

WCT COMMENTATOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE WAPPINGERS CONGRESS OF TEACHERS

Wappingers Congress of Teachers Invites you to the 2nd Annual



**February 23,
2018**

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

John Jay Gym



**Suggested
\$2.00/per person
Donation**

To benefit Sparrows Nest



*Sparrow's Nest Mission Statement:

Sparrow's Nest of the Hudson Valley provides two meals, once a week, to the families of caregivers and children diagnosed with any type of cancer. Caregivers are defined as legal guardians of children, under the age of 18, living in the home. Caregivers and/or children diagnosed with any cancer that requires chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery qualify. All recipients must live within a 20 mile radius of the charity's health department-approved kitchen in Wappingers Falls.

To learn more about Sparrow's Nest, visit their web site at <https://sparrowsnestcharity.org/>.

HUDSON VALLEY FRANCOPHONE CONNECTION

By Delphine Gueren, RCK

Along with two of my friends, I organized a Francophone group called the Hudson Valley Francophone Connection. We meet the first Sunday of the month, generally at the Newburgh Free Library. We have guest speakers and various presentations and celebrations, all in French, and we have been meeting for five years. We

sponsored the opening of a French collection at the Newburgh Library with new books added every year. Our group also runs a story time in French at the library every first Sunday of the month. If interested, please visit— <http://frenchnewburgh.wixsite.com/newburghfrancophones/information>.



BOOK CLUB IN KINGSTON

By Greg Bornstein, RCK

There is a book club I run in Kingston at the Rough Draft bookstore. According to the Rough Draft website, "Rough Draft is a bar and bookstore located at Kingston, New York's historic four corners. We are dedicated to providing a fantastic selection of beer, cider, and wine; Counter Culture coffee; DUB pies and local pastries; a curated selection of books of all kinds; and a place for people from Kingston and beyond to come together for reading, drinking, conversation, and nightly events." The book club's second meeting will take place in March. We are trying to meet once/month. The first book we covered was *Lincoln in the Bar* by George Saunders, and we are currently reading Emma Cline's *The Girls*. For more information, check out the Rough Draft website (<https://www.roughdraftny.com/>) or call (845-802-0027) or email (roughdraftbar@gmail.com).



The Girls by Emma Cline—Summary reprinted from the Penguin Random House website: Northern California, during the violent end of the 1960s. At the start of summer, a lonely and thoughtful teenager, Evie Boyd, sees a group of girls in the park, and is immediately caught by their freedom, their careless dress, their dangerous aura of abandon. Soon, Evie is in thrall to Suzanne, a mesmerizing older girl, and is drawn into the circle of a soon-to-be infamous cult and the man who is its charismatic leader. Hidden in the hills, their sprawling ranch is eerie and run down, but to Evie, it is exotic, thrilling, charged—a place where she feels desperate to be accepted. As she spends more time away from her mother and the rhythms of her daily life, and as her obsession with Suzanne intensifies, Evie does not realize she is coming closer and closer to unthinkable violence.

RCK'S RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CLUB

By Justine Bell, RCK

Here are some of this year's Random Acts of Kindness Club highlights:

- ♦ Gathered a total of 68 personal items to donate to our troops through Operation Gratitude (The Club recently received a "thank you" letter.)
- ♦ Gathered a large quantity of non-perishable food (about 4 boxes worth) to give to a needy family of eight in the WCSD for Christmas
- ♦ Created blue ribbons to give out in memory of Josh Indorf
- ♦ Held an apparel sale to raise money for the Josh Indorf Memorial Scholarship Fund
- ♦ On Feb 15th, visited the Sapphire Nursing Home in the village to play games and give out flowers and valentines



A BLIZZARD OF KINDNESS AT KINRY ROAD

By Meredith Inkeles, Kinry

During the Great Kindness Challenge (January 22 – 26, 2018), the students of Kinry Road were challenged by the PBIS Team to complete twenty or more random acts of kindness from the Great Kindness Checklist for grade 2-12. Students received the 50-item list which includes acts such as:

- compliment five people
- help a younger student
- be kind to yourself and eat a healthy snack
- whisper "thank you" to the librarian
- draw a picture and give it to somebody
- step up for someone in need



At the end of the week, seventy-five students had completed the task and earned a snowflake on the Bulletin Board of Kindness. To learn more about The Great Kindness Challenge, visit <https://thegreatkindnesschallenge.com/schooledition/>.

Learning about and practicing kindness continues for the students. Kinry is now focusing on our next community service project, Tip the Tacoma, by collecting food and toiletries for Dutchess Outreach and the Grace Smith House. Students, faculty, and staff are trying to obtain enough donations to "tip" fifth-grade teacher Mr. Stapleton's Toyota Tacoma. Updates will be available in March!

