



PRESIDENT'S

MESSAGE

Bill Gregory

President – MCPSRA

The new year has begun, and we wish you all the best as we move forward together in 2026.

On January 8, we held our first Board of Directors meeting of the year. It was a

productive meeting focused on opportunities to strengthen our outreach to members and on our ongoing work representing you in meetings with MCPS. We also discussed plans for a webinar on fraud prevention for retirees. We are working with M&T Bank, which has offered to conduct this webinar. Please be sure to look for information we share via email, on Facebook, and on our website at mcpsra.org.

One of our goals this year is to increase opportunities for MCPS retirees to connect and engage with one another. So far this school year, we have hosted a fall homecoming social, two luncheons, a coat drive, community service opportunities, and launched a virtual book club. You will find information about additional events taking place over the next few months elsewhere in this newsletter. I am grateful to the MCPSRA Board—especially our committee chairs—for organizing these activities. These events have allowed us to reconnect with former colleagues and to develop new MCPS friendships.

To help us strengthen our outreach and better serve retirees wherever they reside—whether in Montgomery County, other counties in Maryland, or outside the state—we have developed a survey to gather your ideas

for future programs and activities. A link to the survey is located on page 8. Please take a few minutes to share your input. The more feedback we receive, the better we can serve our membership and create meaningful opportunities for involvement.

The MCPSRA Board is extremely grateful for your continued support and involvement. As the organization that represents MCPS retirees, our strength lies in our membership. The more members we have, the stronger and louder our collective voice becomes. We advocate for retirees on issues such as health benefits and pensions at both the county and state levels. Please encourage fellow retirees who are not yet members to join MCPSRA. This winter, we are meeting with MCPS regarding retiree health benefits, and we will share updates with the membership as information becomes available.

MCPSRA will also continue to provide scholarships for current MCPS employees who are pursuing professional development or advanced degrees. Last year, we received ninety-five applications and were able to award nine scholarships. Supporting current employees in their professional growth is an important and rewarding part of our mission.

We are currently seeking assistance for our Scholarship Committee and need a member who can help our scholarship chair, Bill Stief, during the month of May. This volunteer should be comfortable working with PDF files and Excel. Scholarship applications are received electronically and distributed to committee members, and applicant information must be entered into an Excel spreadsheet. After applications are scored, assistance is needed to help organize the results. John Dahlberg has done an outstanding job with this for several years and has documented the processes he used. John and Bill will be available to answer questions about the process. If you can help, please contact Bill Stief at William.A.Stief@mcpsmd.org. MCPSRA will greatly appreciate the support.

(Continued on page 4)

MCPSRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

Hello February!!!

Officers:

President	Bill Gregory	410-241-8731
Vice President	Marla Caplon	240-793-8288
Immediate Past President	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Recording Secretary	Ranona Heller	301-801-1414
Treasurer	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969

Committee Chairs:

Archives	Marti Gray	301-641-8896
Budget Development	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969
Community Service	Judy Mills	240-223-7271
Consumer Education	Deb Berner	301-455-8608
Financial Review	Phil McGaughey	301-482-0497
Hospitality/Luncheons	LeeAnn Kaye	301-598-5480
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Insurance and Benefits	Denise Bracalilly Stultz	240-535-5182
--- Co-Chair	Chris Richardson	410-852-4331
Legislative	Marita Sherburne	240-432-9671
MCPSRA Projects	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Membership Record Keeping	Kay Katz	240-793-2428
Membership Outreach	Galit Zolkower	301-570-6424
Membership Recruitment	Becky Hubbard	240-643-8610
Newsletter - Editor	Dr. Russell G. Wright	301-806-7252
Nominating	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Parliamentarian	Reggie Ott	301-452-5449
Political Action	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Public Relations	Dr. Dick Lipsky	301-318-0613
Recognition	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
Scholarships (MCPSRA)	William Stief	301-956-5891
Social Media	Christina Sutter	301-471-3637
Trips	Bernadette Rager	301-774-0345

February—a short month filled with big opportunities and new adventures: celebrate Valentine’s Day, Presidents Day AND the MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting on February 26, 2026!!

