

The Agenda



www.mvft.org

Volume 22, Issue 2

Over Seventy Years of Excellence in Education

MOUNT VERNON FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

June 2021

Contract Ratified!



Seated L-R: Anita Amieiro, Charissa Manigault, Christine Iaffaldano, Keith McCall, Nikysha Copeland Bey. Standing L-R: Angelique Perez, Eddie Sauls, Thalia Langley, Jeanne Casino, Nadine Shields Alcalde, Shawn Harper Tarrant, Carene Domato, Mike Jernegons, Jacqueline Simone, Donald Emerson, Tonja Hills, Lydia Rose.

We are pleased to announce that on Friday, June 18th, the Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers, including all teachers, teaching assistants and security monitors voted overwhelmingly to accept the 2019-2022 Memorandum of Agreement. We would like to thank the membership for their confidence and support throughout this long and arduous process.

Negotiating during a pandemic proved challenging and unprecedented. The MVFT Negotiations Team spent close to two years and more than a hundred hours preparing proposals and negotiating with the district, determined to bring forth an agreement worth ratifying. Our building representatives made sure our members in each of the schools were kept

informed throughout this process. Together we all played a role in finally ratifying this three-year contract and it will be all of our responsibilities to both enforce and live up to the spirit in which it was written. It may take some time, but once the provisions are added and new language is appropriately placed, copies will be distributed to all of our members.

Together We Are Stronger!

In Unity,

Carene Domato

Message From The MVFT President

Together We Have Survived and Thrived 2020 – 2021

By Carene Domato, MVFT President

Congratulations! You have made it through another school year, unlike any other we could have possibly imagined. If this past year and a half was a test of strength and unity of our MVFT membership, we can certainly say that we have emerged victorious.

Who would have ever predicted that our greatest challenges would be about following the everchanging CDC guidelines: making sure our members and students answered the COVID questions, had their temperatures taken upon arrival, masks on and keeping everyone 6 feet apart. And even with all of those precautions, to get that dreaded call that there was another case of COVID in your school, and maybe to find out that you needed to quarantine and get tested!

Adding to our daily stress were our concerns about keeping our own families safe, making sure our own children were keeping up with their school work, not being able to see our parents or siblings, and maybe even being kept apart from our grandchildren, some of whom we haven't even met yet.

Each and every one of us deserves to be proud that we survived another year of uncertainty with both strength and dignity. We have overcome the challenges of this COVID pandemic together, learning new ways to reach and teach our students, while maintaining sanity in our own homes, and realizing that we did not have to face it alone.

We are hopeful that all of our students will be returning to our classrooms in September and we will no longer need to teach remotely. We have been able to emerge from the isolation that this pandemic has thrust upon us, grateful for the freedom and the protection of the COVID vaccination and the lowest percentage of positive COVID cases we have seen in the past 16 months. Most of us have recently reunited with our families after keeping our distance for their safety. Finally, we have been able to catch

up on all the hugs we have longed for and cherish the closeness that we surely will never take for granted again.

Retiree Celebration

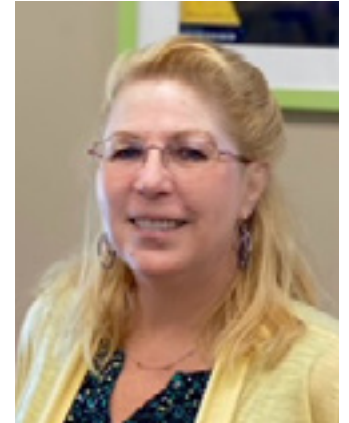
We were able to give our retirees from 2020 and 2021 a proper send off at the MVFT Retiree Luncheon on June 16th. It was a wonderful celebration honoring their service, commitment and dedication to the Mount Vernon Community. Thank you for making the rest of us shine while in your presence.

Newly Tenured Teachers

We also want to congratulate those of our newest members who received tenure this year. We appreciate each and every one of you and recognize how hard you have worked to be awarded this rite of passage.

