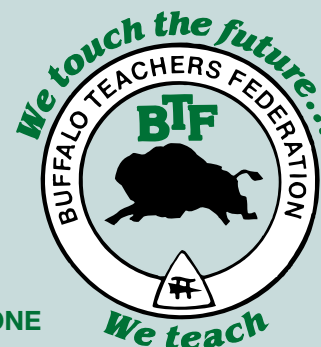


# PROVOCATOR

December 2020

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 51/NUMBER 2

DEDICATION  
SOLIDARITY  
PROFESSIONALISM  
PRIDE  
SECOND TO NONE



## Different This Year, BTF's 24th Annual Thanksgiving Drive Still Feeds More Than 200 Needy Families

For the 24th consecutive year, the Buffalo Teachers Federation has made Thanksgiving "a day of thanks" for more than 200 needy families in the Buffalo School District.

Thousands of dollars in food and gift certificates were donated by BTF members and distributed through several charitable and non-profit groups.

The annual event is held in an effort to "make sure those families enjoy a 'meal of thanks' on Thanksgiving Day", BTF President Phil Rumore explained.

"As we do each year, Buffalo teachers wanted to do their part to make sure families, who might otherwise

go without, enjoy their Thanksgiving meal," President Rumore said.

Under normal circumstances, the Thanksgiving food collections are held in many of the schools and teachers donate thousands of pounds of canned food and dry goods which are taken to the BTF office for distribution.

This year, however, because of Covid-19 restrictions causing most teachers to work from home, the annual event was a little different. Donors were asked to drop off goods at the BTF's delivery door. Both Hutch Tech and School 72 made generous contributions.

In addition, the volunteers, including students from Hutch Tech's JROTC classes who usually converge on the BTF to pack grocery bags with the items needed for a traditional Thanksgiving feast, did not gather for that task.

Instead, the BTF provided \$25 gift certificates so the families could purchase the food themselves.

"This is our 24th Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. This year, bags were not packed with canned

and packaged goods but rather, more easily distributed monetary donations were made by Buffalo teachers", Phil explained.

"Over 4000 families have benefited from the BTF Thanksgiving Food Drive. This is a wonderful way for all of us to give thanks for what we have. After all, isn't that what Thanksgiving is all about?", Phil continued.

The Thanksgiving Day meal donations were distributed to families through The Gloria Parks Community Center, Native American Community Services, Fulgham Family Foundation and City Mission.



### TRUNK FULL OF THANKS:

Teachers and staff of Pathways Academy donated Thanksgiving dinner to seven of its neediest families. The holiday baskets included a turkey, stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, vegetables, rolls and pie. The items were collected and delivered to the students' homes by Kristin Cangialosi, the school Social Worker. The staff is also providing gifts and food to 15 students and their families for the winter holidays. Ms. Cangialosi canvassed the families to determine what was needed and then a list was generated for staff to purchase a gift for each member of the family, who might otherwise not have celebrated the holidays this year. The Pathways Academy has programs at Burgard, I-Prep, Riverside, South Park and East high schools.



Recipients of the BTF Thanksgiving Food Drive received gift certificates in the above festive envelope

## BTF Continues Fighting for Teachers

Despite Buffalo teachers working hard to provide the best education and support possible to its students, the District seems intent on making life more difficult for its dedicated educators.

First, the District insisted teachers report to schools to teach two days per week, despite concerns about disinfecting issues. Then, they didn't notify teachers of reported Covid-19 cases in the buildings.

But, after hearing the BTF's concerns, the District has agreed to notify staff of reported Covid-19 cases in its buildings.

Next, the District decided to enact late, confusing and problematic grading changes after many teachers already filed their grades. However, after the BTF notified Superintendent

Kriner Cash of teachers' concerns, grading deadlines were extended.

Other issues the BTF is currently working on include:

- the District's refusal to issue hotspots to teachers who do not have internet at home
- school reopening plans
- improper practice case against the District for refusal to set tentative dates for negotiations
- grievances on:
  - ✓ duplicate lesson plans
  - ✓ multiple student attendance reports
  - ✓ SPED documentation requirements

Anyone experiencing these or other issues is asked to document the problem and email the information to [lsauer@btfny.org](mailto:lsauer@btfny.org)

*Hardly one day goes by that you, probably one of the most important people in your students' lives, don't give gifts more precious and more important than many they will receive — you in your own way shape knowledge and provide encouragement. Indeed, through your caring, you become an important part of your children's lives. Every one of us can remember an important teacher in our life. That important teacher is and will be you for someone. On behalf of the Buffalo Teachers Federation and Staff, may the precious gifts that you give so freely enrich your lives and be returned to you one hundred fold during this holiday season and throughout the New Year.*



## No Greater Gift by Phil Rumore

Though a month away, Don and Julie's excitement about the upcoming holiday easily reflected that of "their kids." "Yes, even though their students sometimes seemed intent upon exhausting the last remnants of their patience and sanity, they were still "their kids."

