November 14 RA Meeting

☑ Most of the discussion relevant to the retirees was centered on the Janus Case that will be decided by the Supreme Court.

☑ The Janus Case basically makes us a right-to-work state. Active members would have the option of not paying dues and still receive the benefits of the union. It would eliminate the agency fee.

☑ Being proactive, the WCT and locals across the state have formed leadership teams whom they call Ambassadors, to speak one to one to colleagues in their building about the importance of the union. Folders were distributed with a script to use if desired, containing information about the Janus Case, questions members may have, assurance the WCT website has their latest information, and a pledge to be signed that they would want to remain union members.

☑ All this information will be collected by the end of January and then tabulated.

☑ Cathy Schwartz, Labor Relations Specialist, spoke about this program and felt one to one was the best way to get members to see why veteran members fought so hard for unions did and how they have reaped the benefits of that hard work.

☑ February 23, 2018 LAP will host the 2nd Hungry, Hungry Humans at John Jay. This is a fundraiser for the Sparrow’s Nest, an organization that helps families touched by cancer. You can attend or maybe some of you would like to participate. More information will be coming.

Enjoy the coming holidays!

Ellen

Con Con is gone gone!!

Stuffing 1500 envelopes for NO vote on the Constitutional Convention. Retirees shown at WCT/WCRT office on October 30.

From left, Ro Henneberry, Fran Shepherd, Sue Marcoe, and Phil Shepherd. Not pictured: Flo Mondanaro, Jill Platt, and Jack Devine.

Some words and a letter from the editor

by Bill Dourdis, PostScript editor

Remember this from elementary school or junior high? “If one is lonely, two’s a couple, and three’s a crowd, then what’s four and five? (Answer is nine.) Ha, ha.”

Results of Constitutional Convention vote: Yes 17%, No 83%. Ha, ha.

That means over four out of every five voted down the Con Con!!!!

Ya dun gud, kids! We got the word out. We got the bumper stickers to stick. Our lawn signs were signs of the times. And the buttons had people asking “what’s that all about?” or saying “yeah, we can’t let them do that to us.”

It worked! We hope Albany politicians will get off their butts, stand up, get moving, and get back to work amending the good, old-fashioned way by handling one issue at a time in a timely manner with little expense and for the common good. Amen.
NYSUT Regional Conference for Retiree Council 13 very informative
Oct. 12, 2017 at The Chateau, Kingston, NY

Robert A. Caruso
FISHKILL, NY -- Roberta A. Caruso, 66, an area resident since 1991 and formerly of White Plains and Thornwood, died following a long illness on October 19, 2017 at her home surrounded by her family.

Born in Opp, AL on February 9, 1951, she was the daughter of Enrico and Claudia (DiRenzo) Caruso. Roberta had been employed as a Special Education Teacher for the Wappingers Central School District primarily at Roy C. Ketcham High School for 17 years until her retirement in 2015.

On August 29, 1987 in White Plains, Roberta married Joel Smith who survives at home. She is also survived by her daughter, Alexandra Elizabeth Smith of Brooklyn; her mother, Claudia Caruso; her siblings, John Caruso, Claire Jordan, Lisa Schaeffer and Peter Caruso; and many nieces and nephews.

In Memoriam

Roberta loved reading, traveling, and her family. A former actress and singer, she was passionate about music and theater, attending as many Broadway shows, symphonies, and operas as she could. She was curious and adventurous. She was well traveled, having been to numerous countries in Europe, North, and South America. She was a loving and nurturing sister, wife, and mother and will be missed.

Calling hours will be held will be on Saturday from 2-4 and 6-8pm at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction.

Memorial donations may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Foundation (https://giving.mskcc.org/).

Please visit Roberta’s Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com

Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal on Oct. 21, 2017
Iles, (Mon-Thur, and Sun). In ink!

I no longer play softball,
I no longer ski,
I no longer play golf,
I no longer drive at night,
I no longer mow my own lawn,
I have a-fib, a stent, and one manufactured knee,
I have two arthritic thumbs (Beth has to open jars),
Miscellaneous other stuff I don’t care to mention.

On the plus side:
Reasonably cogent (except numbers and names),
Can usually finish NY Times crossword (Mon- Thur, and Sun). In ink!
I like to read. My current favorite is Greg Iles,
News junkie (not sure if this is a plus),
I still do some volunteer work,
I do my share of helping around the house,
I have an Uber App on my l-phone that I actually know how to use.

So…looking at this typical set of data, is the stage set for a mid-retirement crisis? I remember seeing a cover on a supermarket tabloid that warns retirees of the pitfalls of the three “Bs”: Boredom, Booze, and Broads, (for women: Bozos?, Bad Boys?). Speaking just for myself mind you, I can eliminate broods, but boredom and any form of self-medicating can sneak into just about anybody’s routine. Boredom – and its first cousin, Loneliness -- are two Thieves in the Night we have to work at to keep at bay.

