



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

November 2017

IMPORTANT DATES DECEMBER

4th OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

7th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

18th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

21st NON-SCHOOL DAY

22nd – Jan 5th
WINTER BREAK – NO SCHOOL

JANUARY 2018

8th OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

11th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

15th MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DAY – NO SCHOOL

29th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

FROM MARYKAY TO YOU



Welcome back! I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving break. I know we are now in the season of hustle and bustle. Fear not, our next extended break is just a few short weeks away.

Unfortunately, the days preceding Thanksgiving were full of tragedy for some of our colleagues and families. The intruders on our campus (and the hostage situation in Riverside) coupled with the accidental deaths of a student and a parent have caused many of us to reflect on how we respond to crisis.

OMSD has a well-trained crisis response team. The team was dispatched immediately to provide support to both students and staff in the aftermath of the events at DeAnza and Wiltsey. Some of us, however, may require support reaching beyond the first few days. For support, we all have access to Health Advocate. Call 866-695-8692 for referral to counseling resources.

In addition to providing support for recovery, the district has been actively planning to minimize the potential of future safety breaches. Please feel free to share your insights with OMTA. It won't be possible to achieve everyone's idea of the perfect approach, but our progress toward enhanced safety will most certainly be better when multiple perspectives are considered.

Thank you so much for your honest and thoughtful insights regarding the Instructional Rounds process. We received a record number of responses, more feedback on this issue than when we conduct bargaining surveys. Clearly we have hit a nerve. Overwhelmingly, teachers feel some degree of anxiety through the process and they say it impacts teaching and student learning. The intent of the process is to support improved learning and teaching. OMTA will be using your input to engage in discussions with a vision toward changing what isn't working.

Before Thanksgiving, I had the opportunity to attend a Rotary Student of the Month luncheon for the first time. It was a beautiful event, attended by district leaders, elected officials, and community partners. Each of the 8th grade winners spoke to the audience about their success and their goals for the future. Most rewarding for me was to hear from each student how much gratitude they had for the role their teachers played in their achievement. Many teachers were identified by name. Your efforts in the classroom are positively impacting our future.

To demonstrate the positive impact teachers have in our community, the Executive Board, under the direction of Trudy Cowan, is again coordinating a canned food drive for the holiday season. Thanks to those who have already contributed to the boxes set out at your site; you have until December 10 to drop your donations off at the OMTA office. The donations go directly to the communities we serve. I know our students and families appreciate the support; our efforts are a visible reminder that a teacher's job reaches far beyond the classroom walls.

I look forward to seeing you this month and in the New Year. Have a wonderful holiday season!

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MaryKay Scheid, OMTA President



PROTECT OUR CONTRACT

Once again, we are under attack by people who are not friends of public education and children. While many people may believe that not having to pay union/association dues would be a great windfall to their pocketbooks, they are missing the bigger picture. Without union protections, we all could experience reductions to our yearly salaries and benefits, and lose our ability to negotiate healthy working conditions and reasonable class sizes. These types of changes could be effected as early as next spring if the Supreme Court rules against AFSCME in a case currently pending.

This winter, the US Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case of *Janus v AFSCME*. This is a copy of the *Friedrichs v CTA* case from 2016, which ended in deadlock due to Justice Antonin Scalia's passing. The Janus case comes from Illinois; but once the court renders its expected decision in June in favor of Janus and against AFSCME, things in California and across the country are going to get tougher for public unions. Here's the how and why...

In 22 states, there are laws which require public employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (this includes OMTA members) to pay what is called an agency fee to their union if they don't wish to be members. There are several reasons people may not want to belong, but those 22 states say that since you benefit from the efforts of your union to negotiate and enforce a contract, you are expected to pay a fee to support that activity. This fee is less than full membership dues, as the agency fee payer does not have to support the union's ideological activities or anything else not somehow tied to contract negotiation and enforcement.

