

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

CARENE DOMATO

During this joyful holiday season, the Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers extends our best wishes for a healthy and happy new year to you and your family. As we celebrate in our unique and different ways, we can be thankful for the solidarity that gives us strength to fight for what is right for our members, our students and ourselves.

Know that your leadership stands by your side every day, ready and willing to support you and our hard earned contractual rights. The MVFT Negotiations Team continues to work tirelessly preparing proposals and protecting your contract. We have already spent endless hours negotiating for better working conditions, strengthening and preserving what we have fought so hard for in past contracts, increasing the benefits we deserve, and demanding a fair and equitable agreement. We will not relent until we are positive that our membership will be satisfied with the final agreement.

All we ask of you is to do what you do best: teach your hearts out, protect each other like family, respect yourselves and each other especially when others will not and most importantly, stand up for what is right!

May the spirit of our shared belief in justice and fairness spread throughout our lives. May the new year be all that you hope

for and may it be filled with love and friendship.



"TAKE A LOOK AT TEACHING" SUMMIT NYSUT'S FIRST 2019



NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango and MVFT President Carene Domato at the NYSUT Take a Look at Teaching Summit held in Yonkers on October 3rd.

NYSUT's *Take A Look at Teaching* summits held across the state are aimed at cultivating relationships and exploring solutions to the teacher shortage and teacher diversity challenges facing our schools.

The MVFT was invited to attend this year's summit on October 3rd in Yonkers, NY. Superintendent Kenneth Hamilton was invited to attend. "It gave us an opportunity to take a look at what available resources we have to tackle the teacher shortage, and work together on solving the issue in our district," stated Carene Domato.

YFT President Samantha Rosado-Ciriello and NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango hosted the event. DiBrango said the union's initiative is focusing on elevating the profession and encouraging students and career-changers from all backgrounds to take a look at teaching. She noted that NYS teacher preparation programs have declined 53% since 2009. At the same time, the state Teacher's Retirement System projects that one-third of the state's teachers could retire in the next five years. SUNY projects that New York will need 180,000 teachers in the next decade.

President Domato stated, "We need to have a dialogue with teachers, students, higher education faculty and policymakers about how to inspire a new generation to become teachers and help diversify the profession. Summits like these will serve as a vehicle and resource for that dialogue."

NYSTRS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By *Jeanne Casino, MVFT Vice President, Grievance Chairperson*

The 99th Annual Meeting of NYSTRS delegates was held in Saratoga Springs, NY on November 3-4, 2019. In attendance were Anita Amieiro, Carene Domato, Jeanne Casino and new delegate Keith McCall. At this annual meeting, delegates elect teachers to the NYSTRS Board of Trustees and attend various breakout sessions covering a wide variety of topics. This year the sessions included: Social Security Information, Pension Factor and Service Credit, "You've Decided to Retire! What Do You Do Now?," The Potential Liabilities of Loans and The Role of the Delegate. The delegates brought back important information to our members. Be sure to check the bulletin board at your school for information concerning the New York State Retirement System (NYSTRS) and about different retirement preps and seminars you can attend.



Pictured L-R: Carene Domato, Keith McCall, Jeanne Casino, Anita Amieiro

MVFT ANNUAL HOLIDAY DRIVE

Each year the MVFT brightens the holidays for our students in need. The MVFT, with the support of the district, will sponsor "Dress-Down Days" on December 10th and 17th. Your donation of \$20.00 will go towards purchasing gift cards for our secondary students in grades 9-12.



The district's "Be an Angel" project is organized by our homeless liaisons, Lillian Reynolds and Ramona Parker. This project will provide wrapped gifts for grades Pre-K through 8. Also, the MVFT Retirees distribute handmade scarves to all of the elementary students in need. Please ask the guidance counselor or social worker in your building how you can help a child in need from the list they have been provided. Thank you for helping us fill our children with cheer for the holidays. Your generosity is much appreciated!

