



North Pinellas County
Retired Educators Association
NEWSLETTER



email: npcra@gmail.com

PO Box 4248, Clearwater, FL 33758

Vol. 50, Issue 2

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024

Our 50th Year!



Recent Events:

Tues., Sept. 10, Back to School Luncheon
 @ Clearwater Country Club, 11 am - 1:30 pm
 (Details and photos on pp. 5-6 of this issue)

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, NOV 12, Veterans Day Luncheon, 11 am-1:30 pm, Wear red, white, and blue, Clearwater Country Club. Bring items to assist the Homeless Empowerment Program: toiletries, wrapped snack foods, feminine products

Tuesday, Dec. 10, Christmas Luncheon, 11 am-1:30 pm, Clearwater Country Club. Wear Christmas colors. Bring an unwrapped toy for Salvation Army Toy Drive. If you wish to participate, bring a wrapped gift \$5-\$10 for the Naughty Elf Gift Exchange.

Our Tuesday, Nov. 12, luncheon celebrates Veterans Day and brings us a speaker from the Homeless Empowerment Program in Clearwater. HEP is a nonprofit organization providing housing, food, clothing and other services to homeless veterans and families. They are located at 1120 N. Betty Lane in Clearwater.

A graduate of Butler University in Indiana, our speaker Megan Risser has been the Marketing Coordinator for HEP since 2020.



Megan Risser

Please bring supplies for the veterans and families in the Homeless Empowerment Program, including toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, deodorant, razors, etc., wrapped snack foods, feminine products, and other everyday necessities.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



As I'm writing this column, I am sitting in my living room taking in the continual barrage of weather reports and possible storm scenarios. As we are all more than aware, this last several weeks has been devastating not only to our

area, but throughout the nation. The results of this hurricane season have been nothing like I have ever seen.

I pray that as you are reading this month's issue, that life has settled down into some semblance of normalcy. I recognize that some of us have suffered significant losses, and I hope that we can lean on one another for help and encouragement.

Our second luncheon of the year was to be held October 8, but Hurricane Milton had other plans. Our speaker, Danielle Green, hopes to be with us later in the year. She was looking forward to sharing with us the importance of the Wounded Warrior Project. I hope as we recover from these devastating storms, we can reach out for some positivity in each passing day.

Maya Angelou once said, "Each of us has lived through some devastation, some loneliness, some weather superstorm or spiritual superstorm. When we look at each other, we must say, 'I understand. I understand how you feel, because I have been there myself.' We must support each other and empathize with each other because each of us is more alike than we are unlike."

Remember to give yourself and others grace during these trying times. You deserve it, and so do they.

Cupid Crew comes to NPCREA

Each Valentine's Day Cupid Crew volunteers throughout the nation deliver roses and cards to over 230,000 people. With your help, NPCREA can be a part of this activity to do more than just change someone's day.



The Cupid Crew project, sponsored by AARP, is currently a District 6 project. It was spearheaded by the Hernando County Retired Educators unit and Cecelia Solomon. The roses are provided for free by AARP, and we are responsible for prepping them and delivering them to area senior facilities. Nancy Whitlock has graciously volunteered to chair the Cupid Crew project for the North Pinellas County chapter of FREA.

After discussions with our board members and with other members at the September luncheon, our association has accepted the Cupid Crew invitation, and we have chosen two recipient assisted living facilities in our area.

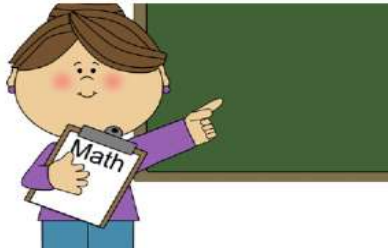
We will be working with:

1. The Preserve at Clearwater
2010 Greenbrier Blvd.
Clearwater, Fl. 33763
65 residents

2. Lakeside Oaks Senior Living
1061 Virginia St.
Dunedin, Fl. 34698
85 residents

At our September meeting 10 members signed up to help with this project. We are more than happy to accept more interested members for this amazing project.

Nancy Whitlock has agreed to store the flowers and to host a card signing party. We also have nostalgic wooden valentine ornaments to go with the flowers. If you're interested, please contact Nancy through her email: nswvalady@sbcglobal.net



...UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, November 12, 11 am



Bring a friend and wear red, white, and blue to Clearwater Country Club for our Veterans' Day Meeting and Luncheon. Bring items to help the Homeless Empowerment Program such as toiletries,

wrapped snack foods, feminine items. Lunch will be roast turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, rolls, and apple cobbler for dessert. Please RSVP by Nov. 5 to npcrea@gmail.com. You may order the Clearwater Country Club salad as an alternate meal if you choose.