The winter holiday break was Don and Julie's special time together. This year they would once again wing their way across the country to the West Coast to have their Christmas dinner in the warmth of the old hotel with the giant Christmas tree. After dinner, the voices of the boys' choir would fill the air with songs of the holiday season.

They had been married there, and every year since then had scrimped and saved so they could return to the wonderful old hotel they accidentally discovered. Each year it brought them closer together. Each year's visit became ever more special. It had been "one of those years." Once in a while, either Julie or Don would get what they would jokingly call "a class from the dark side." Each student, by themselves, was fine; but all in one class — that school bus never looked so good at the end of the day!

This year, they both had "classes from the dark side." "I know it's the ghost of my third grade teacher getting back at me for hitting her smack in the middle of the forehead with a spitball," Don said. "How was I supposed to know that Carl was going to put his head down on his desk at the exact moment I shot it. I know it must be her. There's no other answer," Don sighed. "You know that's it. The ghost of one of our old teachers is getting back at us. There's no other answer," Julie said as they both laughed.

The catalyst in each of their classes seemed to be Nicole and Michael Warren. Nicole was in Julie's fourth grade class and Michael was in Don's sixth grade class. The Warren children weren't bad kids. They were bright, friendly and motivated to learn. They just had that touch of the dark side that made each of their classes bubble beneath the surface, only

to bubble over when you least expected it. Of course, the anticipation of the holiday season stirred the pot even more.

The holiday season always found Don and Julie having students discuss their own holiday and how they would observe it. They talked of Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Christmas and all the holidays each one observed. They remembered how they always seemed to learn something new from one of the kids.

Of course, their students knew about Julie and Don's yearly pilgrimage. "What do you do in a plane for that long?" "Do you have to bring food on the plane?" "How big is the Christmas tree?" "How come there are only boys in the choir?" were but a few of the endless questions that each day came out of nowhere.

"Do they stay up nights thinking of these questions?" Don asked Julie one day at lunch.

"They must stay up nights thinking about our trip," Julie said as she smiled and shook her head. They agreed that they would tell their classes that they would bring back pictures of the old hotel, the giant Christmas tree and the boys' choir.

One evening as they were making final flight and hotel arrangements, Don mentioned that his class had been quiet with Michael out. The kids said that he had the flu.

"Is Nicole in school?" Don asked.

"Yes, but she must be getting something, too. She's been very quiet," Julie answered.

"I think I'll give the Warrens a call to see how Michael is doing and find out when he'll be back. You know — I'll deny I said this — but we sort of miss him," Don said shaking his head as if he couldn't believe what he had just said.

When Don came back into the room, Julie knew something was wrong.

"Michael... Michael... has leukemia. He has leukemia," Don said as he sank into the chair.

He put his head back, closed his eyes, and could say no more. Michael needed an immediate bone marrow transplant and the only hospital that had perfected this procedure was the San Diego Medical Center. But since the Warrens couldn't afford the expense, Michael was to begin a promising chemo treatment at one of the local cancer treatment centers. The doctors gave no guarantees, but the treatment had shown promise.

Soon, everyone at school knew Michael was sick, very sick. During the week before the winter break, Michael was in everyone's thoughts. Somehow the family had put together enough money to fly Michael, his mom and sister to San Diego and back (as well as pay for a place to stay). Michael recovered completely. It seems that his sister's marrow was a perfect match.

Michael, that holiday season, and the sense of being one family would long be remembered by the East Rockaway Elementary School students and staff. All of their individual trials and tribulations faded from view and became so very trivial.

It was a lesson that was not, but was — one that each in his own way did not learn, but understood.

That made it all the more important.

Now, 25 years later, this was to be Julie and Don's last winter holiday season as teachers. In all, they had only missed one visit to the old hotel. Their retirement was set for June. The anticipation of their annual visit to the old hotel still was there — still very special. They were getting ready to leave on the last day before the break, when the always-too-loud intercom blared out "Don and Julie Adams to the office please."

Upon reaching the office, the clerk advised that a Dr. Anderson and a lawyer were there to see them. Don and Julie looked at each other wondering what had happened.

"Mr. and Mrs. Adams?" "Yes," Don and Julie replied hesitantly. "We came to thank you," said the young woman, tears welling in her eyes.

"Thank us for what?" replied Don.

"I'm Michael Warren, the boy whose life you saved," the young man said, his voice almost breaking.

"I'm Dr. Anderson, Nicole Anderson. It used to be Nicole Warren, Michael's sister," the woman explained.

