

The View from Here



**By Ann De Lacy
HCEA President**

Dear Members,

Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your president for the last six years.

Nearly sixteen years ago, after some complaint I'd made to her about a now seemingly mundane issue, then HCEA President Karen Dunlop, called me into her office where she sat me down and told me that I would never understand the challenges of this job or the decisions made until I sat in her chair. Karen was right. Each day brings new trials, questions, experiences and opportunities.

Being HCEA President has provided me the opportunity to form a more global awareness of the policies, practices and politics that influence public education and public education unions. The HCEA staff as well as staff and members (including MSEA and NEA) have provided me with the skills needed to passionately advocate for fair ways to address your challenges and to celebrate and promote your triumphs.

Everyday has been a learning experience...some good and others not so good, but there has not been a single experience I would change. Each one has been an opportunity to learn and grow professionally and personally; and each has helped me to hone my vision and message for HCEA now and as we continue to grow and move forward as an organization.

With the help of many members, the wonderful staff at HCEA, staff at HCPSS and others, during the last six years, we have established the following initiatives:

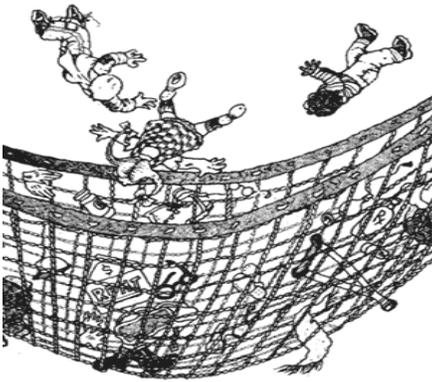
- AFLAC
- Fair Share
- 1,400 new members
- Enhanced the use of the Job Satisfaction Survey
- Instituted the HCEA Legislative Breakfast
- Became a principal member of the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN) Think Tank
- Enhanced the role of the HCEA Board of Directors and Building Reps
- Provided more opportunities for the development of new leaders
- Instituted the HCEA Round Table Discussions with members of the Board of Education and Building Reps
- Reinstated the HCEA Crab Feast
- Instituted the role Local Presidents played in MSEA
- Purchased additional space for meetings
- Enhanced the role of committees
- Won two NCUEA Grants
- Won three ESP Awards for attendance at the MSEA Professional Development Day
- Won awards for membership growth
- Collaborated with HCPSS to establish a student growth model for evaluation of teachers

My personal motto has always been this: **It's all about the members.** It still is. As President, my goal has always been to support members and to provide them opportunities to develop leadership and personal growth through exposure to a variety of venues. These opportunities have enabled many to discover abilities and achieve goals they would have never realized as an employee of Howard County Public Schools.

I look forward to the free time I'll have as retiree. I wish all of you success now and in the future.



Help-A-Child Thanks You For Your Support!



The Help-A-Child Fund started the school year in critical condition. HCEA asked for your help and once again through the generosity of our school system employees and community, the Help-A-Child fund stabilized. We have been able to grant over 400 requests this school year.

We currently have over 165 employees supporting Help-A-Child through payroll deductions. Regular donations from payroll deductions allow us to maintain a dependable balance. Help-A-Child has also been the recipient of donations from various schools and community organizations as well as individuals that have championed our cause.

Debbie Wolfe from Rockburn Elementary School has successfully coordinated fundraisers to benefit Help-A-Child for the past several years, Centennial Elementary School administrators have donated in honor of staff regularly, HCPSS school cluster nurses have also remembered Help-A-Child the past few years. HCEA Vice President, Donna Schulze, is-

sued a challenge to her colleagues at Phelps Luck Elementary School that she would match donations, Patapsco Middle School building reps, Kathy Ivey and Sharon Zelenak, were also very effective in motivating staff to give generously to Help-A-Child. The Hilltop Women's Club has backed our fund for many years and Oakland Mills Community Association contributed this year as well as the West Friendship Elementary School PTA. Many individual donations, in memory of or in honor of a loved one have been a big part of our financial base.

Help-A-Child is a joint project of the Howard County Education Association and the HCPSS Pupil Personnel Workers. We are very grateful that we were able to continue to aid the children in the Howard County Public Schools who needed our help.

Many thanks to the local businesses that support our fund and are the basis for our program. Walmart, Sears, and Elliott City Eye Care accept our vouchers so that families can purchase the items needed; school clothing, coats, shoes and eye glasses.

Since our economy remains fragile, the need for assistance for children in Howard County has continued to grow. Because of the generosity of HCEA members, HCPSS employees and community we have been able to meet this need. Thank you!

SPARKS!

HCEA is looking for a few good women and men to participate in our SPARKS program this October!! SPARKS is an opportunity for those new to the education profession (five years or less) to get together with colleagues in a stress free environment and learn more about education, classroom management, financial planning, stress management – in fact, the participants will help plan the agenda! Participants will be released from one day of school so they can come to Annapolis to learn and have fun. All expenses are paid by HCEA, participants only job is to show up and have fun! If you know someone in your building who is a rising star and you want to nominate them to be a part of this exciting adventure (or if you want to nominate yourself!) contact Mary Jo Neville at mjneville@mseanea.org. Space is limited so let us know right away!!



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Changes Coming in Health Insurance

HCPSS has recently completed a process of rebidding all health insurance plans including medical, dental, prescription and vision as well as all voluntary insurance i.e. life, disability, long-term care, etc. with an eye toward reducing overall health insurance costs as well as bringing the number of available plans in line with other school districts. Currently employees have the option of choosing from seven different health insurance plans and many other voluntary plans which has resulted in confusion for employees as well as additional costs to employees and the system.