Take the time this summer to reflect, rejuvenate and relax.

Stay healthy, stay in touch, and make this a summer to remember!



Congratulations!

MVFT Retirees 2020

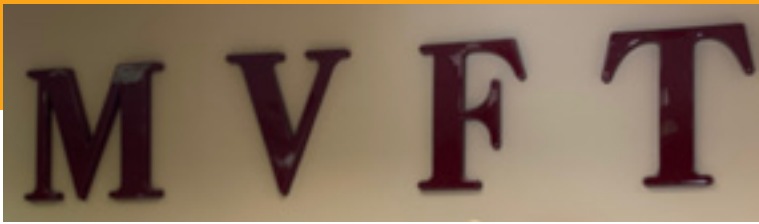
Juliet Alston
Ornella Alves
Mary Barbalato
Debra Bartnicki
Patricia Battles
Margaret Beardsley
Yvonne Blount
Hazel Bush
Patricia Caruso
Maureen Casey
Robyn Cash-Ragins
Annette Coppola
Margaret Crouch
Daniel Cuevas
Keith Dembo
Charles Ferraiola
Christine Francis

Joseph Galgano
Anthony Giannelli
Constance Gold
Catherine Grossi
Patricia Langworthy
Laurie Lee Miller
Lynne Petrone
Alexandria Petty
Freddie Roberson
Lisa Rossi
Deborah Russo
Eunice Sanmoogen
Deborah Semple
Bella Spektor
Gia Strazera
Rose Tavernia
Eulette Walker

MVFT Retirees 2021

Ruth Eva Bridges
Lennox Brown
Anne Marie Bryant
Dolores Burghardt
Lisa Celzo
Lee-Ann Ciocca
Catherine DiLeo
Toba Duggan
Sharon Dupree
Marian Fiorentino
Kathryn Gannon-Block
Raphaella Ganz
Sam Gill
Tina Harris
Jesse Henry
Patricia Holland

Christine Iaffaldano
Tonya Johnson-Cooper
Lynne Middleton
Barbara Millstein
Reyna Molina
Fay Morrison
Maria Neto
Diana O'Sullivan
Patricia Pellicci
Sharon Vann
Gwendolyn Vanriel
Donna Vena
Veronica Washington
Lorraine Webster
Candelaria Wright
James Young



Karen Molinaro, MVFT office manager, has played a vital role in every aspect of the MVFT; her contributions cannot be overstated.

For nearly 20 years, our members have known what to expect when they reached out to the union or welfare fund office. Whatever their question or concern, it was Karen to the rescue! She was the friendly, compassionate and more importantly, knowledgeable voice answering the call, fully prepared to attend to their needs.

For union leadership, she was our gate keeper, our steadying influence with the uncanny ability to read our minds and keep us on task. Karen made us all better at whatever we did.

Karen came to us in 2002. Working at the board of ed. for some time, she had become frustrated with the constant personnel changes and rotating bosses; that gave us our opening and Dom and I jumped on it. We gave her an offer she couldn't refuse! Over the years, of all of the contracts and deals we have made, this one would come to benefit our members most of all.

When Karen arrived, she brought with her the personal and professional demeanor we needed. Karen, a self-starter, was quick to organize the office, updating our files and setting up efficient routines. She put finishing touches on all we did. With her easy personality, bookkeeping skills and knowledge of how the board worked, Karen quickly identified all the missing pieces and systematically moved us toward greater efficiency.

With the knowledge of Karen's approaching retirement, Carene, Karen and I discussed at great length what was needed to replace her. It didn't take long for Carene

and I to confirm what we already knew: Karen was irreplaceable! With that reality, rather than searching for a replacement, we would reimagine how the office would function best in that "time after Karen."

Once we agreed upon a direction, we knew that we would need someone to lead the transition. So, of course, we called on Karen one last time. For the past few months as office manager, she has graciously included training a new secretary and managing the transition of the clerical responsibilities of the Welfare Fund to ASO.