The young man stepped forward, tears continuing to well in his eyes. "Mom passed away last month; but before she died, she told us that you had made her promise that she would never tell us that you — our teachers, had given us the tickets and money to go to the hospital in San Diego," he said.

Nicole, unable to contain her emotions any longer, threw her arms around Don and Julie, as did Michael. It was one of those moments when no words need be spoken-when no words could be spoken, but so much was said.

Nicole had become a doctor. Her specialty was pediatric oncology.

Michael, while a lawyer, had returned to school a year ago. It seems that he had long wanted to be a teacher. Student teaching would begin next September. They both had families and were doing well.

"We have always wanted so much to see you again to tell you how much you both meant to us even before we knew what you had done. You were our favorite teachers," Michael explained.

"We wanted to give you something you missed," Nicole said softly.

In the card Michael handed Julie were two tickets to San Diego and a certificate for a week at the old hotel.

"It's funny the things you remember from your childhood, but both Nicole and I remembered, as if it were yesterday, where you both went every winter holiday," Michael said.

Don, Julie, Michael and Nicole spent the rest of the day as if they were family. And although they had not seen each other for years, it seemed as though they had been together forever, and always would be.

That year, as Julie and Don looked up at the giant Christmas tree, listening to the voices of the boys' choir enveloping them, they thought of all the Michaels and Nicoles whose lives were intertwined with theirs, and how, on this special night, somehow they were all together.

Each light on the giant tree was one of "their kids."

Yes, there had been some very tough times, but they wouldn't trade places with anyone. They had meant something to thousands of lives. It was they who had been touched. They who were blessed. They were teachers.



# Letters to the Editor

## BTF Donates \$100 to Carrousel Museum

I wanted to personally thank you for your donation to the museum. Your generosity allows us to continue being a place of joy in our community. As Denise Zielski shared, "the kindness and acceptance the staff provides is so appreciated! We will be life members for sure!!!"

Your donation ensures we can continue providing magical memories for families throughout Western New York. We are so grateful for your gift and hope that you'll stop by for a carousel ride sometime soon!

Please let us know if we can ever answer any carousel questions for you!

Thank you and we look forward to your continued support.

Warm regards,

Megan Hahin, Executive Director  
Herschell Carrousel Factory Mus.

## Variety Kids Telethon Appreciates Donation

Thank you very much for your most generous donation to the 2020 Variety Kids Telethon!

On behalf of all of us at Variety and all the children we serve, we are so very appreciative and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

We look forward to your continued support.

Thank you again,

Jessica Ritch, Development Dir.

Richard Goldstein, Exec. Director

## Retiring Teacher Thanks BTF

As I end my 30+ year teaching career and begin my retirement, I want to take a moment to whole-heartedly thank all of you for your tireless efforts on behalf of the teachers and the students throughout the years. I took comfort in knowing that the union was always there looking out for our best interests and will continue to do so throughout my retirement.

I am thinking of you all as you try to navigate through this unprecedented school year. I wish you all the best!

Stay healthy and be safe!

Sincerely,

Kim Kulakowski, PS#72

## Young Audiences Appreciates Support

On behalf of the board of directors, staff and artists of Young Audiences of Western New York, we wish to thank the Buffalo Teachers Federation for your commitment of \$1,000 to support the 2020-21 school year as we offer more in-school programs like *ArtWorks: Inspired to Create; Hired to Succeed* and *The Erie Canal Residency: 200 Years of Journeys*.

We know that these are challenging times, but we are inspired by the many ways we have seen our community come together to share resources, give back and reassure one another with kindness and connection. Your support will directly impact the implementation of our new digital programs that meet the ever-changing needs of our young people, schools and teachers in this time of uncertainty. Your support also means that more young children have the opportunity to become better people because of their arts-based learning.

The Erie Canal Residency ensures that young people participating in the arts gain significant outcomes, allowing them to achieve success and appreciation of our region's cultural and historic past. The project also incorporates investigation of history, creative writing, music, museum objects and theatre. ArtWorks is a youth development initiative that addresses the need for teens to develop skills in a real world work environment and builds core competencies that are needed in today's economy. Working with a Master Teaching-Artist, apprentices produce high-quality art and gain valuable experiences transferable to any future career.

Thank you again for investing in high-quality arts-in-education programming and sharing our goal of providing access to arts educations.

Beth Ireland

Director of Development and Marketing

## BTF Donates \$250 to Vietnam Veterans

Thank you for your recent gift of \$250 to the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 77. Your gift has been applied to the Peter P. Tycz II Memorial Scholarship fund and will help deserving students stay in school. In recognition of your donation, your name will be placed on a plaque in the Chapter 77 Museum, 47 Main St, Tonawanda.

