

# SRP NewsLink

A NEWSLETTER FOR NYSUT'S SCHOOL-RELATED PROFESSIONALS LOCAL LEADERS

FALL 2007

[www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org)

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## SRP Recognition Day – Nov. 20, 2007

NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi has thanked Gov. Eliot Spitzer for signing into law the bill that creates a permanent School-Related Professionals Recognition Day on the state calendar.

"The governor's signature on this bill memorializes New York's commitment to some deeply dedicated educators — School-Related Professionals," said Iannuzzi. "Their daily contributions to our students will now be honored annually on the third Tuesday of each November, usually falling during American Education Week."

NYSUT's 90,000 School-Related Professional members perform a variety of key roles in schools. They work as bus drivers, school nurses, custodians, secretaries, food service workers, teaching assistants and aides and in dozens of other job titles.

The SRP bill was sponsored by Assemblywoman Barbara Clark, D-Queens and Sen. James DeFrancisco, R-Syracuse.

"NYSUT appreciates the great legislative support we received on this effort," said Executive Vice President Alan Lubin. "Both houses worked together to make this recognition happen for our members."

Lubin also cited Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito, chair of the Assembly's Government Operations Committee, and Sen. Owen Johnson, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, for their work in pushing this legislation forward.

NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue oversees much of the union's programming for SRPs. "These NYSUT members are often the hidden heroes of our

schools," said Donahue. "Honoring their contributions to our students is the right thing to do. We will urge every school district to use this day to celebrate the work of all school employees, both inside and outside the classroom."

To help celebrate the day, NYSUT will once again be sending out packets with "Proud to be an SRP" and "Proud to work with an SRP" stickers to all SRP locals at the end of October.



## Donahue: "Reach out to your community"

NYSUT is a valued partner and leader in many statewide community outreach efforts that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Vice President Kathleen Donahue urges School-Related Professionals to participate in the Strides Against Breast Cancer walk, which will be held in locations around the state in late September and October. For dates and more information on your local events, go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). This important effort is a major NYSUT



focus and draws the participation of tens of thousands of active and retired members.

Donahue also encourages

outreach to a variety of other local and statewide causes. For example, NYSUT staff and leaders will participate in the HeartWalk which will be held in the Capital District in mid-October.

For more information on related Heart

Association events in your area, go to [www.american-heart.org](http://www.american-heart.org).

"NYSUT members are respected professionals in their communities. Our participation is another way to stay active and vigorous, and to maintain our strong relationships through the years," Donahue said.

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Representing more than 585,000 professionals in education and health care  
For more, see [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **BOCES Leadership Conference**

September 28-29  
Crowne Plaza, Albany

### **SRP Leadership Conference**

October 12-14  
Crowne Plaza, Albany

### **Ending the Gap Symposium**

October 25-27  
Desmond, Albany

### **NEA Education Support Professionals Conference**

March 7-8  
Baltimore, MD

### **Committee of 100**

March 17-18  
Desmond, Albany

### **NYSUT Representative Assembly**

April 10-12  
Hilton, NYC

## SRPNewsLink

*SRP NewsLink* is a newsletter published periodically for New York State United Teachers' School-Related Professionals leaders. NYSUT locals and staff have permission to reprint all *NewsLink* content.

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# Fall dates: celebrate & educate!

*This fall brings three very special recognition days:*

**The first is National School Lunch Week from Oct. 15-19.** This year's theme is "Vote for School Lunch!" Go to [www.asfsa.org](http://www.asfsa.org) to download articles, fact sheets, read new recipes, and see merchandise that is available for this campaign. Don't forget to have the kids vote for their favorite school lunch meal!

**National School Bus Safety Week is October 22-26.** The theme for 2007 is "Stop on Red, Kids Ahead."

Check out [www.napt.org](http://www.napt.org) to learn about the poster contest that is sponsored by the National Association for Pupil Transportation. School Bus Safety Week recognizes the hard work and dedication of school bus drivers, bus

aides, and attendants who ensure a safe journey for our children each and every day under all types of circumstances, such as bad weather, difficult terrain and long bus rides. School bus transportation is the safest form of mass transit in America. It is eight times safer than traveling in the family car. National School Bus Safety Week was created to educate students, parents and the motoring public, and to enhance the safety of our children who ride school buses.