NYSUT WOMEN'S COMMITTEE WORKING TO EMPOWER UNION WOMEN

By *Carene Domato, MVFT President*

The NYSUT Women's Committee reconvened at NYSUT Headquarters in Latham, NY on November 15-16 under the theme #EmpowerHER. Chaired by NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, the NYSUT Women's Committee has four main goals:

- ▶ encourage more locals to develop in-house women's committees
- ▶ educate female members about the work of the union
- ▶ highlight women-specific issues such as inequalities in pay, health care, and education
- ▶ involve more women in union leadership roles

A year ago, only twelve NYSUT Women's Committee chapters were in existence, now there are twenty-three and counting. The MVFT would like to be the twenty-fourth. We are in the beginning stages of forming our very own MVFT Women's Chapter Committee. If you would like to be a part of the movement, contact your building rep or call Carene Domato directly at the MVFT office, 664-3189.



Each of the participating NYSUT locals, including the MVFT, brought feminine product donations to the NYSUT Women's Committee annual meeting at NYSUT Headquarters on November 15-16. Did you know that hundreds of students typically miss a week of school a month because they do not have access to feminine products?

CELEBRATION OF LABOR

Westchester/Putnam Counties AFL/CIO Central Labor Body held its annual “Celebration of Labor” on October 10, 2019 at The Riverview in Hastings-on-the Hudson. Diane Torstrup, MVFT AFL-CIO delegate, and Carene Domato, MVFT President, represented the MVFT at the event.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY OFFERED MANY NEW TOPICS

Social workers, Janill Cabrera from Graham School and Essence Ware-Bryant from Traphagen and Hamilton schools, facilitated training to administrators in non-violence, crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques. The patterns of problem behavior that children go through and the different methods that can be used to intervene were also discussed. You can visit www.crisisprevention.com to learn more about the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training.

Safety officers were engaged in training about safety procedures and evacuation protocols.

Laine Whitaker, advanced trainer from Effective School Solutions, lead a hands-on training with counselors, psychologists and social workers about the “**Nurtured Heart Approach.**” This is a relationship-focused methodology for creating healthy school relationships and recognizing that everyone has inherent greatness.

UNION BENEFIT INSTITUTED FINANCIAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Submitted by Karen Molinaro

ELIGIBILITY:

This benefit covers active members of the Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Welfare Fund and retirees who continue their benefits through the “Plus” plan.

Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. is the firm that administers the program and is one of the 500 largest investment advisors in the world.

The Financial Counseling Program will provide you with access to qualified professionals, Certified Financial Planners and Registered Investment Advisors who are available to work with you to provide *objective and unbiased* advice regarding: debt management, 403b allocations and decisions, retirement planning, insurance, investing, college planning, budgeting, 403b rollovers, and much more.

Stacey Braun’s representatives are prohibited from selling investment and insurance products and are not affiliated with any 403b providers.

To take advantage of the Financial Counseling Program, please contact Stacey Braun Associates, Inc: (888) 949-1925.



MVFT PROUDLY ENDORSE SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD FOR MAYOR OF MOUNT VERNON AND DERRICK THOMPSON FOR CITY COUNCIL

After the MVFT Executive Board had an opportunity to hear from both mayoral candidate Shawyn Patterson-Howard, and MVFT member running for Mount Vernon City Council, Derrick Thompson, the MVFT Executive Board voted overwhelmingly to endorse their candidacy and support their campaigns. President Carene Domato hosted a Halloween phone bank event. Within a few hours, the volunteers had made over 400 calls in an effort to get out the vote and support both Shawyn and Derrick. The MVFT stands proudly with Mount Vernon Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard and City Councilman Derrick Thompson. Congratulations on both of their victories in the November 5th Election!



Phone Bank Picture Names: Carene Domato, Tina Galimore, Derrick Thompson, Candice Offutt, Karen Thompson, Shanae Spruill, Caiifa Clark.