With the rising costs of higher education and the continued challenges of the local economy, we both know that there is a tremendous need for financial assistance; we average more than 90 applications per year. The number of our scholarships awarded is tied to fundraising and, since its inception in 2005, we have been able to present 410 \$250 scholarships with a total value of \$102,500. With help from people like you, we hope to present even more this year.

Again, thank you for your investment in the future of our country and your recognition of the importance of higher education. The Chapter, the Tycz family, as well as the recipients, greatly appreciate your generosity.

Sincerely,

John Heffernan, Chairman  
Scholarship Committee

## BTF Donation Helps Public Broadcasting

Thank you for your donation of \$400 to WNEB PBS and WBFO! Your generous contribution is already at work bringing vibrant and essential public broadcasting across WNY and Southern Ontario.

Especially, in these unprecedented times, your support assures that our broadcasts on television and radio reach over three million households. You help make it possible for us to bring critical NPR and local programming on WBFO. WNEB PBS can bring daily reporting from the PBS NewsHour team on our health and economic crisis and WNEB Classical can bring peaceful and relaxing classical music.

All of this is available to our community because of your generosity.

Thank you for all that you do and stay safe!

Sincerely,

Colleen Miller, Sr. Director  
Leadership & Legacy Giving

Visit our  
Updated Website  
[www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)

# Longevity – What It Is and How It Works

Longevity. It's a word we hear about in connection with the contract and our pay as teachers, but what is longevity? How does it affect our salary? Does it have any other implications other than salary? Much about longevity seems to be misunderstood. However, understanding it can be quite important for a significant number of our members.

To put it simply, "longevity" is a payment made to teachers for years of service in the District.

If we turn back the clock to the first BTF contract in November 1967, there were a total of 14 salary steps plus longevity incentives for reaching 15, 20 and 25 years. The starting salary for a teacher at Master's + 30 hours was \$6,600/year. Each of the 13 subsequent steps delivered a \$275 raise. Then, the three longevity incentives added an additional \$200 each to the annual salary of those who qualified. The top salary for a teacher with Master's + 30 hours was \$10,775 and this was at a time when a Master's degree was not a requirement, by the way.

That structure of the salary schedule continued for many years. Teachers hit the top of the salary schedule after 25 years, but, like teacher salaries everywhere, it was relatively low in comparison to factory workers and most other professions.

When Phil Rumore was elected BTF president, things began to change for the better with the first contract he negotiated. Two additional longevity incentives at 30 and 35 years were

added in the first year of that contract. In the second year, the time between longevity incentives was reduced to four years and an additional increment was added. Thus, it still took 35 years to get to top step, but top step was one increment higher.

In subsequent contracts, the time between longevity increments decreased from four years to three. In 1987, the time between longevity increments was reduced from three years to two. This had the positive effect of reducing the time it took to reach top step from 35 years to 31 years.

The 1980s was a decade that brought improvements to the salary schedules for teachers in New York State, thanks largely to favorable state budgets when Mario Cuomo was governor. It was getting to be a profession where one could actually make a living and not be subject to staying below the poverty line.

The 1996 collective bargaining agreement brought even more improvements. The salary schedule was compressed in that contract and as a result, it took teachers only 27 years to reach top step, not 31. The structure of the salary schedule stayed this way until 2016 when new hires were started on step 2. New teachers to Buffalo with experience are paid based on Step 2 as the starting point.

In addition to new hires starting at step 2, four additional longevity increments were phased in over the duration of the contract. Thus, while there were still 27 steps, the top step

brought teachers four increments higher than the previous contract in addition to the cost of living raises that were negotiated.

Through all the changes over the years, what remains is that there are still 14 regular steps and the rest are longevity incentives. Nowadays, the longevity incentives deliver the same increase as a regular step does. There is, however, a \$1048 bonus for longevity built into the salary schedule. Teachers receive this as part of their annual salary when they hit step 15.

Our contract states that "...teaching service rendered elsewhere and any combination of such service together with trade experience and military service credit may not exceed six (6) years for purposes of longevity." This can be found in Article XXV, (E) (4) (a) and means that if you enter the district with 12 years of teaching experience, for example, you will start on Step 14 as per the provision that starts teachers based on Step 2. However, only 6 of those 12 years will count towards longevity and you must therefore spend 8 years at Step 14 until you have enough time in the District to qualify for longevity incentives.

Being able to start at Step 14 as a new hire in Buffalo is better than what most districts will offer. Still, eliminating the six-year maximum of service rendered elsewhere for the purposes of longevity is something we would like to change. The proposal to eliminate this restriction was made by BTF for our current negotiations.



## Welcome New Members

The following 36 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last printing of the Provocator. Welcome to the union!