What about the other 28 states? These are so-called "Right-to-Work" states. Doesn't that sound great? Everyone should have that right...right? All 50 states allow people to work. That's not what "Right-to-Work" means. Rather, the agency-fee arrangement doesn't exist in these states. Unions exist, including teachers' unions, but employees there can choose to belong and pay dues, or not belong, and pay nothing. It's a generally accepted concept that if people can get something of value for nothing, often they will. But at the end of the day, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Imagine if your favorite restaurant made paying optional. It wouldn't be your favorite for long because, without revenue, service and quality cannot be maintained. Ultimately conditions will deteriorate to the point that the business cannot be sustained.

Like well-funded businesses, strong unions command respect in the statehouse and at the bargaining table. Many of our younger colleagues are beside us today because Prop 30 in 2012 and Prop 55 in 2016 were passed and created the funding to keep them working with our students. Those initiatives don't make the ballot and pass without the resources and people power of our union, CTA.

Since wealthy interests have failed to destroy unions through legislation or initiative, they have moved to the courts. They hope to take your voice and your power by eroding our union to a husk. That is only possible if we let them...

Next year you will likely be faced with a choice to belong to our union or take a free ride. Before you make the call, take some time to read your contract. Along with our state's Ed Code, this document represents the effort and sacrifice of generations of educators who came before us. Those rights, rules, protections, and benefits weren't gifts from the state or school district. They were hard-won victories from those on whose shoulders we stand today. We thrive on their legacy.

Teaching is a calling and a noble profession. Those who would seek to hobble our union and dismantle public education are counting on enough of us to choose to break the chain. Those who came before us won countless battles to create positive conditions for learning and teaching. It is our responsibility to do the same for ourselves and those who will come after us. 🍏

FORM A TEAM WITH YOUR FELLOW TEACHERS!

Support your students on their pathway to an education after high school by taking part in the 2017 City of Ontario Reindeer Run & Rudolph Dash to benefit Promise Scholars college visits and scholarships for OMSD students. This fun family event will be held on Saturday, December 9, 2017 at the Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario.

Register online: <http://www.ontario5krun.com/>

Race Information

- 7:00 AM – Check-in
- 7:30 AM – Mascot Run
- 8:00 AM – Rudolph's Dash Fun Run
- 8:30 AM – 5K Reindeer Run Begins
- 8:30 AM – Pancake Breakfast

T-Shirt size not guaranteed after 11/19/2017

Walk-in/Mail-in registration ends 12/1

Online registration ends 12/3

The more participants at your school site means your school might win \$1,000! The OMSD school with the most participants registered by Dec. 1st will win \$1,000.

ELVIA RIVAS, OMSD BOARD TRUSTEE 2010-2017

By: Judy Westbrook

In an effort to get to know Ontario Montclair School Board Trustees, we are working to meet with all board members in order to open face-to-face dialogs. A school board member's job is to set policy that the Superintendent must carry out on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the communities they serve. In the next election in 2018, three board member positions will be up for re-election.

We begin our series of OMSD Trustee articles with President Elvia Rivas, who met with OMTA Executive Board Members Shari Megaw and Judy Westbrook recently.

Elvia grew up in La Puente and, although she had naysayers in her family telling her she couldn't do it, she earned a full scholarship to the University of La Verne where she majored in Communications. She later transferred to San Diego State, switched majors, and graduated with a BA in Liberal Studies Bilingual/Bicultural Education. She student taught for one year and decided it was an important and rewarding profession, but not one for her. So after her husband received his law license, she managed his law office and raised her children.

Elvia moved to Ontario in 2000 with her family. She immediately got involved with Ontario Eastern Little League where her son and daughter played baseball, and soon she joined the league's executive board.

Around the same time, community member and local business owner, the late Jerry DuBois, invited Elvia to join him at an Ontario Kiwanis meeting. Elvia joined readily and has since served in many positions on the Kiwanis Board, including local club president and Region 15 Lt. Governor. She is a successful businesswoman and served as the Vice President for SoCalBizOps, Inc. and, currently, is the Administrative Assistant and Safety Representative at DAL Global Services, based at the Ontario Airport.

When asked, "What made you want to become an OMSD board member?" With a grin, Elvia answered, "Ever since I was elected 6th grade class president, I knew I wanted to run for office one day."