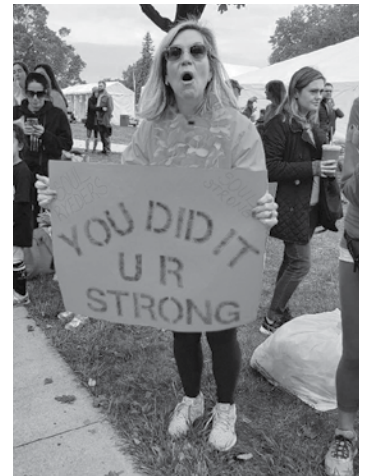
MVFT SUPPORTS MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER



Delegate Assembly Meeting: "I WEAR PINK SHIRTS" Front Row L- R: Christine Ceglio-Iaffaldano, Diana O'Sullivan, Jaqueline Simone, Angelique Perez, Jeanne Casino, Second Row L-R: Charlene Clarke, Marcia Wint, Thalia Langley, Modesta Curzio-Spies, Carene Domato, Toba Duggan, Anita Amieiro Back Row L-R: Janeen Clayton, Nikysha Copeland Bey, Keith McCall, Eddie Sauls, Rebecca Challop and Alexis Paupaw-Myrie

MAKING STRIDES WALK - MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE - OCTOBER 20, 2019

Many thanks to all who participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer fundraiser. The MVFT collected \$5,069. In addition, Lincoln Elementary School collected \$4,000. A special thank you to the MVFT Making Strides Committee: Monique Bell, Charlene Clarke and Charissa Manigault.



A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT LEADER NY STATE REGENT JUDITH JOHNSON

By Carene Domato, MVFT President

Judith Johnson, perhaps the best known educator in the Lower Hudson Valley, who fought for educational equity for decades and represented the region on the state Board of Regents since 2015, passed away on October 22. She was 80 years old.

The MVFT leadership enjoyed a special relationship with Judith when she served as interim Superintendent of Mount Vernon City Schools from 2009 to 2012.

She remained a close ally. We were proud when she became NY Regent. She believed in building partnerships and fostered trust and respect. Not only did she maintain her relationship with many of



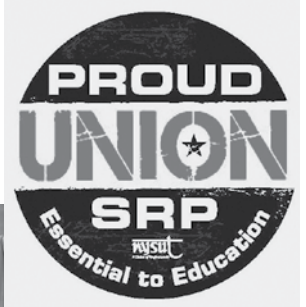
us, she arranged roundtable discussions with all of the locals in our area. She was a staunch advocate for public educators and students. The regents quickly recognized that Judith Johnson was not to be ignored and a force to be reckoned with.

In our last open forum in April 2019, Regent Johnson arranged for all of the Westchester/Putnam NYSUT leaders to meet with her and two other regents to hear firsthand what issues we had experienced with the state exams. That was the year we had piloted the online ELA and Math grade 3-8 exams that shut down on the first day of testing. The students suffered through untimed exams that lasted beyond the school day. Judith Johnson gave us a voice and we were heard loud and clear at that forum.

The MVFT was honored to know Judith Johnson. She will be dearly missed.

SCHOOL-RELATED PROFESSIONAL'S (SRP) DAY

SRP Recognition Day acknowledges the contributions of School-Related Professionals in helping to educate the whole student. Officially established as law in 2007, SRP Recognition Day falls on the third Tuesday of each November, often during American Education Week.



SPOTLIGHT

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

By Charissa Manigault, RTES Teaching Assistant

Rebecca Turner Elementary School celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with an assembly. Students performed to salsa and bachata songs. They read poems in Spanish and translated them in English. Our music teacher, Steven Coyne, and school counselor, Jennifer Giore-Peralta, created an original song which the students performed during the assembly. Parents, staff and students were thrilled to share in the celebration! A special thank you to the performance organizers: Charissa Manigault, teaching assistant; Kristen Diaz, psychologist; Jennifer Goire-Peralta, counselor and her intern, Bianca Gentile. High School students Magdalene McKoy, Ronald Carter, Marilyn Chambers and Marni Ferguson (former RTES students) volunteered their time after school to help with choreography and decorations.