Tuesday, December 10, 11 am

Our Winter Holiday party! Bring a friend and wear your holiday fun fashions. Please bring an unwrapped toy or two for the Salvation Army Toy Drive, and bring a wrapped \$5-10 gift for the Naughty Elf game if you choose to participate. Luncheon will be pork tenderloin, small salad, rolls, roasted potatoes, mixed veggies, and ice cream sundae for dessert. Please RSVP by Dec. 5 to npcrea@gmail.com. You may order the Clearwater Country Club salad as an alternate meal if you choose.



...PATRONS WANTED

Please consider becoming an NPCREA PATRON for fiscal year 2024-25. The cost is \$15 and helps to defray the cost of printing our newsletters, directories, brochures, and flyers.

Anyone wishing to become a PATRON should send a check to NPCREA, P. O. Box 4248, Clearwater, Fl. 33758, or give a check to Linda McGeehan, our new Treasurer, or Rick Pope, our Patronage board member, at any meeting.

Our new 2024-25 patrons are:

Anonymous
Mary Blackmon
Michael Cook
Jeannette Crabbe
Cheryl Good
Martha Gray
Marie Grein
Herb Johnson

Nan Lanham
Sharon Ozbun
Katrina Pershing
Carole Pope
Rick Pope
Richard Werling
Nancy Whitlock

...BRIDGE-A-RAMA



Bridge-a-Rama is played on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 am.

More bridge players are needed. Call Phyllis Walls at 727.418.7025 for details.

The December 12 Meeting is Going to be Something Special!

by Sharon Ozbun

We'll be meeting at 11 am at Clearwater Country Club, so get ready for some "holiday fun" as you wear your favorite Christmas holiday outfit! We will have a photo screen up for fun photos to be taken in your holiday finery.



We will be collecting unwrapped toys for the Salvation Army Toy Drive. Don't forget the teens as you shop for these toys. We will also enjoy our annual holiday music concert by Lora Mills and her flautist friends.

For our holiday meal, we will have pork tenderloin, small salad, rolls, roasted potatoes, mixed veggies, and an ice cream sundae for dessert. Or you may select the Clearwater Country Club Salad as an alternate meal. Please be sure to RSVP for the luncheon so we have a correct count of attendees.

After lunch we will have a Naughty Elf contest. Those who choose to participate will bring a wrapped gift worth \$5-10. Names will be called in random order for participants to choose a wrapped present and open it. Each participant can choose a new wrapped present or to be a "naughty elf" and steal a present from those already opened. In the end, all gifts will be opened and everyone will have one.

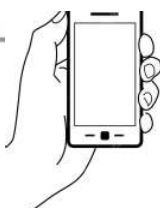
Please don't forget to fill out a Volunteer Services Report and turn it in to Eldon Weaver during the luncheon, or you may fill out the form below and phone or email the totals to Eldon



VOLUNTEER SERVICES REPORT

Name: _____ Month(s): _____

	<u>Youth</u>	<u>Adult</u>
<i>Retired Educators Assn.</i>	_____	_____
<i>Community/Clubs</i>	_____	_____
<i>Hospital/Schools</i>	_____	_____
<i>Churches</i>	_____	_____
<i>Friends/Neighbors</i>	_____	_____
<i>All Others</i>	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____



Phone to Mr. Eldon Weaver at 954.895.1073
 or email to pegasus_fl@yahoo.com
 or cut out and bring to the meeting



At our September 10 Back to School luncheon

Sharon Ozbun took photos of our participants before a schoolroom backdrop. See pg. 6 for some of those photos.

Carol Pope gave the Thought for the Day about having dreams and following them.



Carole Pope

Eldon Weaver asked everyone to fill out a Volunteer Services half sheet, accumulating volunteer hours for the months of June, July, and August 2024.

Sharon reminded us to check our listing in the NPCREA Member Directory to be sure our name, address, phone number, or email information has not changed. The new edition for 2025/6 will be published soon. New members were asked to add their information before they left the meeting.

She also asked everyone to fill out a "Where we went this summer/year" half sheet and give it to our vice president, Katrina Pershing.