We all know that time brings change. Leaders come and go, as do co-workers. We were all fortunate to have had Karen as the office manager for as long as we did.

So, Karen, congratulations! You will be missed by all of us, and most certainly, by those of us who have had the pleasure of sharing the office with you every day. You have earned this opportunity to spend more time with Gary and your family. On behalf of the MVFT, I thank you for taking such good care of us all!

By Jeff Yonkers, Past MVFT president



Retirement Celebration



RETIREE NEWS

MVFTRC CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Rick Castellitto

As a refresher, the membership of the Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Retiree Chapter (MVFTRC) held an election in November 2020 to approve or reject a proposed inaugural constitution. This addition of a constitution was required by NYSUT and AFT rules in order to keep the Chapter's Charter active. The results of the MVFTRC Constitution Ratification were 163 votes to approve and 2 votes to reject. 165 voters out of a possible 499 participated in the election.

So what's next? According to the newly adopted Constitution, the following actions should happen:

- An Election Committee should be formed to prepare for Executive Board elections (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate-at-Large);
- Nominations for the Executive Board officers should be completed by November 15, with elections held by January 15;
- The Executive Board will carry out the functions of their office as well as appoint interested members to the Social/Community Service Committee and the Legislation Committee;
- The Executive Board will review the Chapter's budget and adopt a dues structure;
- The Executive Board will call at least two General Membership meetings per year

We don't know how much of this can happen in a timely fashion given the constraints we all have for health and safety issues, as well as the start of summer, but we hope to be able to be up and running in early Fall.

HOLIDAY INITIATIVE - SCARVES FOR KIDS

Maz Hogan, Chairperson.

We are planning to donate scarves to our students in need in December 2021, so get those needles going!

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Karen Wallace, Chairperson.

The kitchens are being renovated and should be finished in another month. No decision has been made about the date that we can resume our cooking. We still have some money for food, so as soon as we get the okay - we will cook!

TABS FOR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Margaret Mahoney, Chairperson

Tab collections will be organized in the spring of 2022.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Gayle Wykoff, Chairperson

Although there are no plans currently, we are considering an outdoor picnic space for our next chapter meeting. As of this writing, we do not have a date or a place, but Gayle Wykoff, Chairperson, and the committee are exploring options.

WELFARE FUND TRUSTEE VACANCIES

There will be two vacancies on the Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Welfare Fund Board of Trustees as of November 1, 2021. One vacancy is for an ACTIVE member, and the other is a RETIREE position. The term of service is for four years effective November 1, 2021- October 31, 2025. The trustees meet at the Union/Welfare Fund office at least four times during the school year and are responsible for overseeing the administration of the Fund; providing an appropriate level of benefits while acting in a fiduciary manner.

Anyone wishing to apply must be a member of the MVFT in good standing and a current member of the Welfare Fund. If interested, please send a letter of introduction and qualification, **no later than October 1, 2021** to:

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Welfare Fund
22 West First Street, Suite 303
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