**Nov. 20 is SRP Recognition Day.** Please refer to the article on page one for details and information.

## PDP: Members training members



*NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue with attendees of the SRP professional development program summer training sponsored by the NYSUT Education Learning Trust.*

## Join the AFT NCLB Grassroots Postcard Campaign

Political action at the local, state and national levels is a necessary part of union activism. It is used to address initiatives, elect officials and lobby legislators to support or not support issues. You will soon have the opportunity to participate in a grassroots lobbying blitz of Congress when it takes up the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in September. A special insert of preprinted postcards on NCLB is included in the back-to-school issue of the *AFT PRSP Reporter*.

The postcards reinforce the AFT's call

for changes in NCLB to address weaknesses in the law. The postcard calls for a fair and accurate accountability system that recognizes student progress; adequate support and resources without new and unnecessary requirements on teachers and paraprofessionals and research-based interventions for struggling schools and adequate funding. Please remove and send the postcard to your congressional lawmakers as they return from summer recess. Encourage your co-workers to also send their postcards to your congressional delegation.

## N.Y. School Bus Driver Gets Porter Scholarship Grant

Jadeen Hapeman, a school bus driver in Wappingers Falls and a member of the Wappingers FTCM Workers Association, is a 2007 Robert G. Porter Scholars Program \$1,000 grant winner. Hapeman is pursuing a degree in liberal arts and science at Dutchess Community College to become a teacher or a school psychologist. Hapeman, a single mother of two, has been a school bus driver for 16 years. She enjoys being with kids, and over the years she has been a confidante and “ear” to many students — especially the teenagers who just needed to vent. She prides herself on being a nonjudgmental listener.

Hapeman finds that as a school bus driver, she is limited in her involvement with students. She would like to make more of a difference in the lives of children by helping them find solutions to problems, and by guiding them to stay on the right path by completing school and applying themselves in the future.

“Instead of going through a mid-life crisis, I am experiencing a mid-career crisis! I am a true believer that it is never too late to make both changes and improvements in your life, both of which can be achieved through education.” One of Jadeen’s sons completed a degree in theater and has since become a kindergarten teacher, returning to school to complete a master’s degree in education. “This grant not only gives me the opportunity to follow in my son’s footsteps, but also to accomplish my dream of becoming more involved with children,” said Hapeman.

The Robert G. Porter Scholars Program was established through a resolution passed by the AFT executive council in 1992 to recognize the contributions and honor the memory of AFT Secretary-Treasurer Robert G. Porter by fostering the education of AFT members and their families. The program annually awards four post-secondary scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members, and 10 \$1,000 grants to AFT members pursuing courses in their field of work or labor studies.

## Bus Stamp Campaign:

### *A Response from an SRP member*

**From Randy Wilson, North Syracuse EA**

In response to the spring 2007 *SRP NewsLink* article encouraging members to support a stamp honoring bus drivers, member Randy Wilson sent the following:

“Bus drivers touch just about ALL our lives. Either we were students who have ridden on a bus and/or our children have. I know for myself as a student, the bus driver was the first person related to my school day that I would see. Their smiles and “good mornings” start our days on the right foot and for some students it’s the first kind word from an adult! (Fortunately, my Mom and Dad started my day with a hug and kiss, but I know some of the kids who rode my bus came from “tough” homes — and back in the ‘60s there wasn’t the “social” support like today.) One time I got sick just before the bus call at the end of the day (I was a senior at Cicero HS) and that bus driver drove me right to my door instead of leaving me at the end of the street. When my son started school, it was the smiling, wonderful bus driver who assured me that my son would be okay and darn if she wasn’t right. Do you know it’s been almost 20 years since that day, and that driver still asks me how my son is doing! Bus drivers are caring and thoughtful folks doing a difficult and at times heroic job. Through tearful first goodbyes, winter blizzards that hit before they can get kids home, and wild and crazy last days of school, the bus driver delivers!

## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Margie Brumfield

*SRP Advisory Committee chair*

WELCOME BACK TO ALL OF YOU!

I hope everyone had an enjoyable but restful summer. We should be rejuvenated and looking forward to an exciting new school year.

