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# Dispatch

P E N N S Y L V A N I A   S T A T E   E D U C A T I O N   A S S O C I A T I O N - E S P

Summer 2018

A publication for education support professionals of PSEA

## Message from your president

# We need to be unified, engaged, and active

**T**he ESP Region recently held its annual House of Delegates and workshops. This year's theme was "Uniting Our Members for Strong Students, Schools, and Communities."

For the second year, the ESP Region sponsored a supply drive to engage members while assisting students in a local school district. This year the supplies collected were donated to K-5 students in the Aliquippa School District, Beaver County. The response to this endeavor over the last two years has been overwhelming.

I encourage you to organize similar activities in your local. Supply drives, food drives, and book drives are examples of activities that are easy to organize and help students and families in your local school district.

These activities will promote a positive relationship between the local and district while showing the community you are committed to educating and developing the whole student. A whole student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

We need a unified, engaged, and active membership to combat the

many threats and attacks we are facing to our union and careers. Be ready to act when PSEA calls on us to contact our legislators to urge them to reject any legislation that will harm our jobs and our students. I want to thank each of you who has contacted your legislators when called upon. These calls do make a

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**"A strong local is very important for your continued success."**

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difference.

A strong local is very important for your continued success. It is imperative that one-on-one conversations are taking place among members to share interests, engage members, and build strength and unity.

I encourage you to explore how to best organize your local to positively promote the commitment you have to your career, school, and students. This will help create a positive and safe educational environment for all students.

An organized and strong local is valuable during bargaining and will help you gain support from



**Dawn Bandle**  
*ESP Region President*

the community. Speak up, brag about the great work you are doing to help students, and tell your stories. These stories, when told, are powerful and illustrate how valuable you are to the educational process.

It is critical that we have engaged and active members to successfully advocate for our professions and students. We refuse to cave to legislation and policies that are harmful. Remember, we all need to step up, defend our rights, and promote a strong and unified front.

Thank you for all that you do to help our public school students be successful. Enjoy your summer, and I hope you get a chance to relax and recharge for the next school year.

## Upper Darby ESP featured speaker

**M**elanie Hudson, an ESP in the Upper Darby School District, Delaware County, was the featured speaker in February at the Working People's Day of Action in Philadelphia.

Her spirited address stirred the crowd, and her message rang true – that workers who labor fulltime should not receive a paycheck that keeps them in poverty. Members of the Upper Darby Education Support Professionals Association and the Southeastern Region were there to cheer her on, and she received many compliments from other labor leaders.

Hudson, a personal care assistant to an autistic high school student, is an active member of UDESPA. She volunteers with social outreach



projects, attends meetings and training sessions, and works phone banks at the Southeastern Region office. She is also pursuing training

at the Gettysburg Summer Leadership Conference and will attend her second year of Core School this summer.

## Stay connected with PSEA-Retired

**P**SEA-Retired is a great way to stay connected with the schools and students you spent decades serving. Membership also offers great benefits.

Retiring doesn't mean you should retire from PSEA and the important activities of your union. PSEA-Retired offers a wealth of programs, activities, and benefits,

while keeping you connected to the people and the profession that are so important to you. For more information, visit [www.psea.org/retired](http://www.psea.org/retired).

## Central Bucks ESP honored

**C**ongratulations to Shannon Decorrevont from Central Bucks ESP. Decorrevont was honored as the Outstanding Technical Support Person of the Year by the Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology (PAECT).

"I am truly humbled and honored by this," Decorrevont said. "I feel that I simply come in and do my job every day to

the best of my ability. The best reward is knowing that at the end of the day I have accomplished just that. I am grateful to have been recognized for my work here in the district, but that is not why I do what I do."

Pictured with Decorrevont are Brian Merrill, left, and Brian Novick of the Central Bucks Technology and Innovation Department.



## Kindergarten students learn about vision impairments

**K**indergarten students at Mountain View Elementary School learned what it is like to be visually impaired.

Veronica Thomas, a paraprofessional who has raised two visually impaired children and has been assigned a visually impaired kindergarten student, applied for a grant from Susquehanna County Chapter

of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees. The grant was used for a presentation on the visually impaired to all kindergarten classes.

Tracey Ranze and Jessica Black, teachers who work with the visually impaired, provided the students with special glasses and activities to help them understand what it is like to get through life with vision

impairments.

“The students of Mountain View truly benefited from a discussion and an obstacle course to help them understand how their fellow classmates possibly feel,” Thomas said. “We are molding students to appreciate all differences.”



*Pictured from left are Veronica Thomas, Tracey Ranze, and Jessica Black*

## Nominations for ESP of Year

**E**ach year PSEA recognizes the hard work, dedication, and community service of education support professionals through the annual ESP Member of the Year Award.

Nominations are now being accepted for the award, which is presented to a PSEA member who demonstrates the many contributions ESPs make to public

education and to the community. PSEA's recipient is then nominated for the National Education Association ESP of the Year Award.

Please take time to consider all of the outstanding ESPs you know. A nominee must have been a PSEA member for at least three years as of September 2018. Any PSEA member in good standing, any PSEA local, or the ESP Executive

Board can make a nomination for the award.

Nominations should be submitted to Candace Kuba at [ckuba@psea.org](mailto:ckuba@psea.org), or mailed to her attention at PSEA, 400 N. Third St., Harrisburg PA, 17101. They must be received by 5 p.m. on Sept. 14. For nomination forms, please contact your local president, or visit [www.psea.org/espoftheyear](http://www.psea.org/espoftheyear).

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 education support professionals of the  
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*Dawn Bandle, right, ESP Region president, presents a plaque on behalf of the Region to PSEA President Dolores McCracken, in recognition of McCracken's being the first ESP member to head the Association.*

**Dates to Remember**

NEA Representative Assembly  
**June 30-July 5, 2018**

Gettysburg Summer Leadership Conference  
**July 22-26, 2018**

ESP Member of the Year Application Deadline  
**Sept. 14, 2018**

Collective Bargaining Conference  
**Oct. 19-20, 2018**