Our speaker was Savannah Rock, athlete team leader for Special Olympics. She spoke about competitions for athletes with various disabilities and the other benefits available for the disabled. Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968; the Special Olympics has expanded to worldwide fundraising and competition events. Coaches are needed year round. Our athlete speaker was Maegen Miller, a competitive swimmer. She explained that Special Olympics is more than just competitions; it changes lives of both the athletes and the volunteers who organize and coach and operate the various events. Our new vice-president, Katrina Pershing, presented the two Special Olympians with a certificate and mug from NPCREA.



Savannah Rock, Maegen Miller, and Katrina Pershing

We collected a large tableful of socks and shoes, underwear, t-shirts, and shorts for Clothes to Kids to distribute to needy students as they went back to school in September.



Clothes to Kids donations

Linda McGeehan, our new Treasurer, reported a balance of \$7925.46 with \$2000

encumbered for scholarships. Balance available for use: \$5925.46. Linda also reviewed the 2024/5 budget. Money was added under Carwise Awards to balance the budget at \$2780.

Michael Cook spoke about the benefits offered by AMBA and changes coming to Medicare and the Medicare supplement plans.

Sharon announced that long-time member, Erma Johnson, has passed on. A donation was sent in her name to FREF.

Sharon reminded us that we need a coordinator for the Cupid Crew, sponsored by AARP, which will deliver roses and cards to people in nursing homes/assisted living facilities in February. Last year we sent little baskets to Coral Oaks Nursing Home in Palm Harbor. Eight members indicated interest in



Big Winner Pat Dalton

doing the Cupid Crew this year. Nancy Whitlock volunteered to head up the event.

Lunch was lemon grilled chicken, scalloped potatoes, carrots, rolls, and ice cream sundaes.

Twelve attendees won door prizes. Two members won Share the Wealth.



Jeanette Crabbe

At the Sept. 10 Luncheon



Phyllis Walls



Lora Mills & Eldon Weaver



Gay Gentry



Bobbie Albertus & Nancy Whitlock



Carole & Rick Pope



Bob & Val Stephens



Nan Lanham & Mary Blackmon

In 2024 We Visited.....

Jayne Creelman visited England and Wales, walking through the town in Holyhead, Wales, where her grandparents were from.

Lora Mills and Eldon Weaver had a cousin from Belgium come into town, bringing her 10-year old grandson. They had fun trying to communicate in their high school French with the two Belgians.

Nancy Whitlock visited the Great Lakes, Niagara Falls, and Toronto on a two-week cruise of the Great Lakes. She was happy that she didn't catch Covid on this trip.

Mary Blackmon visited Wesley Chapel for the FREA Convention in May. She enjoyed working as a host, meeting friends from all across Florida, sharing a suite with four others, singing and dancing with the 14 other members of North Pinellas CREA who attended.

Marcia Lork visited her physical therapist throughout the summer in hopes of visiting Philadelphia, Williamsburg, and DC in October.

Katrina Pershing took a 25-day road trip seeing friends and family. She especially enjoyed seeing Niagara Falls from the Canadian side and experiencing the light show and fireworks from her hotel over Horseshoe Falls.

Sharon Ozbun drove to Michigan for her daughter's wedding, experiencing lots of love, tears, and laughter. She met the other half of the family, making lasting memories and having a wonderful time.

Jeanette Crabbe attended the 60th class reunion of the Jones High School Class of 1964 in Orlando. She also visited Seattle and Orangeburg, New York, enjoying the lower humidity in those places, which kept her hair looking nice everyday.

Val and Bob Stephens visited Ovieta for their granddaughter's graduation. They also went to Rays baseball games and Florida Gator games, especially having fun spending time with family.

Rich Werling enjoyed visiting the Florida Keys, Cedar Key, Port Canaveral, and Crystal River. He enjoyed the beauty of Florida and getting out of Pinellas County.

Sharilyn Gipson enjoyed a visit from her son from California. She spent a whole week with her oldest child, Burnie.

Linda McGeehan visited Glacier National Park and the mountains of Canada. She enjoyed seeing snow on the mountains in summer.

Rosemarie and Michael Ceraolo-O'Donnell celebrated their 40th anniversary in Oahu and Waikiki, Hawaii. They visited their daughter in Hawaii and also found their way to Key West, Niagara Falls, and the Total Eclipse in 2024.

Marie Grein visited the International Forest of Friendship in Atchison, Kansas. Founded 48 years ago, it promotes peace for people of all countries who pursue aviation and space activities. A plaque for Marie was installed there on Sept. 21 in the Florida section of the Forest for her work in Aviation and Space activities in local schools, Sun 'n Fun, and international conferences.