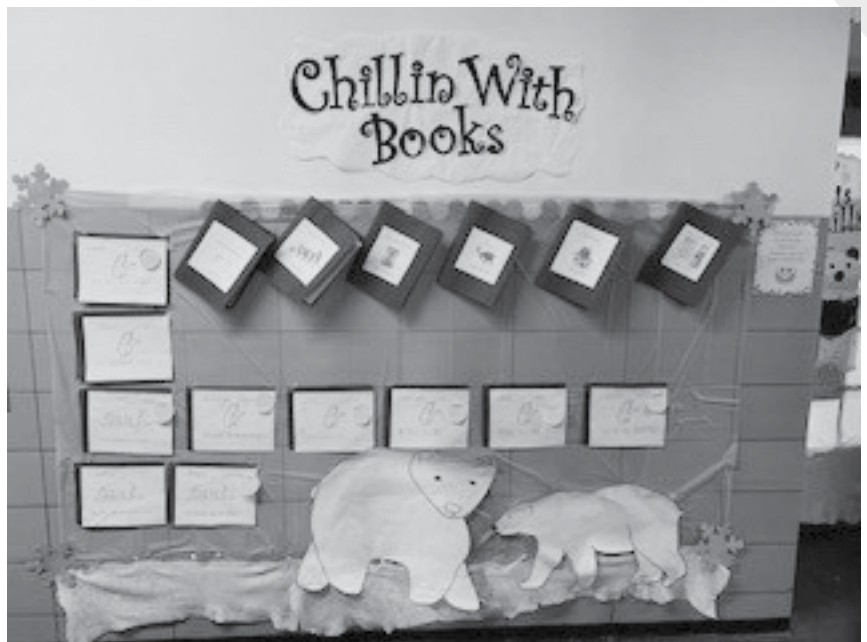
Kudos to Ainy Betancourt, teaching assistant, who created the bulletin board of Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo.



A DAY IN THE ARCTIC

By Saroya Brown, First Grade Teacher, Parker ES

After two wonderful professional development sessions with Discovery Education, first grade teachers Ms. Brown and Mrs. Cioffi, and kindergarten teacher Ms. Pearson from Parker Elementary collaborated to take their students on a virtual field trip. On November 13th, the students experienced the tundra and polar bears live with Polar Bears International and Discovery Education! The virtual journey took place just outside of Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Leading up to the trip, students were engaged in learning about the Arctic ecosystem, adaptations, the sea ice habitat and polar bears. Each classroom was transformed into a cold wintery place as the students took a trip to the tundra. Culminating activities included snow slime stations, marshmallow polar bear dens and a blubber experiment.



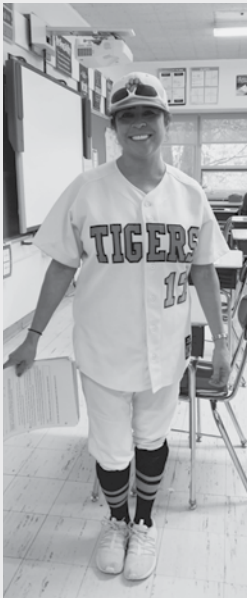
TRAPHAGEN HONORS OUR VETERANS

By Kathryn Santoro, Teacher, Traphagen

Traphagen Elementary School celebrated Veteran's Day on Friday, November 8, 2019. Ms. Moore, music teacher, worked hard with the students and staff members to put on a performance for the school community in honor of Veterans. Everyone wore red white and blue to honor the men and women who have kept our country safe. Family members of our Traphagen students who are Veterans came in to say a few words and listen to our students present their poems and musical selections. It was an amazing performance with the support and help of all of us working together.



CAN YOU GUESS WHO THESE MVFT STAFF MEMBERS WERE FOR HALLOWEEN?



RETIREE NEWS ~

Minutes of the MVFT Retiree Chapter meeting on October 30th were emailed on Nov. 2, 2019.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

RICK CASTELLITTO, Chairperson

The MVFT Retiree Chapter constitution is completed and will be emailed for ratification by March 2020. Election of officers will be in the fall of 2020.

Important info: Due to the high cost of mailing ballots, all voting will be done via email. If you have not been receiving retiree emails, please send your email address to Karen Wallace at kkwallace312@gmail.com. If you do not have an email address, paper ballots will be

mailed by written request. Send your request for paper ballots with your mailing address to Karen Wallace, MVFT, Suite 303, 22 West First St., Mt. Vernon, NY 10550 ATTN: RETIREES.

PULL TABS FOR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

MARGARET MAHONEY, Chairperson

The building reps brought all collected tabs from their buildings to the MVFT office. On Nov. 20th, retirees Margaret Mahoney and Marie Ciccimare delivered 60,182 tabs or 47.5 lbs. to a very appreciative Ronald McDonald House in Valhalla, NY. Many thanks to all who contributed. A special thanks to the Mount Vernon teachers for their time and commitment to this project; truly a genuine act of kindness from people who are overwhelmed with tasks on a daily basis!