RALPH & JANET CAPASSO SCHOLARSHIP

The WCT, in conjunction with the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers, is offering three (3) \$2,000 scholarships to seniors presently enrolled in any public or private high school planning to attend college in the fall of 2018. To be eligible candidates must have a parent or legal guardian who is a member in good standing of the WCT.

The selection process for these awards will require the following:

- an application
- an essay
- a high school transcript (including senior year classes & grades)
- one letter of recommendation
- a personal interview for the finalists



Applications will be available in the WCT office on February 20, 2018. Please call 845-227-5065 to request an application or pick it up directly. To be considered, applications must reach the WCT office no later than 5:00 PM on April 6, 2018.

WJH ART TEACHER, CYNTHIA MCCUSKER: INTERNATIONAL ARTIST

Cynthia McCusker, junior high (7th grade) art teacher, has been selected for art residences in Italy, France, and Poland. She was awarded a partial scholarship for the residency in France where she participated in a performance painting at a live concert with over 2,000 people in attendance.

Her work was featured in juried exhibitions in Paris, France; Marnay-sur-Seine, France; Lancut, Poland; various locations throughout Poland as part of a traveling exhibition; Naples, Italy; Miami, FL; Tubac, Arizona; many galleries in the tristate area, including several in New York City.

Locally, Cynthia has participated in performance painting fundraisers for local non-profit organizations like Mid-Hudson Animal Aid and Howland Cultural Center; just completed a mural at a hair salon in Hyde Park; was the Artist in Residence for the Walkway Over the Hudson Opening Celebration; worked with community art-making efforts which involved WJHS students and many local families including seniors; and made mosaic murals with village kids in the Village of Wappingers Falls (at Veterans Park).

Her first sale of 2018 was to a collector in Rome, where work was part of a juried exhibition at Domus Romana Art Gallery. Be sure to visit Cynthia's website: <http://cynthiamccusker.com/> to see her gallery of art.



Vision, Cynthia McCusker, acrylic on wood panel, 48"x18"

GAYHEAD RAISES OVER \$40,000 DURING JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

By Karen Ferrara, Gayhead

Gayhead has raised our highest Jump Rope for Heart total ever, raising **\$40,746.34** to help the American Heart Association fund research and education programs. On Valentine's Day, Mr. Sean Keenan, a 4th-grade teacher had his head shaved. The following classes attended the head shaving:

- Ms. Schukal's (the 6th grade with the most participants at 45% and the most money \$1,820)
- Mr. Kennedy's (the 5th grade with the most participants at 48% and the most money \$1,405)
- Mrs. Colucci's (raised \$5,208 the most money in the whole school)
- Mrs. Guerriero's and Mrs. Tortarella's class (with the most 4th grade participants at 52 %).

The Shavers for the day were the top two Gayhead fundraisers Aidan Downey (\$4,335) and Alycia Conti (\$1,220), and raffle winners (those who raised \$100 or more) Ella Corrao, Victoria Abt, and Mrs. Burger.

The top fundraising class in the whole school was Mrs. Colucci's 4th-grade class raising \$5,208. They will also earn a Heart Healthy luncheon in the Spring. The Top participating class with 74% participation was Mrs. Carroll's 1st-grade class. They will earn a Recess Equipment Package.

Thank you to all of the amazing Gayhead Grizzlies that participated in this life-saving effort!

Quote from Mr. Sean Keenan, 4th-grade teacher: *" There are a couple of reasons I volunteered to have my head shaved. Most importantly, The American Heart Association does an unbelievable job for a GREAT cause!! My good friends Mr. Pig-gott, Mrs. Boccini, and Mr. Russo, are highly motivated physical education teachers who take on the enormous task for the benefit of the charity and I thought shaving my head could help raise more money.*

Another reason is Norm Schofield, who the charity drive honors. I went to Our Lady of Lourdes with some of his children. They are a great family who are pillars of the community. Doing things for other people is one of the Core Values we learned at Lourdes. So, I figured if getting my head shaved would help raise a little more money, it would be well worth it.

I also feel that leading by example is a good way to get my point across to the students at Gayhead, my football players I coached at Millbrook High School , and the girls on my JV basketball team at John Jay."



FOUNDATION LAUNCHES SECOND INNOVATION SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

By Norma Chlus, RCK

Over the last two years, three John Jay High School Alumni - Nolan Kartholl, John McMahon, and Mitri Najjar – combined their passion for business acumen to create the Educ845 Foundation. Recognizing an opportunity to offer experiential business learning to high school students, Educ845 seeks to create the next generation of conscience, analytical problem solvers and students who can accelerate their ability to make an impact by hosting innovation scholarship competitions.