Liz Alvarez  
Jennifer Anderson  
Talitha Baldwin  
Nicole Boreanaz  
Vanessa Boyd  
Daniel Brunner  
Taylor Bryant  
Dulce Centeno  
JoAnna Cockram  
Juetaun Drewitt  
Lorena Erny  
Jack Frisicaro

Jeffrey James  
Kelsey Jankowiak  
Jessica Jones  
Stephen Kelly  
Hannah Kinz  
Kim Luchey-McDuffie  
Luis Maisonet  
Frank Mancuso  
Colleen Melisz  
Lindsay Messore  
Rose Neville  
Jennifer Nielsen

Amanda Ochal  
Yolanda Peay  
Ericka Rivera  
Nicholas Santora  
Lauren Savino  
Daniel Selig  
Lovell Smith  
Sarah Stupke  
Carmen Terrell  
Howard Thompson  
Eryn Thuman  
Brittney Truesdale

## Buffalo Teacher Wins United Way Challenge

A Buffalo teacher was one of 15 Grand Prize winners of the 2020 United Way Challenge.

Sally Brennan, a teacher at Early Childhood Center #17, won a \$1000 gift card to Wegmans.

The United Way Challenge was open to anyone who pledged \$1 per week, or \$52 per year to the United Way campaign or registered on the United Way website, [www.uwbec.org](http://www.uwbec.org).

Grand Prize winners were awarded one of five certificates for \$1,000 each to Wegmans, Tops Friendly Markets or Ashley's Homestore.



# Teachers Visit Student Homes to Help With Technology, Deliver School Supplies and Gifts

The 2020-21 school year will go down in history as one of the most challenging for teachers, parents and students. Technical problems, constant disruptions and distractions in the home and difficulty engaging students are ongoing issues.

Despite the challenges of remote teaching, however, many Buffalo teachers often “go the extra mile,” for their students, quite literally.

Teachers, social workers, and counselors have been delivering school supplies to their students to help them be successful this school year. Many teachers have reported making regular deliveries to students to replenish supplies and provide materials to make learning a little easier than it is online.

In addition, many teachers dropped off “welcome packages” at the start of school, food for Thanksgiving, and now are preparing Christmas treats for students and necessities for needy families.

Teaching during a pandemic has been a challenge for most teachers, but everyone is doing their best to provide the most rigorous education they can for their students.

Many teachers were willing to share their experiences as remote teachers. Here’s what some of the teachers had to say:

**Anna Klapakis**, a Community Based Special Education teacher at the Occupational Training Center, said her students are missing the physical contact of the classroom.

“I think we should all be working from home”, she said. “But the point is that my students, my community-based special education alternate assessed students really do get the short end of the stick without the personal touch in proximity and smiles and high-fives and other subtleties they get from that person-to-person contact. They’re kind of lost so they just sit and stare at the computer.”

**Julie Seemueller Taylor**, an 8:1:1 Community-Based Special Education teacher at South Park High School, personally met with her students to teach them how to access the programs she uses.

“Because I only have eight students, I was able to set aside time to sit down with each of my students and their parents 1:1 and teach them how to use Microsoft Teams and Schoology. This is a big reason



why I think I have had all of my students log on with me every day. Most of my students can go through the entire day independently but for those who may need more support, I am very lucky that their families have been able to help with the technology.

“The most important thing for my students is to develop a routine and to keep them engaged. Every day we begin by checking in with each other. The key is to have everyone’s voice be heard. The students check in and first tell me what learning zone they are in for the day and then tell me one thing that they are grateful for,” she explained.

Seemueller Taylor also said she gives her students “brain breaks” throughout the day to keep them focused.

“I find that it is very important to take brain breaks throughout the virtual learning day. Some ways we do this is by incorporating movement by doing Just Dance videos on YouTube, using the website Go Noodle, doing group exercises or playing games like Simon Says. We’ve also done breathing exercises and mindful listening exercises.”

She also suggested that teachers reach out to their colleagues or teacher groups if they are feeling overwhelmed.

“Now that I am in a routine, I am beginning to enjoy virtual teaching. Even so, there are many things that we simply can’t do if we are not together in person and I can’t wait to get back inside the

classroom and see my kids”, Seemueller Taylor said.

**Elizabeth Spiro Carman**, an Art teacher at School #6, explained how art teachers are being affected by remote learning.

“While remote learning has created many challenges to teachers, students and families, art teachers have the additional burden of teaching homebound students who are without their school-supplied art materials.

“In addition, last spring’s remote learning kept art teachers from ordering supplemental supplies for the 2020-21 school year, magnifying the challenges they face”, she explained.

“At least one BPS art teacher gathered basic materials from the art room, then purchased supplemental art supplies well before the first paycheck of the school year. Then, the teacher spent three to four hours an evening for two weeks, packaging the art materials for the students.