An HCPSS Employee Benefits Committee was established earlier this year and has met on multiple occasions to examine and interview companies who have submitted RFP's (Request For Proposals) to the BOE. This committee is comprised of representatives from all three employee unions as well as staff persons from HCPSS's health insurance department. The BOE's consulting firm of Bolton & Partners has assisted the committee in its work.

One of the requirements that HCEA representatives insisted on being included in all of the RFP's was a condition that all plan designs had to include, as a minimum, the highest level of benefits in each area from all of the current plans. This will ensure that there is no diminution of the level of benefits cur-

rently enjoyed by employees. The other area that was closely examined by HCEA representatives was the "disruption analysis." This was to ensure that if plans other than current plans were chosen, the physicians currently used by our employees would also be part of those plans.

The Health Benefits Committee has completed its work and their recommendations will be presented to the Board of Education at the June 9th meeting for adoption. If accepted, these plans will go into effect beginning January 1, 2012 and will be included in the open enrollment process in the fall.

FBLA Learning Conference

The FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Learning Conference was held on April 6th in Hunt Valley, Maryland.

HCPSS educators and FBLA Sponsors Reg Hahne, Marriotts Ridge HS and Teresa Waters, River Hill HS attended the event. Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools was also in attendance.

The FBLA is an organization that helps prepare students for the business fields through pre-business postsecondary study. More than 950 students from around the state participated in this remarkable event; River Hill HS took home the first place trophy while Marriotts Ridge HS placed 3rd amongst the more that 75 participating chapter organizations. Many county students earned the right to participate at the National Learning Conference to be held in Orlando, Florida on June 28th - July 1st.



Pictured from left: Reg Hahne, Marriotts Ridge HS, Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, and Teresa Waters, River Hill HS at the FBLA Learning Conference.

HCEA Marketplace

General Services

Home Mortgages/Refinancing: Interest rates and home prices are the lowest in years. Presidential is a Maryland based bank with offices in Columbia. No application fees or appraisal fees for HCEA members. First time home buyer programs. Contact Mitch Lax at 443-812-9319 or by e-mail mitchlax@presidential.com to discuss your mortgage options.

Tutorrific! Tutor in homes throughout Howard County. A great way to make extra money! Please send an email with your resume to Deborah Peled Markowitz at tutorrific@comcast.net.

Longaberger!! Do you need a flexible part time job or want to buy gifts at a discount? To find out how to purchase our baskets and other products, host a home show, have a fundraising event for your school or organization or become part of the growing Longaberger family contact Melissa Ronnenberg, at 410-719-2214 or melisron1@comcast.net.

Help Your Body, Help Yourself: Looking for a natural stress reliever? Want to enjoy a deep state of relaxation? Consider a Reiki treatment at a convenient Howard Co. location. For more information or to make an appointment, contact Janet @410-925-5053 Certified Usui Reiki Master. HCEA members receive \$10 off your first session. Receive 10% off your next visit when you refer a friend.

"To-Do List" piling up? Need help???? Contact JM Frederick, LLC for handyman services. MHIC Licensed #97185, #125996. Insured, and Workers Comp. Residential and Commercial Services available. Office: email jm.frederick.llc@gmail.com or call 410-750-7473. Servicing Howard

and nearby counties. Emergency services as available.

Thinking about remodeling your current home? Adding an addition, finishing a basement, adding a deck or garage? Thinking about building new? Contact The CAD Studio for a FREE Consultation online at www.thecadstudiodesign.com or 240-994-9554. MHIC #92007.

Rentals

3BR 2.5 BA townhouse for rent. Asking \$2200 (negotiable) per month. Utilities are not included. Conveniently located off Route 1, 32 and 95. Pictures and details available upon request. The community is very safe and our neighbors are great! If interested contact Amanda J. Bixler, at (609) 923-5630 or Amanda.J.Bixler@mcpmsd.org.

Vacation Rentals

North Ocean City, MD: Plan your summer now! 4 BR, 2 bath single family home on 140th street. Home has cable TV, wireless internet, large deck, outside shower, fully equipped kitchen, etc. Discount to HCEA members from \$1750 to \$1275. Call Pam 410-381-8593 or email pam_vogel@hcps.org.

Deep Creek Lake: 3 BR lake chalet, sleeps 10. Fully furnished, close to restaurants, activities and State Parks. Discount to Ho Co employees! Winter, spring, summer and fall great place to relax and enjoy the outdoors! Contact Chuck at 410-979-4958 or Candy at 410-530-1265.

Ocean City Condo- Newly redecorated! 2 bedrm, 2 bath, sleeps 6-8, cath. ceiling, private pool, easy walk to beach and much more! visit www.vacationrentals.com/vacation-rentals/21523.html for photos and more. Discount for HCPSS employees! Summer dates still available! Call Kecia Little 410-241-9005.

Deep Creek Lake: 5 BR log cabin chalet; fully furnished; all amenities included; minutes from WISP Ski resort; 30% discount to HCEA members; weekend or weekly rental. Call Dan at 410-465-5190.

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Dates to Remember:

Call HCEA to register for events.

BJ's Discount Membership

June 1 – 30

Last Day of School

Wednesday, June 22

NEA Rep Assembly

June 30 – July 5

Chicago, Illinois

"Anything Goes" at Toby's

Thursday, June 29

Half Price for HCEA Members

MSEA Summer Training Series

August 2 - 4