Some of us are fortunate to have family and friends to keep us focused on things outside of ourselves. Sadly, seen and unforeseen events, have caused a few of us to become isolated. The WCRT does a good job (thanks to Ruth Ehlers) of keeping track of our members that are having bad stuff going on in their lives (and good stuff!). Carol Wall keeps Gayhead retirees engaged and connected through planned luncheons and timely emails. I’m sure many other schools do the same.

But we are all on the same train, and it’s just a matter of luck, genes, and good personal habits that will determine when we will run out of track (not a sports metaphor!). Until then, it is our personal responsibility to stay engaged with life to the best of our abilities. If you have 10 grandchildren, most of your hair and teeth, a stomach that can digest a cinder block, a car that starts in winter, a vacation home in a warm climate zone, and three good friends that you can call at 3:00 a.m. to come and fetch you (with bail money), we are happy for you.

On the other hand, if your spouse is long gone, your only child is living in a commune in Malaysia, your fifteen-year-old cat isn’t eating her food, and you have been -- slowly but surely -- exiting yourself from the human race, it’s time for a reboot.

Some suggestions (no special order):
Get rid of any sweatpants in your wardrobe.
Go to church. Any church to start. Episcopal churches are good (they will accept anyone and every one). But look around and find one where you are comfortable. You do not have to believe in God! Tell them you’re a work in progress.
Join a mahjong group (You don’t have to be Chinese or Jewish!).
Get a haircut, manicure, pedicure. Do something about those ears.
Run for office. I’m serious. Check the last election.
If you can afford a new car, go for it (Do you want to leave your money to a commune in Malaysia?) Get one that parks itself.
Lighten up on your Facebook time. A lot of it is Fake News! (hyperbole at best) Bad!! Go find a real friend. They are out there. Probably looking for you.

There are dozens of things in the Real World that are waiting for our input. Pilot trainees are told that no matter how dire the circumstances are, you have to keep flying the plane. If the engine’s on fire and the wings are about to fall off, you gotta keep flying -- until you can’t. Good advice for pilots. Good advice for retirees. As those great WWII posters said so well, “Keep ‘em Flyin’!”

Capasso Scholarship winner thanks WCRT
Dear WCRT,
As I prepare to graduate from Roy C. Ketcham High School, I would like to take the time to thank you for the generous scholarship that you awarded me.
I am sincerely grateful and am looking forward to studying elementary education in college.
Thank you again,
Carly Wright
WCRT thanked for donations to non profits...

October 14, 2017

Mary Coiteux, Chairperson Gifts and Contributions
Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
280 New Hackensack Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Dear Mary:

Once again, I would like to thank you and the WCRT members for supporting our early literacy project, Leading to Reading. Your continued support has helped to make the program such an important outreach into our community.

Since Leading to Reading began in 2004, over 30,000 books have been distributed to children in our area. Many of your members are volunteers who continue to make family book packets, serve as community readers, provide book giveaways, take part in a middle school community service project, and celebrate Children’s Book Week. Every baby born at Vassar Brothers Medical Center leaves the hospital with a board book and information on the importance of reading to infants as part of the parent take-home packet. Our newest outreach, Laundromat Libraries, provides used books in places where children spend long times waiting. They are invited to read them there and take one home with them.

Your support is truly appreciated. An article has been placed in our monthly newsletter, The Branch, and we will highlight your donation on our website and Facebook page and list the WCRT in our outreach materials. Please share my thanks with the others in your group.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Harrel
Project Director

July 11, 2017

The Wappers Congress of Retired Teachers
ATTN Ms. Mary Coiteux
13 Easy St.
Hopewell Junction, New York 12533

Dear Ms. Coiteux:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, please accept our thanks for your generous donation.

As you know, Miles of Hope funds support services for people affected by breast cancer within the eight counties of the Hudson Valley. Your donation will enable us to continue and expand the important programs and services we offer to this under-served population.

Again, thanks for your contribution in memory of Rhoda Post to help us continue this important work.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Cathy Varunok
Co-Founder

[Signature]

Dana Effron
Co-Founder
October 31, 2017

Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
Att: Mary Colteux
280 New Hackensack Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Dear Maggie,

We are honored your group "WCRT Rock Solid" chose Literacy Connections to receive your continued support for adult and family literacy in our community.

We are a small group with a big mission: to help eradicate adult illiteracy. We know that literacy changes lives, and now we also know from empirical research that children who have parents who read are far more likely to succeed in their lives too.

Literacy provides hope, opportunity, and enrichment.

Thank you so much for your support. There is no doubt that we could not do what we do without people like you.

Sincerely,

Debbie Paskowski
Bookkeeper/ Office Manager

This letter hereby acknowledges your contribution of $100.00, and assures that you have received no goods, benefit or compensation of any kind in return for your donation.