“The teacher’s plan was to periodically package materials for the students as they progressed through each project. Doing this would allow the students the opportunity to successfully manage a small amount of art materials so that the supplies would be available when needed,” Spiro Carman explained.

“So, then, the question became: how to distribute the art supplies to the students?”

Art teachers often have between 450-650 students. Therefore, personal delivery of supplies is impossible.

As schools were distributing lunches and other educational materials, art packets could have been distributed and parents and students could have received the supplies directly from the schools.

However, this method has proven to be less than 100% reliable. Too many BPS families are without transportation, making material pick-ups very difficult, if not impossible,”

She related that one art teacher prepared art supply packets for distribution with educational materials, but the packets were not given to the families picking up materials.

“This is yet another of the ongoing frustrations of remote learning made necessary due to the Covid-19 pandemic,” Spiro Carman sighed.

# District Intent on Conducting Virtual APPR/Evaluations – Observations

As if teachers aren't under enough stress, the District is intent on adding to the stress by evaluating teachers virtually.

The BTF has not agreed to any modification of our APPR Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to which both the BTF and District agreed. Any change would have to be agreed to by the Executive Committee, Council of Delegates and you.

The issue here is that the rubric did not contemplate virtual observations. To make matters worse, adequate training was not provided and many teachers are learning to teach virtually on the job.

If directed to "submit" to an announced observation for APPR, remember there must be a pre-meeting, in which the teacher and administrator agree upon a lesson, and date/time for the observation. For unannounced observations, there must be one "waive off" allowed in which the teacher can ask for the observation to be rescheduled.

If you are observed for your APPR or at any other time:

- Take notes relating to the conditions/circumstances, e.g.:
  - o The date, time and length of the observation.
  - o Was it done virtually, i.e. the administrator was/or was not in your room?
  - o How could the building administrator "view" all of your students?
  - o What did the administrator say during the lesson?
  - o What was said at your pre- and post-meetings with your building administrator?
  - o Other information we can use to challenge this.

The BTF is advising teachers to complete the form indicating that they do not wish to participate in the "Annual Professional Performance Review/Teacher Evaluation" that was sent to all teachers by email on December 7th. It is also available at [btfny.org](http://btfny.org) under Latest News/News and Alerts.



## Sue Raichilson Fêted By JA of WNY

Sue Raichilson, a business teacher at Riverside Academy High School and long-time BTF Executive Committee member and union activist, was honored by Junior Achievement (JA) of Western New York.

Raichilson, a JA Education Champion, was recognized October 29 during the Junior Achievement of WNY Centennial Gala, a virtual celebration broadcast from the Forbes Theatre in downtown Buffalo.

The evening included the history and future of Junior Achievement, celebration of its 100th birthday, and recognition of Sustaining Supporters, Volunteers and Education Champions.

The gala was aired live. For more information, visit the JA website: [www.juniorachievement.org](http://www.juniorachievement.org)

## Did You Know...

That teachers who provide sixty (60) calendar days' notice of their upcoming retirement are entitled to receive a \$500 payment above and beyond any other termination compensation they are due?

Not only does this assist the District in filling vacancies in a timely manner but provides a welcome benefit to teachers.

This can be found in Article XIV, M (p33) of the collective bargaining agreement.

## Art Teacher Wins NYS Art Teachers Award

Michelle Schroeder, an art teacher at Leonardo daVinci High School, has been awarded the 2020 Special Citation member award.

The award was presented by the New York State Art Teachers Association November 22nd during the "This is Art 2020" Virtual Conference.

The Special Citation award is given to members and non-members of the New York State Art Teachers Association or to School District members who have made a significant contribution to art education. Recipients are presented with a plaque.

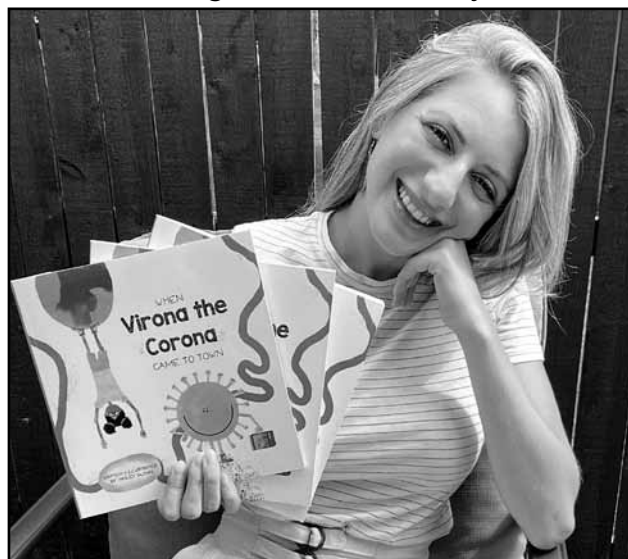
## Buffalo Teacher Publishes Book for Children

Hailey Glynn, a first grade teacher at North Park Community School #50, recently became a best-selling author/illustrator with the publication of her children's book titled "When Virona the Corona Came to Town."