Becoming more serious, she explained, "In 2010, I had a life altering event occur...I had a DVT (blood clot) in my leg that would not disintegrate, and the doctors were afraid it would move to my lungs or my brain. It took over a year, but with medication and good people thinking of me, I made it. Since they ordered me off work, it was a good time to examine my priorities...I decided that I could help kids and families, so I ran for OMSD Board Trustee and won. My degree in Education and legal background comes in handy all the time on the Board."

Later, Elvia was asked, "So what do you want to see happen in the district?"

She said, "I want to see our teachers and our kids happy. I think our teachers are the best in the area. They work hard under challenging circumstances, yet make great strides with their students each year. I want to see our kids go to college."

She continued, "I know how important good teachers are to kids because it was important to me. I lived the life of some of our kids when I was young, so I know some of what they are going through," she noted. "When I go to speak to students, I tell them all the time to get an education and to be perseverant, even if they take different paths or extra time to earn that education."

Elvia concluded, "Even though I wasn't a teacher very long, I still think it gives me some insight into what the day might be like, how the students might be behaving, and the work required to even get through a day in the classroom. I appreciate what that takes."

Next month we will feature OMSD Board Trustee Sam Crowe. 🍏



Elvis Rivas and Shari Megaw.

MEMBER BENEFITS

As a member of OMTA, you are also a member of CTA and NEA. In addition to providing support to teachers through local associations, CTA and NEA offer an abundance of membership benefits –some even available to extended family members.

As an OMTA member, you are among more than 325,000 members of CTA. This purchasing power enables CTA to negotiate a host of discounts from a wide array of vendors. CTA provides discounts on insurance (including long-term care), investments, and disaster relief. According to CTA Member Benefits: "Of all the benefits and programs available to CTA members, our long list of discounts on retail shopping,

entertainment and vacation destinations are probably the most popular among our members." CTA members also enjoy discounts locally, in the form of theme park, movie, and restaurant discounts.

Access to these CTA discounts comes through the "Access Discounts" icon on www.ctamemberbenefits.org. The largest private discount network of its kind, Access can connect members with more than 350,000 participating merchants and deals in virtually every U.S. market. By logging into the member benefits website, and once again signing into the Access feature, you can search discounts via region and category.

According to the NEA Member Benefits Website: “NEA members have two major advantages when it comes to making their money stretch as far as possible: Educators are natural researchers who love to discover the smartest ways to save money on all the things they need to buy, and membership in the NEA means you have access to a wide variety of money-saving benefits provided by NEA Member Benefits.”

NEA members can shop at NEA Click & Save, which offers discounts from well-known retailers such as Kohl’s, Sears, Macys and many more. If you are more interested in experiences than things, you can access travel benefits for discounted airline tickets, lodging, cruises, and car rentals.

If you are in the market for a new car, be sure to check out the NEA car-buying service. After logging in to your neamb.com (NEA member benefits) account, you can build your dream car and browse partner dealers to view the discounted prices. The TrueCar-screened dealerships offer an average savings of \$3,000 off MSRP on new cars!

Teachers are readers, and teachers can access free reading material through the NEA Magazine Program – you qualify for 2 free subscriptions each year. For those who need more to read, the service offers more than 800 magazines at up to 85% off the cover price.

Our pets are part of our family, but they aren’t covered by our benefits plan. No worries. The NEA Pet Insurance Program, backed by Pets Best Insurance, offers protection. Pet insurance typically includes reimbursement for emergency visits, lab tests, prescriptions, exams, hospitalization, surgery, and more. You can enroll without medical records, insure older pets and visit any licensed veterinarian. Plans start at less than \$1 per day.

NEA Member Benefits provides access to discounted continuing education courses and free resources through NEA edCommunities. Before spending more of your own money on classroom resources, check out the website to find NEA partners with tips and discounts.

NOTE: Information in this article is current as of July 2017. For more details about these benefits and any applicable exclusions, please visit the respective benefit’s information page. 🍏

Don’t forget to buy your **SEE’S CANDY CERTIFICATES** For the holidays!

Available at the OMTA office
Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
\$15.50 per certificate
(Valued at \$19.80)



*Happy
Holidays!*

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