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Carene Domato
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Jeanne Casino
Vice President, Grievance Chair
Angelique Perez
Treasurer
Anita Amieiro
Secretary
Karl Nifontoff
High School VP
Richard Suozzo
High School VP
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Diana O'Sullivan
PreK-8 VP
Charlene Clarke
PreK-8 VP
Keith McCall
PreK-8 VP
Josephine Kirkland-Hudson
Pupil Personnel VP
David Watson, Jr.
Security Chapter Leader
Melvin Campbell
Teaching Assistant Chapter Leader

UNION OFFICE

MVFT Rm. 303
22 West First St.
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Phone: (914) 664-3189
Fax: (914) 664-0860

Online at: www.mvft.org

Membership Report

Active	1115
Leave	16
<u>Retirees</u>	<u>538</u>
Total	1669

BUILDING REPS

Ryan Kirk #1
Jhanice McDonald #1
Toba Duggan #2
Modesta Curzio-Spies #2
Andrea Hyatt-Copeland #4
Shawn Harper-Tarrant #4
Thalia Langley #5
Marcia Wint #5
Rebecca Challop #6
Kathryn Santoro #6
Tashi Campbell-Tulloch #7
Stacia Fogg #7
Janeen Clayton #8
Nikysha Copeland Bey #8
Michael Jernegons #9
Alexis Paupaw-Myrie #9
Lynne Petrone #10
Scott Pollard #12
Annette Coppola #12
Donald Emerson #13
Lydia Rose #13
Nicole White Lee #14
Charissa Manigault #14
Tonja Hills #16
Denisha Hawkins #16
Nadine Shields Alcalde #17
Isabel Garcia #17
Michael Malocsay #18
David Israel #18
Eddie Sauls #18
Jacqueline Simone #18

The Agenda

Editor

Josephine Kirkland-Hudson

Staff

Carene Domato
Karen Molinaro
Charissa Manigault
Nicole White
Karen Wallace
Barbara DeAngelo

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

By Anita Amieiro, Secretary

WELCOME BACK

Genette Pearson, Lincoln

WEDDING BELLS

Michael Smith (*Steam*)

Sara Buckley (*Columbus*)

Kacie Danielsen (*Grimes*)

BIRTHS

Chad Charney (*Steam*) birth of son

Ediris Squitieri (*Columbus*) birth of daughter

Diana Manganiello (*Columbus*) birth of daughter

Peter Squitieri (*Lincoln*) birth of daughter

Kristina Pinamonti (*Lincoln*) birth of daughter

Linda Coshigano (*Lincoln*) birth of granddaughter

Marisol Florez (*Holmes*) birth of son

Ona McFarlane Lowe (*Holmes*) birth of daughter

Wanda White (*Retiree*) birth of granddaughter

Mitsugi Reid (*MVHS*) birth of daughter

Gina Conrad-Thompson (*Steam*) birth of daughter

Maureen Alleva (*Holmes*) birth of grandson

CONGRATULATIONS

Carmela Sanzi (*Graham*) engagement

Ann-Marie Carroll (*MVHS*) engagement

Lisa Duffy (*Retiree*) Son's marriage, June 2019

Daughter's marriage, September 2019

GET WELL

Niki Herrera (*Columbus*)

CONDOLENCES

Carl Caprio (*Retiree*) loss of mother

Solivette Dacunha (*Hamilton*) loss of mother

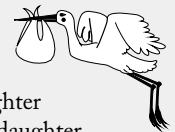
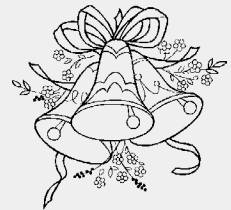
Susan Lombardi (*Lincoln*) loss of father

Dawn Nasti (*Lincoln*) loss of brother-in-law

Annette Coppola (*Steam*) loss of brother

Stephanie Zito (*Holmes*) loss of sister

To the Family of Antoine Macsoud (*Retiree*)



The MVFT wants to hear from you!
Submit a photo and short blurb to MVFT
Agenda editor, Josephine Kirkland-Hudson at
jkirkland@mtvernoncsd.org