FRANK PANDOLFO MEMORIAL MEMBERS' SCHOLARSHIP

2020-2021 Recipients

James Apostolou

Son of Francesca Apostolou
Holmes School

Henry Becker

Son of Neal Becker
Mount Vernon High School

Eli Civita

Son of Alyson Civita
Mount Vernon High School

Abigail Copeland

Daughter of Andrea Hyatt-Copeland
Parker School

Shelah Johnson

Daughter of Tinaca Johnson
Rebecca Turner Elementary School

Sydney Leathers

Daughter of Landa Hunter
Rebecca Turner Elementary School

Lauren Lee

Daughter of Monique Lee
Holmes School

Michael Manganiello

Son of Sally Manganiello
Traphagen School

Rayven Daniels

Daughter of Casandre Laurent
Williams School

Diane Emerson

Daughter of Donald Emerson
Bejamin Turner Middle School

Edwin Florez

Son of Marisol Florez
Holmes School

Justin Goldsmith

Son of Kizzy Knott
Nelson Mandela/ Dr. Hosea Zollicoffer School

Nina Grosso

Daughter of Laura Grosso
Mount Vernon STEAM Academy

Bennett Marino

Son of Laura Marino
Lincoln School

Mekhi Miller

Son of Dwayne Miller
Rebecca Turner Elementary School

Kaya Roxas

Daughter of Jennifer Roxas
Mount Vernon High School

Samantha Spies

Daughter of Modesta Curzio-Spies
Lincoln School

Tyshawn Staggers

Son Of Tyshawn Staggers
Mount Vernon High School



SPOTLIGHT

COLUMBUS

On Tuesday, March 16th, 2021, Columbus Elementary School hosted an AVID virtual showcase where teachers and students from grade levels K-6 demonstrated their use of AVID strategies that fall under the umbrella of WICOR. The showcase focused on 5 classrooms each displaying their college readiness culture.

In Ms. Zimmar's kindergarten class the students used the WICOR strategy of 4 Corners to tell about their favorite stories from the week. The children completed a Quick Draw where they drew a picture of their favorite book. The students completed the lesson by giving each other Shout Out compliments on each other's writing pieces.

In Ms. Acosta's 2nd grade class the students held a Socratic Seminar as they interacted with the text.

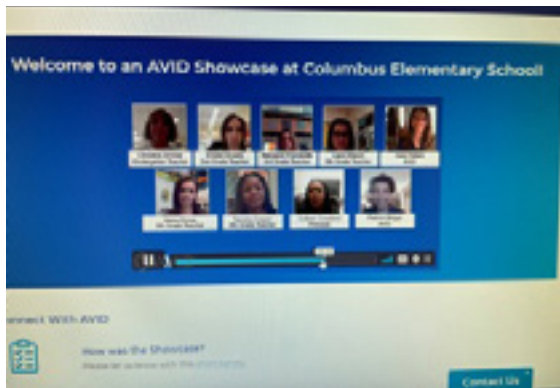
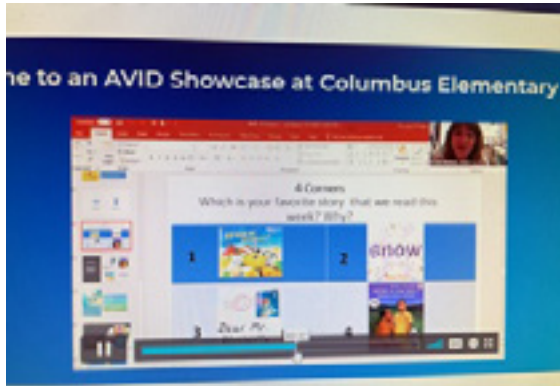
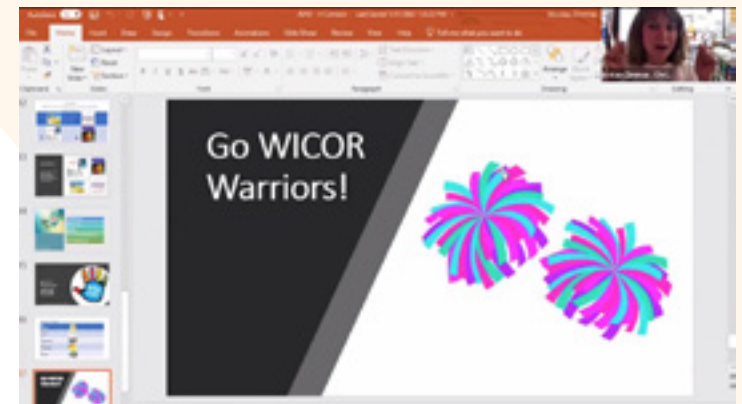
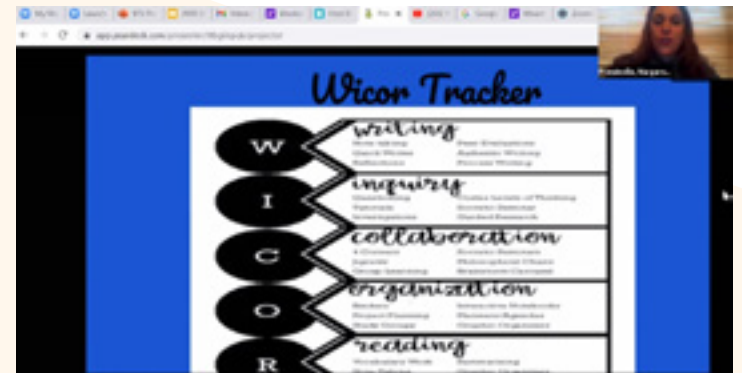
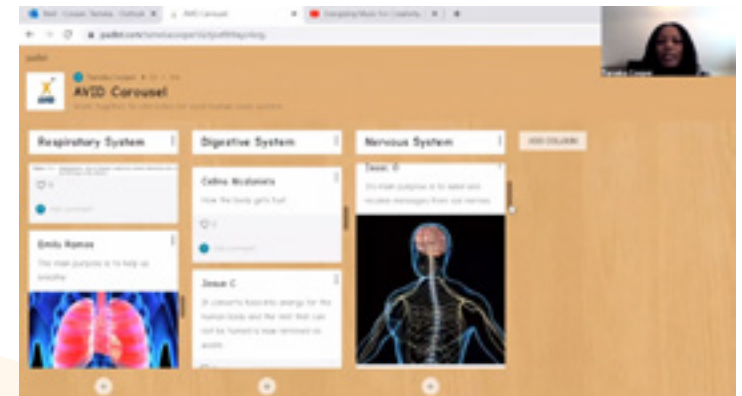
In 3rd grade, Ms. Prendeville and Ms. Garufi displayed their Bitmoji AVID classroom and had their students watch a video and take notes on the video using graphic organizers, while using evidence-based sentence structures.

