

MEA-Retired Tribune

May, 2022

“Our Nation’s teachers are selfless, dedicated, and caring individuals who devote themselves to the well-being and progress of our students. During this National Teacher Appreciation Day and throughout National Teacher Appreciation Week, we honor educators who touch the lives of students across America and who are essential to building the future of our Nation.”

***-President Joe Biden,
from the Proclamation on National Teacher Appreciation Day
and National Teacher Appreciation Week, 2022,
presented April 29, 2022***

Celebrate educators May 2-6

As retired educators, we think about and support those who are still working with students and colleagues every day; they deal with challenges that we experienced and others that didn’t exist when some of us were still working. This week is National Teacher Appreciation Week, and we honor ALL of our active MEA members who make such a difference in the lives of the students entrusted to them.

Last week, I made an overnight trip to the Grand Rapids area and had the pleasure of attending a fifth grade music program at the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center. The young singers shared a variety of recognizable tunes from various Disney productions for an audience of more than 400. British pop singer Rick Astley would have enjoyed seeing over 100 children enthusiastically rocking out to his 1988 hit single "Never Gonna Give You Up" (the students seemed to really enjoy performing this one, which was featured in *Wreck It Ralph*). The last musical selection was a medley from *Hamilton*, which brought down the house. What an impressive group of students, and, obviously, a gifted elementary music teacher who put this performance together. She was lauded by one of her building’s fifth grade educators at the conclusion of the program, students presented her with flowers and the district’s superintendent and others individually talked with her as others were leaving.

Here are a few suggestions—some from NEA—that WE might think about taking to support our active members this week:

- Text CELEBRATE to 48744 to leave a message of gratitude to educators. These will be delivered (see above) to the real people helping our students every day.
- Celebrate the educators in your life by sharing a message on social media, tagging @NEAToday, and using the hashtags #WeHearYou and #ThankATeacher.

- Bring some treats to thank staff at a nearby building in your district.
- Send an email thanking educators to someone you know who is still working in your district and ask them to share with others in their building or whole district if possible.
- Click on nea.org/TAW for inspirational stories of educators, a message from NEA President Becky Pringle and downloadable graphics you can share on social media.

Delegates make significant PAC contributions

Thanks to our nearly three-dozen MEA-Retired delegates to the MEA Representative Assembly, which was held virtually the evenings of April 20-21 and for several hours during the day on Saturday, April 22. Items on the agenda included a speech by MEA President Paula Herbart, greetings and thanks from Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, information about and votes on several items and other presentations.

Our MEA-Retired delegates certainly MORE than rose to the occasion when we asked them to donate to PAC. According to the Department of Public Affairs, many of the delegates had donated in the last 60 days, with nearly everyone donating during the RA. **Our MEA-Retired DELEGATE donations from April 21-23 ALONE were over \$1800**, which was a HUGE piece—nearly one third—of the total MEA RA PAC donation "pie"! We thank our delegates for their outstanding participation in the three-day RA PAC drive.

We're launching a PAC drive in the next couple of weeks that will let YOU, too, make a difference. Stay tuned.

From ssa.gov:

Providing greater access to SSA services

We continue to welcome people back to our offices for in-person service with or without an appointment. As we help more people in person, we want to highlight the best ways and times to access our services by phone or in person. We also encourage you to [visit our website to conduct your business online](#) if you can. Our online services are secure and convenient. Going online or calling us can save you a trip to a busy office.

Can't complete your business online?

If you can't complete your business online, you can call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213**. You may reach us faster by contacting us when our telephones and offices may be less busy. Our National 800 Number may be less busy before 10 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7p.m local time, or later in the week. Like in our offices, waits on our phone lines are generally shorter later in the month. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

Are you considering visiting an office?

Our offices are very busy and wait times without an appointment can be long. We tend to be less busy later in the day, later in the week, and later in the month.

Appointments are **strongly recommended**, though we continue to help people without one. An appointment reduces your wait time and ensures you know what documents to bring, so we can help you quickly in one visit.

Please visit our webpage, [How to Get Help from Social Security](#), to learn what you need to know before you visit our offices. For example, everyone must wear a mask and physically distance from other customers and employees. Due to current space restrictions, local offices have limits on who may join you if you need help during your visit.

Online, by phone, and in person, we are committed to helping you. Please share this information with friends and family – and post it on social media.

Sarah Says: From NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman

Here's how I see it. We Marched into April, and now we MAY make it. What a winter...a soon to be dismissed pandemic and masks, war and rumors of war, politicians just getting warmed up, weather disasters, and finally now spring has come. Remember that old tongue twister? "We'll weather the weather whatever the weather, whether we like it or not." I sort of feel that way about more than one event. As I write, we are beginning preparations for the summer Retired Annual Meeting with yet another method: a hybrid of virtual and in-person participation! First it was Zoom only; then last year a production of virtual participation, and now...this old dog will be learning new tricks. However, so will those joining from home as well as all delegates and guests in the room. Get your handheld devices in order as we will all need one to participate! Know this: our members have been flexible and we'll do it one more time because we're about the business of our over 330,000 members and we will get it done! Never say "die" and just keep on keeping on.