She was trying to think of a way to help her students understand the pandemic and her mom suggested that she write a book! She has enjoyed sharing the book with her students and now with children all over the world. Hailey has other books in the works.

This is Hailey's fourth year teaching first grade. She has a B.A. in international relations and Spanish

and an Ed.M. in childhood education. The BTF congratulates Ms. Glynn!



## Scholarships Available

Scholarships, some earmarked specifically for the children of Buffalo teachers, are being offered by The Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo.

The Foundation will be awarding scholarships for the 2021-22 academic year in the spring.

Students who currently are high school seniors or are already enrolled in an accredited program are encouraged to apply.

Applications are accepted from students all over Western New York and some money is allocated specifically for the children of Buffalo teachers. Awards range from \$1000-\$6000.

The application process opens on January 1st and closes April 30th.

To apply, visit [www.cfgb.org](http://www.cfgb.org) and click on the Scholarships tab. You also may call the CFGB at 852-2857.



# NYSED Cancels January Regents Exams

For only the second time in the history of New York State Regents exams, the New York State Education Department (NYSED), has decided to cancel high school assessments.

Exams scheduled for January 2021 were cancelled due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

NYSED also cancelled the June and August 2020 exams after schools were closed in March.

According to a memorandum issued by Interim Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa, the main reason for cancelling the exams is due to “much uncertainty as to when all secondary-level students in schools across the state will return to fully in-person instruction.”

Her memo also cited safety and fairness issues for the cancellation.

“Consequently we are cancelling the January 2021 Regents Examinations administration as we cannot be certain that these examinations can be administered in a fair, equitable and safe manner for all secondary-level students and teachers across the



## Cancelled January exams give students a break on graduation requirements

State,” Rosa continued.

Because of the cancellation of the January exams, NYSED is making modifications to the assessment requirements that students must meet in order to earn high school diplomas.

Subject to adoption of emergency regulations by the Board of Regents, students who were planning to take one or more Regents exams in January after the completion of a secondary-level course or make up course will be exempt from passing that exam to meet graduation requirements.

To qualify for the exemption, the student must meet one of the following requirements:

- Be currently enrolled in a course that would ordinarily culminate in taking the January exam or earn credit for such course the end of the first semester
- Successfully complete a repeat course between September 1 and the end of the first semester
- Be preparing to take a required Regents exam in order to graduate at the end of the first semester

Students who meet the exemption requirements and earn 65 in the completed course will be awarded the Regents credit.

Any questions about the exemptions from requirements or the effect of such exemptions on student qualification for a diploma should be directed to emscgradeq@nysed.gov.

NYSED has not yet made a decision about the administration of Regents exams in June and August 2021.

“When it is time to decide about these Regents Examinations and other State examination administration periods, those decisions will be fully informed by all available and relevant public health and educational data”, Rosa said. “And as always, we will put the health and safety of students and teachers first.”



## Plan...Protect...Invest...

Proudly Helping Buffalo School Employees with their 403(b) Since 1972



- Local family owned financial firm
- Full transparency on all fees/costs
- Stress-free sign up process

716-674-6700 [www.sgroifinancial.com](http://www.sgroifinancial.com)

Securities offered through Cadaret, Grant & Co., Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory services offered through Sgroi Wealth Advisory Group LLC, an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. Sgroi Wealth Advisory Group LLC, Sgroi Financial LLC, and Cadaret, Grant & Co., Inc. are separate entities.



Greg Mucha  
Optician

Call Today for An Appointment With our Optometrist!

834-3511  
**Eyewear Unlimited**  
1480 Hertel Avenue @ Sterling Avenue

**100% Total Coverage\***

Complete Frame & Lens Coverage for BTF & Dependents

Single Vision or Flat-Top 28  
\* Plastic lenses power to ± .400 SPH. • with ± .200 CYC. Choose from a Special Selection of Frames. Tints extra. Not Good with other offers.

*Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina*



Joe Frandina  
Optician

Call Today for An Appointment With our Optometrist!



Charles San George



EST. 1985



Charles San George II O.D.