Helping people to read, write, and reach their potential in Dutchess, Columbia, Green and Orange Counties
...Even more thanks for WCRT donations.

October 16, 2017

Ms. Mary Coiteux, Chairperson
WCRT Gifts and Contributions
Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
280 New Hackensack Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Dear Ms. Coiteux:

Thank you for your generous donation of $100. We are planning to build up our juvenile science section – and your gift will help us with that goal!

Sincerely,

Frances C. Harrison
Executive Director

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First-timer Denise Lombardi spent 22 years as a Special Ed teacher at Fishkill Plains. She retired this past June.

Jack Donnolly, seated, RCK Reading teacher listens while Joe Barone, Italian teacher, chats with Barbara Searle, JJHS, and Betsy Macnamee, RCKHS, both English teachers.

Newly retired Jeannine Beaumont taught 3rd and 4th Grades and AIS for 16 years at Myers, Gayhead, and Fishkill Plains.
This golf term could be heard all over the course at the Beekman Golf Club on Friday, September 15 as 91 golfers, some of whom were Duffers, took to the links to play in a tourney sponsored by the New Hamburg Yacht Club to raise money for the Meals on Wheels Program of Wappingers Falls.

This was the 14th Annual Day of Golf. The weather was perfect. Sunny with temps in the 80s as the golfers mingled with each other, sipping coffee, tea, soda, water, and another beverage enjoyed by many golfers (guess what that was?) YUP!!! THAT’S CORRECT!

Ten members of The Golf Committee were present to work their tails off for this most worthy cause. Many of the members were former WCSD teachers and administrators. HIP, HIP HOORAY! At day’s end, rave reviews were given by many of the golfers saying, “This was the best tournament I have ever played in! I’ll be back next year!”

One aspect of the fund raising for the tournament is called “Feed A Resident.” Sometimes a Meals on Wheels client cannot afford the weekly $25.00 for their meals due to some unforeseen circumstances. So, members of the community contribute $25.00 so that a client will still be provided their daily meals. This year $1,525.00 was raised for this program. When you read about next year’s tournament in the Postscript, please consider donating to the Feed A Resident Program. Who knows, (da Shadow do,) in the future you may need the services of Meals on Wheels.

Other highlights that contributed to the success of this tournament are a raffle of 60 very impressive gifts, a 50/50, a 2 for 1, 4 New York Giant Tickets with parking, a putting contest, and a Romantic Week-end getaway. The total raised for these highlights was $2,660.00! AWESOME!

Sooooo, do you want to know how much was raised for the Meals on Wheels Program of Wappingers Falls? Well, hold on to your pants…. drum roll please… a check was presented to Meals on Wheels at the October 25 meeting of the NHYC for $11,720.00. HOLY COW!

In actuality, there are too many individuals to name who helped to make this tournament a success. However, I feel I should mention TEG Federal Credit Union for their Diamond Sponsorship and Frank Contelmo and Jack Fedigan for their Platinum Sponsorship. Also, accolades to the Mensching Team of Signal Graphics for printing the Registration Form as well as the expertly designed Golf Program put together by the gifted and talented Kathy Corrigan!

Just as an aside, a bride and groom couple, shown below, arrived on the scene accompanied by their hair stylist, Carol Gillert. They arrived at the start of the tournament and enjoyed themselves to the end!

Thanks to all who helped make this tournament the HUGE success that it was!
NYSUT Member Benefits... more than just insurance!

As an additional benefit to NYSUT members and their families, your union membership allows you to participate in more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits.

These offerings include crucial products that you may already purchase such as life, auto & homeowners insurance, unbiased financial services and expert legal advice. But your NYSUT membership also allows you to participate in a variety of shopping, travel and personal programs that can help you save on everyday purchases and those special occasions.

Our endorsed shopping/travel/personal programs offer savings on numerous online purchases, including:

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<th>Theme Park &amp; Movie Tickets</th>
<th>Office Supply Discounts</th>
<th>Electronics Discounts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel &amp; Vacation Discounts</td>
<td>Retail Store Discounts</td>
<td>Ski Tickets</td>
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<td>Car &amp; Truck Rentals</td>
<td>Concerts &amp; Sporting Events</td>
<td>Car Buying Service</td>
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Participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also gives you a trusted advocate ready to assist you with any issues or concerns with any of our programs.

Member Appreciation Month coming in February 2018!

As a show of thanks to the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that comprise this labor union, NYSUT Member Benefits will once again be holding our annual Member Appreciation Month celebration in February 2018.

Special prize drawings will be held each day of the month. To be eligible to win, you must be a member of our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

Sign up any time through the end of February 2018 to be eligible to win... but if you join MAP by January 31, 2018, you'll have the most chances to win!

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.