In a 5th grade class, Ms. Mason and Ms. Dimas presented a math lesson on Kami using the WICOR strategy of philosophical chairs.

In Ms. Cooper's 6th grade science class, the students took part in a Brainstorm AVID Carrousel using Padlet. The students also participated in a Gallery Tour where they were able to comment, like, or post questions related to their classmates' posts.

Overall, Columbus Elementary School exhibited that our students throughout all grade levels are true WICOR WARRIORS! AVID ROCKS!

by Christina Nicolau-Zimmar



SPOTLIGHT

TRAPHAGEN

Traphgen staff members Jenny Jones, Ashley Rodriquez, Charlotte Moore, Zuri Fairman, Caroline Cullinane, Taryn Hill, Nilaja Williams, Erin Langton, Michelle Bromley, and many more worked with the students of Traphagen to present an amazing Black Excellence Virtual assembly for the whole school, parents, and community to enjoy.



SPOTLIGHT

DWSA VIRTUAL CONCERT

Under the direction of Mr. Mansa Gory, The Dynamic Denzel Washington Band put on a dazzling virtual solo and ensemble concert on May 11th over the Zoom streaming platform. The performance, which featured 6th through 12th band students, showcased a wide variety of musical instruments and genres. Some highlights were Chopin's *Ballade 1*, John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, *Path of the Wind*, Bruno Mars *Leave the Door Open*, and original compositions.

"I am very proud of the progress of Denzel band students this year. We persevered through the challenges to push ourselves to the next level. Band night is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our young musical artist," said Mr. Gory.

Stream the performance videos here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLctkZ6LMLCpwypoWlmuNU8RuYTLV_dVhI

Stream the audio playlist here:

https://www.bandlab.com/mansa_gory/collections/4bc770d2-d1ae-eb11-85aa-0050f28a50ba



HOME TITLE FRAUD: WHAT TO KNOW

By: Mirkin & Gordon, P. C.

Lately, there have been advertisements in various media by service providers offering to protect you from home title fraud. While this could be helpful, in most cases, these providers only monitor and alert you of potential activity involving your title, but do not intercede on your behalf. In some instances, scammers can pose as these types of businesses too, so it is important to do research before signing up.