The competitions, which run throughout the school year, enable groups of two to four high school seniors to compete for a \$5,000 college scholarship. Their task: Create a solution that improves the high school student experience. Launching in 2016, Educ845 hosts a series of workshops over the course of the year that helps the teams form, develop, market, and pitch their business ideas. During these sessions, the students interact with experienced entrepreneurs, corporate executives, and academics from leading universities to help guide their thinking and introduce them to a network of professionals.



Last year's winner of the \$5,000 prize, Mike Pergolizzi and Chris Callaghan (left & center), with co-founder, John McMahon (right).

The Educ845 is building off its successful first year and kicked off its second competition at John Jay in January. The team expects to branch out to other schools in the coming years.

The foundation will be hosting its Second Annual Evening for Education fundraiser at the Public House Restaurant in New York City on Saturday, February 24th from 7PM-10PM at the Public House. Tickets are available at www.educ845.org/event, and WCSSD employees get \$25 off using the Promo Code: **EDUCATOR**. The event will feature a 3-hour open bar, appetizers, raffles, and give-a-ways!

To learn more about The Educ845 Foundation or to get involved, please visit www.Educ845.org.

NYSUT REACTS TO MASS SHOOTING IN FLORIDA HS

Source: NYSUT Media Relations
February 15, 2018

New York State United Teachers today released the following statement on the mass shooting in Parkland, Fla. that claimed 17 lives, shattered countless others and horrified the nation.

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said, "Once again, our nation grieves over a senseless act of violence and destruction in a school. We are humbled and heartened by the stories of teachers and school professionals who put their lives on the line to protect the students in their care. We share the rage of everyone asking why we must continue to endure this kind of tragedy. There is no single right answer to stopping these horrific attacks. We should be united in our commitment to ensuring that every school is a sanctuary for teaching and learning, and a safe, nurturing environment for all."

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Reprinted from AFT's Share My Lesson <https://sharemylesson.com/collections/helping-children-cope-traumatic-events>

Schools are often the most important places in a community for educators, students and parents to receive support when a crisis occurs; our schools provide a familiar environment where the needs of students, their families and faculty can be met in one place.

In the aftermath of recent cowardly acts of violence against the men, women and children of Broward County, Florida; Rancho Tehama Reserve, California; Sutherland Springs, Texas; and New York City, the American Federation of Teachers' Share My Lesson has selected lesson plans, webinars and go-to guides for educators and the wider community to help grieving and fearful students cope in the days to come. Please check back in with us; we will be adding resources as they become available. Thirty-nine lessons covering from Pre-K through high school are available.

Currently in the Collection:

- Mass Shootings
- Helping Students Express Their Feelings
- Mental Health Resources
- When Hate is in the Headlines



RELIEF FOR THE MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Donate online at <https://www.aft.org/broward-relief>



Broward
Teachers
Union

Our hearts are broken. It is impossible to make sense of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Florida. But in moments of tragedy, our union family comes together to support one another—and we ask you to join us.

Your contribution through the AFT Disaster Relief Fund will go directly to providing resources and supports for the students, families, educators and staff at Stoneman and the surrounding school community.

Thank you for standing with our union brothers and sisters and the communities they serve.

February 1, 2018

Dear DEHIC Participants:

This is to inform you of an important update from the DEHIC Board of Trustees that will positively impact the prescription drug benefit of the Alternate PPO, Healthy Advantage PPO and EPO Select 20 beginning July 1, 2018. This important update is estimated to save the health plan \$2.2M over the next plan year.

During the Board of Trustee's meeting held on January 24, 2018, a motion was made to approve the introduction of Mandatory Mail Order Coverage for prescription drug maintenance medications.

By definition, maintenance medications are those drugs used to treat chronic, long-term conditions taken on a regular, recurring basis. Examples of chronic conditions requiring this type of treatment include diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc. DEHIC members currently have an opportunity to obtain their maintenance medication through the mail order process under Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI). The process is currently voluntary, and members are able to obtain a 90-day supply for two copayments.

Beginning on July 1, 2018, members will be required to obtain their maintenance medications through ESI, which will save time and money (two copayments for 90-day supply remains in place). No longer will they need to make a trip to the pharmacy, as the medication will be delivered directly to their home address. If members will be away from home for extended periods (e.g., 3 months or more), the medication can easily be re-directed upon request.

We have attached materials for your review that explain the process for you as well as a list of maintenance medications. The attached list of medications is subject to change by ESI, so it is important to periodically check with Empire customer service on such updates.

