



THE EDUCATOR

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Don't Let the Spirit of Giving Fade

Each holiday season the thoughts of many alight on ways to help the less fortunate, such as donating turkeys and sponsoring families who can't afford the extravagance of presents. While this is a noble addition to the rush to fill stockings and plan festive gatherings for friends and family, the plight of the poor and the hungry continues even after the holiday season runs its course. In light of this, the ATA has several charitable efforts that go on throughout the year.

Since its inception in 2011, the ATA's program to serve dinner at Dutchess Outreach's Lunch Box in Poughkeepsie has been ongoing. Two

evenings a month ATA members arrive at 29 North Hamilton Street to dish out food to all who want a hot meal. High school special education

"We'll continue to serve at the Lunch Box because it's important for us all to see how good we have it and to try help others in need. It's humbling and necessary work."

-Dana Newsom, UVMS

teacher Colleen Napora is the ATA's liaison to Dutchess Outreach. She explains, "[Serving dinner at the Lunch Box] is an excellent way to give back to our community. We show support for families and their needs by volunteering here. There is a

huge need for help with food in the Hudson Valley and specifically with our students in the Arlington district. By volunteering, we are examples for our

students for what it means to be a caring human being."

Arlington parent Nyhisha Gibbs is Dutchess Outreach's Volunteer Administrator. It is her job to secure help for all of the meals served at the Lunch Box. With approximately 100-160 men, women, and children enjoying dinner each night it is served, the need for volunteers is great. Gibbs entreats, "Think of those less fortunate than yourselves. Think of them as yourselves and/or your students. Think of those less
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Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could be the proud winner of ATA gear!

Who was the original commander of the Death Star?

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Allison Kilroy** from Noxon. She correctly identified **1954** as the year Styrofoam was first sold in the U.S. She will be the proud owner of ATA gear.

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to sfalk@acsdny.org by **December 29**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Dress Down Day Delivers Donations

On November 21 the entire district came together to support a local organization, the Grace Smith House, which helps families in crisis. Among the many good works they do is coming to our middle schools and high school to speak with our students about safe dating, bullying, and the signs of a dangerous relationship in students' health classes. They protect families who are fleeing from an abusive relationship and have

resources available to help the survivors get back on their feet. Grace Smith House has a program in place to provide emergency shelter, clothing, and necessities for immediate need, as well as legal and counseling services for the long term aid and support of its clientele. They spend tireless hours advocating for children and the victims of domestic violence.

The Arlington Teachers' Association was able to

donate over \$3,000 to the Grace Smith House this year. In addition, several bags of brand new blankets were also donated by a member. They were overjoyed with the donation, and the director of donations stated: "That is absolutely amazing! I cannot thank you enough! What wonderful generosity and dedication on the part of your association. We could not do what we do without you."

-Kristine Jackson, PR Chair

Thinking About Retirement?

On November 5 and 6 I, along with several other Arlington Teachers Association members, attended the annual delegate's conference in Saratoga Springs for the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS). This conference has informational meetings on different topics related to our retirement system. Although I took many notes during the seminars, NYSTRS also provides the information that was discussed in the seminars in PowerPoint presentations on each topic on their website for all members to access. The website is: <https://www.nystrs.org/Delegates/Annual-Delegates-Meeting>. Once at the page, you will see a blue icon that says "2017 Delegates Meeting". Under this category, the seven presentations are listed and you can read the PowerPoint for each of the various topics.

Whether you are approaching retirement in a few years, or even longer

than that, it is good to stay informed. For many of us, our pension will be the largest chunk of our income in our retirement years. Don't wait until the year that you are retiring, start educating yourself on your New York State Retirement System pension. Recently you should have received in the mail your red 2016 Benefit Profile. Please take time to review this to make sure that the information is accurate. If you have questions, you can call and speak to a NYSTRS employee at (800) 348-7298 or (518) 447-2900. I've found that the people who work for NYSTRS are very helpful and eager to answer any questions that you may have.

If you are nearing retirement, meet with a consultant and make a plan. Video consultations can be scheduled at Arlington High School to talk with a NYSUT consultant about your particular retirement information and choices. You can also call NYSUT and make an ap-

pointment to meet with someone in person to discuss this at their headquarters in Albany or one of their other sites. NYSTRS also offers PREP (Pension and Retirement Education Program) sessions that are held throughout the state in different locations. Reservations are needed to attend a PREP session, and these fill up very, very quickly. The closest location to our area is in Fishkill at the Ramada Inn and will be held this spring on Saturday, March 25. You can enroll via the NYSTRS website or by calling NYSTRS at Ext. 6180. While you are at it, you can schedule a meeting with Bob Maier by calling the ATA office to discuss retirement information that is specific to our contract such as unused sick days. We are lucky to have wonderful resources from NYSTRS at our fingertips to help us with retirement planning.