Sheridan / Delaware Plaza Across From Tops  
874-4600  
Convenient Parking

100% Coverage for Teachers and Dependents

Monday though Fri: 9:30AM –6:00PM We Supply and Submit Your Forms

Saturdays: 9:30AM – 2:00PM

**Eye Examinations by Appointment - Evenings Available**

## BTF at a Glance

### **BTF President**

Philip Rumore

### **BTF Vice President**

Rebecca Pordum

### **BTF Treasurer**

Joseph Montante

### **BTF Secretary**

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan

### **BTF Executive Committee Members**

#### **Pre-K-6**

Rachel Binda-Lis, April Hall,  
Sophia Howard-Johnson,  
Trisha Rosokoff, Janine Schuster,  
Ruyvette Townsend

#### **7-12**

Dennis Brancato, Patrick Foster,  
Lynn Garcia, Melissa Kenney,  
M. Sue Raichilson, Chris Salamone,  
Eve Shippens

#### **K-12**

Susan Baker, Nicole Herkey,  
Ellen Malone, Mark Mecca,  
Gregory Sawicki, Elizabeth Spiro-Carman

#### **At Large**

Tom Anthony, Marc Bruno,  
Mike Mecca

#### **BTF Headquarters Staff**

Philip Rumore, *President*

Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*

Rebecca Pordum, *Presidential Assistant*

Tim Connick, *NYSUT Counsel*

Jenna Burke, *NYSUT Labor Relations  
Specialist*

Matthew Kibler, *NYSUT Labor Relations  
Specialist*

Robert Mueller, *NYSUT Labor Relations  
Specialist*

Visit Our Updated Website  
[www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)



# PROVOCATOR

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 824  
Buffalo, NY

**BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION**  
**271 PORTER AVENUE**  
**BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14201**  
**716-881-5400**



**Address Service Requested**

## Building Elections to Be Held Virtually

Terms of office for Building Delegates, Alternates and Building Committee members have been extended until January 31, 2021 or until new elections can be held.

The extension was approved by the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates, who had previously extended the terms until November 30.

Elections, normally held in May, were postponed when the Covid-19 pandemic forced schools to close. Current representatives were elected in May 2019.

A letter has been sent to all Delegate Chairs explaining the election procedure and asking them to seek a chairperson for the upcoming election.

Once an Elections Chair has been secured, she/he will seek nominations for candidates wishing to run for office. The nominating window will be open for one week and members can self-nominate and may be nominated in more than one category.

The Elections Chair will send the names of all candidates for the various positions to the BTF. The BTF, with the assistance of ElectionBuddy, a company that specializes in conducting elections by email, will then compile a list of the candidates for the ballot.

Another list of every member in the building, along with their personal emails, will be compiled by the BTF and ElectionBuddy will send out an electronic ballot to all members whose email address is on file with the BTF.

If you have not already submitted your email address to the BTF, you can do so on its website, [www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)

ElectionBuddy will conduct a secure election by secret ballot, then tally and report the results.

ElectionBuddy is a reputable company that has been conducting elections for unions and other organizations for many years.

Please be sure to vote!

## The BTF Needs You!

Not happy with the status quo? Think you can make a difference in the workplace? Be the change you want to see!

All BTF members in good standing can run for Building representative positions in the upcoming elections.

Each school gets a Delegate Chair, and a number of Delegates and Alternates based on the number of teachers in their school.

Two additional representatives are elected to serve on the Building Committee along with the Delegate Chair.

Delegates are voting members of the BTF Council of Delegates, which meets once a month. They are responsible for disseminating information to members in their buildings and representing their schools before the Council.

The Building Committee meets with the Building Principal monthly to discuss building issues raised by teachers in the building.

Other responsibilities include:

- Delegates are responsible for conducting the affairs of the Federation within their respective buildings.
- Delegates communicate to the Council of Delegates the wishes, opinions and reactions of the members they represent.
- The Building Committee represents the interests of the Federation before the administration of their respective schools. It is also responsible for disseminating the minutes of all meetings.

A complete description of these positions and their responsibilities is available in the By-laws, on the BTF website, [www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)

## PROVOCATOR

### **BTF Provocator Staff**

Joseph Montante, *managing editor, photo editor*  
Chris Salamone, *editor*

The **Provocator** is the official publication of the Buffalo Teachers Federation. It will be published six times during the 2020-2021 school year as a service to BTF members and interested parties in the community. Subscription price is included in BTF dues.

**Postmaster**, send address changes to:  
BTF Provocator, 271 Porter Avenue,  
Buffalo, New York 14201.

**Advertising:** Rates and anticipated publishing schedule may be requested from the BTF, 716-881-5400, FAX 716-881-6678. Although advertising is screened, advertising does not imply BTF endorsement of the product, service or the views expressed. Your patronage of our advertisers is appreciated.

The **BTF** is an affiliate of **NYSUT**, **AFT** and **NEA**.

December 2020  
Volume 51, No. 2  
Circulation 4400