I am and will continue to encourage you to attend your local and state meetings and conferences. Being mobilized in our union is how we get our voices heard. Making yourselves visible representing your members speaks volumes. Volunteering for committee work, being politically active (phone banking, letter writing, etc.) makes things happen for us. This involvement is critical as the elections of 2008 are just around the corner! We need to have our locals motivated and ready to help get the right candidate elected.

As of July 25, I am proud to report that I was elected as an SRP Director at Large on the NYSUT Board of Directors. I will continue advocating for all SRP titles on a different level now. I promise you that I will always try to bring an informed perspective to the Board on the behalf of SRPs.

I’m looking forward to seeing many of you at the statewide SRP Leadership Conference, October 12-14 in Albany. We have a great program planned for all!

## Welcome to NYSUT’s newest SRP members

Special greetings to our newest NYSUT SRP members: Ramapo Association of Aides and Monitors, Fort Edward SRPs, and the addition of the North Salem Nurses into the teaching unit.

# NYSUT Social Services: Help for the Caregiving of Elder Loved Ones



Did you know there is help for you if you are taking care of a senior family member? NYSUT Social Services can direct you to low-cost companion services, programs which can provide

homecare at a reasonable cost, respite care while you are at work, and groups to support you — the caregiver.

We know that caregiving should not be done alone. Let NYSUT Social Services

guide you to services in your own community that can help you.

Contact us at:  
(800) 342-9810 ext. 6206  
or [socsvcs@nysutmail.org](mailto:socsvcs@nysutmail.org).

**NYSUT Social Services Staff:**

Scott Hicks, LCSW  
Laurie Kupperstein, MS  
Ani Shahinian, LCSW-R

## Are You Covered?

Chances are you already protect your most important assets with insurance — your home, your car and, of course, your life. And you probably have health insurance to cover medical expenses.

But do you insure your income? Think about how you would deal with the financial effects of a disabling illness or injury if you were unable to work for a period of time. Disability insurance can help you and your family pay living expenses such as food, clothing, mortgage, transportation and so on.

Many people don't think about disability insurance because they are under the assumption that they already

have coverage through their employer or through the state.

While public school employees are not automatically covered by the New York state disability insurance program, it is possible for public school employees to be covered by disability insurance if their employer elects to participate in the state's program.

You are encouraged to find out if your employer participates in the state's program or if your employer provides a group disability plan. Once you have this knowledge, determine the amount of coverage you have, if any, and consider purchasing additional insurance if

the coverage amount isn't adequate. Include the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed disability insurance plan when comparing policies and in purchasing decisions.

For information about this program or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at (800) 626-8101, e-mail [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org), visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org), or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.

## Are your college-age dependents covered by your health insurance plan?

Most health insurance covers unmarried dependent children until their 19th birthday. An exception is made for those dependents who are physically or mentally handicapped and incapable of self-support.

Dependents over age 19 may be dropped from their parents' health insurance plan unless additional riders are purchased to extend the coverage period. These riders usually will cover students to age 23 or 25 if they can provide proof they are full-time students. A few plans will cover unmarried dependents to

higher age limits regardless of their student status.

According to a 2005 survey conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, a health advocacy group in New York, 31% of college-age students are uninsured, the largest population in the U.S. with no coverage. Check with your health plan to determine the age limits for dependent children

and if necessary, investigate the following alternatives:

- If college students are not covered by their parent's plan, they may be able to obtain a limited accident or illness policy through the college they are attending.
- In accordance with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) over-age dependents may also be eligible to purchase group health insurance through their parent's employer sponsored plan at their own cost plus a 2% administrative charge.
- Over-age dependents who are working and have limited income may qualify for coverage under the New York State Healthy New York Program or through their employer.
- Although expensive, non-group policies may be purchased from health insurance companies.

For questions concerning dependent age coverage limits, please contact your health insurance plan directly. If you need assistance in obtaining coverage, please contact your health insurance plan directly. If you need assistance in obtaining coverage for your dependents, please contact NYSUT Social Services at (800) 342-9810, ext. 6206.

### PTSI booklet available

The Pupil Transportation Safety Institute 2008 NYS Laws and regulations for school bus drivers, monitors, and attendants is available for our membership. If you would like an individual copy or enough for the transportation workers in your local, please call Jeannine Doggett at (800) 342-9810 or email her at [jdoggett@nysutmail.org](mailto:jdoggett@nysutmail.org) with your order.