-Anne-Marie Nolan-Dolce,
UVMS

Don't Let the Spirit of Giving Fade When the Holidays Do



Photo by Dana Newsom

UVMS teacher Dana Newsom's children Mia and Jake enjoyed serving dessert at The Lunch Box in August 2017.

Continued from Front

fortunate than yourselves all year long; every day. Think of them during non-holiday seasons. We need volunteers every day of the year."

LMS technology teacher Peter Seigny first started volunteering with Dutchess Outreach almost 20 years ago when he was a Cub Scout leader doing community service badges, and he has continued being a regular server at the Lunch Box since joining the ATA. "The help is truly needed," he adds, "There is a small staff that runs the program. The people who receive the meals are very appreciative."

Dana Newsom, LMS English teacher and frequent Lunch Box volunteer, echoes this feeling, "It's important for ATA members to keep volunteering at the Lunch Box to see how truly fortunate we are and to give back to the community. The staff that works at the Lunch Box need lots of help to serve each meal as well and the customers at the Lunch Box like to see us. Sometimes I've even seen former students there!" Newsom

started bringing her own kids with her to volunteer last year. Daughter Mia is a West Road student and son Jake is at Traver Road. According to Newsom, "They enjoyed telling customers to enjoy their meal or asking them what they wanted for dessert. By the end of the session, I couldn't get them to leave! They wanted to help as much as they could. They cleaned out refrigerators and washed tables and helped put things away. I only wish they'd help so much at home! We'll continue to serve at the Lunch Box because it's important for us all to see how good we have it and to try help others in need. It's humbling and necessary work."

What does a volunteer session entail? Newsom explains in detail: "Volunteers arrive at 4:00 PM, preferably dressed in ATA gear, and do whatever is necessary to serve the meal smoothly. We may roll silverware, make coffee, pour iced tea, chop salad vegetables, mash potatoes, etc. Around 5:00, dinner is served buffet-style. Each volunteer is responsible for serving a piece of the meal like the entrée, the side

dishes, the salad, the dessert, or the drinks. Once the whole line of customers is served, the Lunch Box staff will usually call for second servings. Once it looks like things are slowing down with the meal, volunteers start to clean up. We bring any dirty dishes and pans back to the dishwasher and we sanitize the tables and put the chairs up. We leave around 6:00."

Two hours of time is all it takes to make a big difference in the lives of others. Unfortunately, Napora has recently been having difficulty finding volunteers for the two nights a month that the ATA has committed to. Since Arlington is such a big district she is hoping to have a volunteer liaison in each school to help recruit others. They could also be a point person for donations since Dutchess Outreach is always looking for staple items such as sugar, salt, spices, and dish towels. Anyone interested should contact Colleen Napora at AHS. The ATA's spirit of giving doesn't end when the holidays do.

-Sam Falk, editor



Photo courtesy of NYSUT

ATA members take on many jobs when they help out at The Lunch Box, Dutchess Outreach's soup kitchen. This photo shows them pouring juice at a dinner sessions on September 2012.

PAGE 4 **ATA Holiday Party 2017**



These photos and many more are available on our website at www.ata.edu

Photos by Kathleen Vogt



More can be found on the ATA's
arlingtonteachers.com

2017 — 2018 ATA Officers

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PR Committee Chair

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OPS — Nancy Thomas

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR — Chris Greco

TIS — Sue Ramsden

LMS — Kevin Walsh

UVMS — Jim DeBonis

AHS — John Filor

AHS — Noreen Mills Martin

What's Going On?

"What's Going on" is a monthly feature of The Educator. It highlights noteworthy accomplishments by ATA members. Do you know of a colleague who deserves recognition? Let The Educator know by emailing sfalk@acsdny.org. We can't know what's going on at all of your schools without your help!

Congratulations to the following ATA members for their contributions to the Arlington community and beyond.

Arlington High School

Social studies teachers Elizabeth Brzozowski and Krysta Weiss will be facilitating a book club discussion at Dutchess County BO-CES in the spring. The group will be reading *The Warmth of Other Suns*, by Isabel Wilkerson. Interested teachers can sign up through MyLearningPlan online.