This will help you understand what home title fraud is, how to avoid it and protect yourself.

What is home title fraud?

Home title fraud occurs when someone obtains the title of your property – usually by stealing your identity – to change ownership from your name to theirs. This person can then secure loans using your equity as collateral. Often the real homeowner is unaware of the scam until the lender starts to send letters indicating they intend to foreclose on the home.

How often does this occur?

While once considered rare, home title fraud is now seen as one of the fast-growing cybercrime schemes in the country. The FBI reported in 2017 that in the real estate and rental industry, more than 9,600 victims lost over \$56 million.

How does home title fraud happen?

Home title fraud usually is a result of identity theft. Many transaction and document requests are done online, which increases the chances of criminals stealing information. Older people are the most common targets because they typically have more equity in their homes and may not be as online-savvy. Other targets include people who own second homes, vacation homes, and investment properties who may not pay as much attention to those properties and may miss notices or bills (property bills, foreclosure notices, or past-due notices). Other tactics include what's known as "phishing e-mails" that ask a homeowner for personal information so they can obtain their home title. These phishing e-mails are attempts to get recipients to divulge sensitive information (usernames, passwords, social security numbers, etc.)



How to protect yourself.

Check your credit report to identify any financial activity that may have occurred in your name to determine if you have been a victim of identity theft.

Pay attention to incoming bills such as the tax bill, water bill, mortgage bill, etc. Not receiving an expected bill can be a sign of home title fraud or possible identity theft.

Check your home information with your county's deed office every so often to make sure nothing has changed.

What if I think I am already a victim of home title fraud? If you think you are already a victim; you can add a one-year fraud alert to your credit report, file an identity theft report with your local police department and add a seven-year fraud victim alert to your credit report.

The New York State Attorney General's office has also established a "Protect Our Homes" Program where victims can report complaints.

Attorneys from the Fund's legal services program are also available to assist you if you think you are a victim of identity theft, including home title fraud.

POWER OF ATTORNEY FORM NEW CHANGES

By: Mirkin & Gordon, P.C.

Recently, New York Law governing power of attorney forms was amended with changes to go effect June 15, 2021. Among other things, these changes allow less rigid language to be used in power of attorney forms and discourage banks and other financial institutions from unreasonably rejecting them; in other words, more effective in operation.

What is a power of attorney? A power of attorney is a form that a person (the Principal) may use to grant powers and authority to another person (the Agent or Attorney-in-Fact) to handle financial transactions for the Principal (e.g., banking, paying bills, etc.). It is particularly important if the Principal becomes disabled and cannot handle his/her own affairs.

Why has the law changed? The currently approved power of attorney form was found to be too complex, costly and difficult for individuals to use. It rigidly requires the exact language of the statute be incorporated in power of attorney forms, causing many not to be accepted by banks and other financial institutions for harmless errors.

What changes were made? The new law makes rejection of the document less likely because it allows language that “substantially conforms” with the statute rather than requiring the form to incorporate the exact wording of the statute. Forms can no longer be rejected for insignificant mistakes in wording, spelling, punctuation, formatting, or use of bold or italic type. It also discourages banks and other

financial institutions from improperly refusing to accept the form by authorizing judicially imposed penalties and attorney fees against institutions that unreasonably refuse to accept a valid power of attorney form.

The Statutory Gifts Rider has also been eliminated. The changes to the law also make it simpler to grant an Agent the authority to make certain gifts. Now, such gift giving provisions may be included in the main body of the power of attorney; while before, they had to be in a complicated separate document called the “Statutory Gift Rider”, which also had to be completed and signed by the Principal, often causing confusion.

Have your Power of Attorney Reviewed.

While power of attorney forms executed before these changes in the law remain valid, this may be a good time to have your existing documents reviewed by an attorney under the Fund’s comprehensive plan of legal services benefits. If you and/or your spouse do not have a power of attorney or other important documents covered by the Fund’s plan (e.g., will, healthcare proxy, living will, disposition of remains directive, etc.) you should contact the Fund to make an appointment with an attorney from the panel law firm, which can be conducted at your convenience via telephone or video conference.