Enjoy getting together with your fellow retirees, meet new people, renew previous friendships, stay abreast of happenings affecting MCPS Retirees, have fun and enjoy good food! You’ll find it all February 26th.

In the words of fellow retirees, Audrey and Willie Hill “the luncheons are always welcoming and inviting.” From Lois Schreiber, “pertinent information regarding our benefits is provided.” And from Jan and Spencer Schmidt, “the speakers are well prepared and know their topics well.”

Evan Vucci, a graduate of Sherwood High School will be the speaker. Evan is an American photojournalist currently serving as the chief photographer for the Associated Press in Washington DC. He shoots and produces both photography and video projects worldwide. He was first interested in photography as a Farquhar Middle School student and went on to graduate from the Rochester Institute of Technology. He was part of the AP reporting team that won a Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography in 2021, was embedded with the troops in Iraq and was a photographer at the 2000 Olympic games in Australia.

Reminder for the Toolkits project: Please bring your bottlecaps to the luncheon.

I hope to see you at Argyle Country Club, February 26th. See the menu and reservation on page 11.

If MCPS is closed, the luncheon is cancelled. If there is a delayed opening, the luncheon will be held.

After the February luncheon, two luncheons remain. Mark your calendar:

April 30, 2026

June 11, 2026

LeeAnn Kaye



EXCUSES, EXCUSES!

Most of us who worked directly in the classroom with children could most likely write a bestselling book on excuses that kids have used to explain a variety of behaviors that did not sit well with the teacher. Some were credible, some hilarious, and some were obvious lies. Reflecting back over the years, a couple incidents stand out in my memory. Over 50 years ago, I was student teaching in a second-grade classroom in a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA. My supervising teacher (who was a real grouch in my opinion) pulled aside little Joey. Looking down at his dirty, oversized, worn-out tennis shoes that had no shoe laces to hold them on his feet, "Ms. Grouch" demanded that Joey explain **again** just why he had no laces in his shoes. "My daddy.... ah, I - I - I lost them," he sputtered through a cascade of tears running down his face. "Well! You go home and tell that father of yours that you may NOT come back to school again until you have laces in those shoes!" she shouted. I was in total shock witnessing this exchange and could only stand there with tears in my own eyes, thinking just how wicked Ms. Grouch really was. Seeing the look on my face, the teacher explained, "I have put new shoe laces in his shoes every day this week and each day he comes back to school without any laces in his shoes. His father takes them and puts them in his own shoes! The only way to get him to stop taking them is to tell him that he'll have to keep Joey at home until those shoe laces remain in Joey's shoes." The next day Joey came to school with shoe laces back in his shoes. During my tenure as her student teacher, I discovered just how compassionate Ms. Grouch really was and just how much money she took out of her own pocket to provide basic necessities and school supplies for her students, the majority of whom came from very needy families. I bet we could all testify to the fact that most teachers have done this a lot over the years.

Lots of excuses fall under the category of *Why I Didn't Do My Homework*. I've heard ones such as *It drowned in a puddle at the bus stop; My dog ate it; My dad couldn't figure it out so he's going to work on it today at work; I traded it for Sammy's cookies at lunch* and the list goes on. But the ones I remember the best still pull at my heart strings. The simple directions on one kindergarten assignment were to color each

(Continued on page 10)

SUPPORT FOR THE MCPSRA TOOLKITS PROJECT

Please provide the following information and mail it along with a check (payable to: **MCPS Educational Foundation**, with "Toolkits Project" on the memo line, to Mrs. Joan Donovan, 13 Hilton Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3521

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Donation enclosed: \$ _____

Optional: In memory of _____ In honor of _____

Send acknowledgement to _____

Select one: _____ *e-mail me a receipt at _____

(*preferred)

_____ no receipt is necessary _____ mail me a receipt (if necessary)

Welcome New Members

Joined in November 2025

Leslie L Gerran-Davison	9558 White Pillar Terr., Gaithersburg, MD 20882	240-308-0973
Valerie G. Boyd	11806 Blanding Court, Bowie, MD 20720	301-464-4223
Barbara J. Gesumaria	4806 Levada Terr., Rockville, MD 20853	240-938-1228
Michelle Fishman	13011 Mimosa Farm Court, Rockville, MD 20850	240-277-2542

Joined in December 2025

Renee B. King	13003 John Bostar Lane, Charlotte, NC 28215	443-844-1930
Natalie J. Zanin	708 Easley Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910	301-908-6397

Get Future Newsletters by Email Only!