A quote from English teacher Julie Jee is part of the New York State Museum's exhibit celebrating New York's suffrage centennial. Her statement, "It was exciting to see my three children experience their first act of civil disobedience. We live in a country where dissident is possible, so for my children to see protest in action was amazing. They were blown away by the thousands of people peacefully marching with their colorful signs." accompanies a poster from the Women's March that



Photo courtesy of Amanda Buhler

Arlington Art Department

The opening reception for the annual Alexander Juried Art Show on was held on Thursday, December 14 in the Arlington High School William J. Sweeney Performance Hall Lobby. Named after retired art teacher Yvonne Alexander, the exhibit features a collection of artwork from Arlington students in grades one through 12. Each work of art has been carefully framed and hung in a professional gallery setting. On the 14th Arlington art teachers were able to visit with current and former students and their parents while enjoying art and refreshments.

took place at the Walkway Over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie in January 2016.

Arthur S. May School

Allison Whitted, speech and language pathologist, and Melissa Maggiacomo, 3rd grade teacher, once again organized the annual Shoebox Event in which the school partnered up with Dutchess Outreach to give gifts to families in need.

Overlook Primary

In May 2017, the Department of Education at SUNY Albany awarded kindergarten teacher Karen Maher with the Stella Pietrzyk Scholarship for excellent use of children's literature in the class-

room for research. The award enabled her to attend the 2017 Literacy Research Association Conference in Tampa, Florida from November 29 to December 2. She was able to meet several of the researchers whom she cited in her dissertation research entitled "Exploring Kindergartners' Understanding of Gender".

Vail Farm Elementary

For the very first time the fifth grade at Vail Farm is participating in Scholastic's 9th Annual Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive. Students donate brand new sets of pajamas, and for every pair donated Scholastic

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ATA Lightweight Unisex Hoodie Order Form

To place your order, fill out the form below and send it, along with cash (exact amount, please) or check, in the amount of \$25, through inter-office mail to the ATA Office. Checks can be made out to "Arlington Teachers' Association." Orders will be shipped to the school requested. All proceeds will benefit the Arlington Teachers' Association scholarship fund, which grants two Arlington graduates, one an aspiring teacher and one going into a different field of study, \$1,000 each year.

Size (S; M; L; XL; XXL-\$2 extra)	Quantity	Total Price (\$25 each, XXL add \$2)



Name: _____

School: _____

Total Payment Included: _____

Contact Information: _____

Questions? Please email Kristine Jackson at LMS: kjackson@acsdny.org

ATA Members Do Great Things in the Community

Continued from Page 6
 donates a book. All donations are kept local and Vail Farm 5th graders have chosen their donations to go to the Grace Smith House in Poughkeepsie. On December 21, in celebration of the Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive, students will be invited to wear their pajamas to school and have a "Read In" with hot cocoa, marshmallows, and

treats. The fifth grade team of Gwen Moschetto, Jennifer Schafer, Michelle Malkischer, Scott Adams, Michael Barley, Jill Abrams, Alison Durkin organized the whole effort.

The 4th and 5th Grade Student Council, run by 1st grade teacher Janet Will and K-2 special education teacher Jennifer Sullivan has done a few events recently: For the Halloween Candy Drive, students col-

lected 14 boxes of candy (208 pounds) to send to our military troops. The Thanksgiving Food Drive collected 14 boxes of food to donate to our local food pantries. This month, the Student Council is partnering with AHS Junior Brian Will for a "Warm for the Winter" drive. They are collecting new hats and gloves to donate to Dutchess Outreach and Grace Smith House.



Photo by Peter Sevigny

LaGrange Middle School

Technology teacher Peter Sevigny recently acted as a liaison between some Arlington students in his neighborhood and employees of the Town of Poughkeepsie. With his help they were able to install two benches next to the basketball court in Overocker Park on December 2. Pictured are LMS students Jamal Ahmorrass, Mylan Henry, and Jose Martinez, and Bader Ahmorrass from Titusville, along with Town of Poughkeepsie Recreation Director Thomas Meyering.

Dates to Remember



DECEMBER

- 12th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., VF
- 14th—Elementary Half Day
- 25-29th—Winter Recess - No School

JANUARY

- 1st—Winter Recess - No School
- 9th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., NOX
- 15th—Martin Luther King Day - No School
- 16th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- 22-25th—Regents Week
- 23rd—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., JDWR
- 26th—Superintendent's Conference Day



FEBRUARY

- 1st—Deadline for June 2018 Retirement Decisions
- 13th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., TIS
- 19th—Presidents' Day - No School
- 20th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432



Announcements

Stay informed! *Like* us on Facebook or check out www.arlingtonteachers.com for forms, photos, calendars, and more.

**The staff of
The Educator would like
to wish all ATA
members a happy and
healthy
holiday season.**

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at the Lunch Box in Poughkeepsie from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on February 9.

Please contact Colleen Napora at cnapora@acsdny.org to sign up. Donations of sugar, salt, pepper, spices, dish towels are also welcome.