EXECUTIVE BOARD BUILDING REPS

Carene Domato
President

Jeanne Casino
Vice President, Grievance Chair

Angelique Perez
Treasurer

Anita Amieiro
Secretary

Karl Nifontoff
High School VP

Richard Suozzo
High School VP

Christine Ceglie
PreK-8 VP

Charlene Clarke
PreK-8 VP

Keith McCall
PreK-8 VP

Diana O'Sullivan
PreK-8 VP

Josephine Kirkland-Hudson
Pupil Personnel VP

Denise Coates
Security Chapter Leader

Monique Bell
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

Ryan Kirk #1
Toba Duggan #2
Modesta Curzio-Spies #2
Michelle Battista #3
Andrea Hyatt-Copeland #4
Shawn Harper-Tarrant #4
Thalia Langley #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
Ellen Benowitz #10
Lenora Harris-Shoulders #10
Frank Claro #12
Jason Stone #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

Staff
Carene Domato
Karen Molinaro
Karen Wallace
Barbara DeAngelo

Membership Report

Active	1096
Leave	28
<u>Retirees</u>	<u>619</u>
Total	1743

GET WELL

Linda Servino (*Lincoln*)

Dolores Paul (*Graham*)

Michael Malocsay (*MVHS*)

BIRTHS

Annamaria Olivera (*Holmes*) daughter

Toba Duggan (*Lincoln*) grandson

Janine DiBelardino (*Lincoln*) son

Daniela Beechner (*Holmes*) daughter

Isaura Molina Calvo (*Graham*) son

Frederick Kahn (*Lincoln*) daughter

Peter Squitieri (*Lincoln*) daughter

Ashley Corral (*Grimes*) son

Patrice Lee (*Graham*) son

Maureen Alleva (*Holmes*) grandson

Carene Domato (*Hamilton*) grandson

Enid Ingram (*Traphagen*) grandchild

Annette Coppola (*Retiree*) grandchild

CONGRATULATIONS

Erica Porco (*Lincoln*) engagement

Susan Lombardi (*Lincoln*) son's wedding, daughter's engagement

WELCOME BACK

Anna Cammarata (*Lincoln*)

Janine DeBelardino (*Lincoln*)



CONDOLENCES

Dawn Nasti (*Lincoln*) loss of father

Andrew Pucci (*Parker*) loss of mother-in-law and uncle

Maureen Alleva (*Holmes*) loss of mother

Jeffrey Morrison (*Hamilton*) loss of mother

Laura Marino (*Lincoln*) loss of father

Linda Coschigano (*Lincoln*) loss of father

Anna Cammarata (*Lincoln*) loss of uncle

Kendalyn Myers (*Lincoln*) loss of brother

Alisa Lentini (*Graham*) loss of husband

Kristina Pinamonti (*Lincoln*) loss of father

Craig Zern (*Graham*) loss of father

Sharon Whitter (*Parker*) loss of father

Isabel Garcia (*Holes*) loss of mother

Jennifer Quiros (*Hamilton*) loss of father

Adrian Rosario (*Holmes*) loss of grandmother

Stacey Wynn (*Traphagen*) loss of spouse

Lauren Wynn (*Columbus*) loss of brother

Annette Coppola (*Retiree*) loss of grandmother

Susan Marie Stanton (*Retiree*) loss of mother

William Rundle (*Retiree*) loss of mother

Laura Rodriguez (*Retiree*) loss of mother

Denise Medoff (*Retiree*) loss of mother

Teresita Fajardo (*Retiree*) loss of husband Proceso Fajardo (*Retiree*)

Don Munroe (*Security*) loss of father

To the Family of Gerri Dixon (Teaching Assistant, MVHS)

To the Family of Maureen Mack (Teaching Assistant, Graham School)