Although this does not go into effect until July 1, 2018, please enroll sooner than later so that any issues that may arise can be worked out. To ease in the transition beginning July 1, 2018, members will be allowed to obtain two prescription fills at their pharmacy if they have forgotten to enroll in the mail order service. After that, they must use the mail order service, or will have to pay the full cost of the prescription out of pocket. Should members forget to use the mail order service beginning July 1st, a letter will be sent to the member from ESI within 2 weeks after each fill at the pharmacy. The letter will remind the member to use mail order, as well as the ways in which they can sign up. A phone number will be included for additional member support.

Please take the time to review your medications and check the list to see what maintenance drugs are covered. Remember this will be mandatory as of July 1, 2018.

In Solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini

Pasquale Delli Carpini



THIS MONTH IN LABOR HISTORY

<http://www.unionist.com>

16 February 2011—All public schools in Milwaukee and Madison, Wisc., are closed as teachers call in sick to protest Gov. Scott Walker's plans to gut their collective bargaining rights.

19 February 1975—The U.S. Supreme Court decides in favor of sales clerk Leura Collins and her union, the Retail Clerks, in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten Inc.*—the case establishing that workers have a right to request the presence of their union steward if they believe they are to be disciplined for a workplace infraction.

Weingarten Rights: Read word for word to your supervisor. "If this discussion, meeting or telephone call could in any way be related to my being disciplined or terminated or affect any of my working conditions, I exercise my federal rights and hereby request that my union representative or shop steward be present. Without their presence, I choose not to participate in this discussion or meeting. Please do not request that I waive this right."



WCT EXECUTIVE BOARD 2017—2018

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Director Political Action: Jim Marrinan (OG)

Secondary at Large: Diane DiChiara (JJ)

Secondary at Large: Ann Liebergot (VW)

Elementary at Large: Michelle Ross (GY)

Elementary at Large: Theresa Stowell (FP)

22 February 1997—Albert Shanker dies at age 68. He served as president of New York City's United Federation of Teachers from 1964 to 1984 and of the American Federation of Teachers from 1974 to 1997.



Albert Shanker

23 February 1868—W.E.B.

DuBois, educator and civil rights activist, born.

25 February 2011—A crowd estimated to be 100,000 strong rallied at the Wisconsin state Capitol in protest of what was ultimately was to become a successful push by the state's Republican majority to cripple public employee bargaining rights.

NYSUT's Upcoming Social Justice All Year Round topics are:

- February: Social Justice (World Day of Social Justice, Feb. 20, every year)
- March: Women's Rights (Women's History Month; International Women's Day, March 8, every year)
- April: Children's Rights (Child Abuse Prevention Month; Global Youth Services Day, April 20-22, 2018; Bring your Sons and Daughters to Work Day, fourth Thursday in April every year)
- May: Immigrant Workers' (May Day/International Workers Day, May 1, every year)
- June: Environmental Justice (World Environment Day, June 5, every year)

July/August: Labor; Wage Equality (Labor Day, first Monday in September, every year)

Union Dues for 2017

\$884.80

**THE PRESCRIPTION & COPAYMENT/
COINSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT
WINDOW IS NOW OPEN.**

You have until **March 31, 2018** to file your paperwork with Daniel H. Cook. Please refer to the Welfare Trust Fund Forms tab on the WCT website for forms and details on what to do.

**WCT WELFARE TRUST
FUND LEGAL & FINANCIAL
DAYS 2017-2018**

Mar 21, 2018 Apr 18, 2018
May 23, 2018 June 20, 2018

*If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call the union office at 227-5065.

**A PUBLICATION OF THE
WAPPINGERS CONGRESS OF TEACHERS**

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BOTH NONCOMMERCIAL, MEMBER ADS (NO CHARGE/TWO ISSUES) & COMMERCIAL ADS (\$5/ISSUE), THROUGH WCT OFFICE:

commentator@wcteachers.org.

Checks payable & mailed to WCT

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**THE WCT WELFARE TRUST
FUND TRUSTEES**

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Theresa Stowell—Treasurer

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Kim Mahusky—Trustee

Pasquale Delli Carpini—Trustee

Ronnie Dwyer—WTF Administrator

LOCATION OF WCT OFFICE

280 NEW HACKENSACK RD

WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY 12590

Located directly across from Dutchess
County Airport

On the right 2.5 miles from Rt 9

On the left .25 miles from All Angels and
376 Intersection

Next to Mid-Hudson Podiatry

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

WCT OFFICE:	845-227-5065
DANIEL H. COOK :	800-342 -6651
MIRKIN & GORDON: (LAWYERS)	914-997 -1576
DAVIS VISION :	800-999 -5431
STACY BRAUN ASSOC : (FINANCIAL)	888-949 -1925