What is FREF?

The Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF) is an autonomous branch of the Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA).

What Does FREF Do?

FREF aids past, present, and future educators and school personnel.

Past

FREF provides assistance to retired educators who find themselves in financial crisis.

Present

FREF provides grants to practicing teachers who want to initiate a project in their school or classroom.

Future

FREF awards scholarships to outstanding high school students who wish to major in education.

How can you help?

FREF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donations are tax exempt and qualify for receipts for taxes.

Building a legacy for your departed loved one: When educators pass, family members may donate to FREF in memory of their loved ones (i.e. include in obituary, "In lieu of flowers, please donate to FREF".) The educators' legacy will live on in the Foundation.

IRS Charitable Donations (IRS Publication 590-B)

For taxpayers looking to maximize their tax savings through charitable giving, the IRS reminds them that giving money or goods to a tax-exempt charity before December 31 can usually be deducted on that year's federal income tax return. (#GivingTuesday on Nov. 28) Please consider the following:

- Check the IRS Select Check tool to find eligible charitable organizations.
- Only taxpayers who itemize using Form 1040 Schedule A can claim deductions for charitable contributions.
- A bank record or written statement from the charity is needed to prove the amount and date of any donation of money.
- IRA owners age 70 ½ or older can transfer up to \$100,000 per year to an eligible charity tax-free. The transfer can count as their required minimum distribution for the year. Funds must be transferred directly by the IRA trustee to the eligible charity.
- The type of records a taxpayer needs to keep depends on the amount and type of the donation.

Please consult your tax advisor or the IRS website for the latest 590-b information <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/>



North Pinellas County Retired Educators Association Membership Application



Unified Dues: \$60.00 Annually – July 1 to June 30

<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of Membership	General Member - Circle One: Retired School Teacher/School Administrator/School Transportation School Maintenance, School Cafeteria. Other:
FREA Benefits are fully available to ALL FREA members be they Regular or Associate.	Associate Member Associate: Any person supporting the mission of the Association may apply for associate membership. (Associate members may not vote as a delegate.)
Circle One: Miss, Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., Other	Date:
Your Name:	Spouse's Name
Mailing Address	Apt./Condo
City	Telephone—Cell phone preferred ()
E-mail address:	Your Month/Day/of Birth:
School District Retired From:	Year Retired
	Position Retired From

NPCREA and FREA are your advocates regarding your pension and the future of education in the State of Florida. Would you like to support our efforts on behalf of all present and future Retired Educators, and other beneficiaries of the Florida Retirement System like First Responders, etc.? This money will be used in a non-partisan way.

Yes, I would like to support FREA's Legislative Advocacy: \$ 4.00
 Unified Dues for July 1–June 30: **\$60.00**

Yes, I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Florida Retired Educators Foundation of \$5.00
 Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: NPCREA (North Pinellas County Retired Educators Association)
Mail to: NPCREA, P.O. Box 4248 Clearwater, FL 33758-4248

Have questions? Contact NPCREA: NPCREA@gmail.com

NPCREA has many active committees. All of our committees welcome new people, ideas and /or suggestions. The work of the committees listed below is explained at our meetings.

Please indicate your interest in one or more of them by checking the line by the committee. The chair will contact you personally.

Volunteer Services	Information Services	Newsletter
Hospitality	Legislative	Photography (Historian)
Sunshine	Name Tags	Retirement Planning
Phone Tree	Membership	Publicity/Website
Cultural Affairs	Nominating	Thought for the Day

**NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY
RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 4248
CLEARWATER, FL 33758-4248**



NPCREA LEADERS FOR 2024-25

PRESIDENT	SHARON OZBUN
VICE-PRESIDENT	KATRINA PERSHING
TREASURER	LINDA MCGEEHAN
RECORDING SECRETARY	MARY BLACKMON
CORRES. SECRETARY	MARCIA LORK
INFORMATION SPECIALIST	MAURA HEDRICH
MEMBERSHIP	CHERYL GOOD
PATRONAGE	RICK POPE
VOLUNTEER SERVICES	ELDON WEAVER
HISTORIAN/NEWSLETTER	MARY BLACKMON

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NPCREA Newsletter is published six times each year by North Pinellas County Retired Educators Association, P.O. Box 4248, Clearwater, FL 33758. Newsletter staff: Editor, Mary Blackmon, 727-348-0771. Assembly and mailing: Marie Grein. Labels: FREA Office.