Do you prefer reading our newsletter on a screen? If so, you can help us save on printing and postage by getting only the email version!

Let us know if you'd like to join the **220** members who have already switched.

Just send an email to mail.mcpsra.org@mail.com. Include your first and last name and write the words "**EMAIL ONLY**" on the Subject line.

The change will take effect with the February 2026 issue.

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, April 9, 2026

11:00

AM - 3:30 PM

**MCPSRA will host a Blood Drive
in the Central Office Auditorium**



More details coming.

(Presidents Message Continued from page 1)

Finally, our Membership Committee has two upcoming events that you will find detailed in this newsletter, in email blasts, on our website, and on our Facebook page. On February 2, we will host our first **Game Day** at MCPS on Gude Drive for members interested in connecting and enjoying a variety of games together. On April 9, MCPSRA will sponsor a **Blood Drive** in the auditorium of CESC.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support of MCPSRA.

Consumer Education for February 2026—March 2026 by Deb Berner

As the new year settles in, February and March offer a perfect opportunity to take care of tasks that may have been postponed during the busy holiday season. Many of us tell ourselves, “I’ll get to it next week,” only to find that weeks—or even months—slip by. Taking a little time now to address those lingering *to-dos* can bring real peace of mind.

One important item you may want to add to that list is a helpful community initiative recently shared by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service called the “File of Life” program. This program

FILE OF LIFE

Prior medical conditions? Allergies? Medications? The **FILE OF LIFE** packet puts these answers in the hands of first responders so they can provide the best possible care and your information can be shared with emergency room physicians – just in case you are unable.

Make your own in 3 easy steps:

1. Click & print out the insert
2. Fill it in with your info
3. Grab a Ziploc baggie & place on fridge



www.mcfrs.org/mcsafe

provides first responders with quick access to critical medical information when a patient or family member is unable to communicate.

The File of Life is a red, magnetic packet that contains essential medical details, along with space to list your doctor’s contact information, emergency contacts, insurance information, and any special circumstances rescue personnel should know when caring for you. The packet is designed to be easily located in an emergency, saving valuable time when it matters most.

FREE “File of Life” packets are available to Montgomery County residents. Simply call 311 to request that a packet be mailed to you. Additional information about this valuable resource can be found on the Montgomery County website at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcfrs-info/tips/seniors/fileoflife.html>

Don't forget that February is **African American History Month**, and March is **Women's History Month**



— meaningful times to reflect on and honor the generations of African Americans who struggled against adversity to achieve full citizenship and respect, and to celebrate the many contributions women have made to our history and society.



Finally, please be sure to check out the most recent **Consumer Connection** newsletter on the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association website at mrspa.org for additional updates and helpful information.

Community Service Update for the New Year by Judy Mills

Can you believe we are in the first quarter of 2026, winter is almost half way through, and the days are getting longer! Interfaith Works (IW) continues to flourish thanks to our MCPSRA Volunteers and our IW group

leaders, Nina, Karen and Latrice, and to Russ Wright (newsletter editor), who sends Email Blast announcements and reminders! Because of you, our monthly MCPSRA volunteering at IW is successful! Thank YOU! Please mark your calendars for one or more of our upcoming IW volunteer activities: Feb 5, Mar 12, Apr 9, or May 14. Want to lead our group in June, July or August? Email: judy.mills549@gmail.com

Toolkits Assembly Needs YOU. If you'd like to help out, send your name, phone number and email address to pame2k1@aim.com . Also, continue to collect and bring your clean bottle caps to any of our



MCPSRA activities!!! Last year nearly 1200 kits were assembled and distributed to Pre-K students across Montgomery County (MD). Read the Toolkits article in this newsletter to find other ways to support Toolkits.

MCPS Linkages to Learning schools! Volunteers offer a huge resource and support for our Linkages to Learning schools. Your time and skills not only benefit the students, but has a

positive impact on the classroom, the school and the entire community! Visit the website at: linkagestolearning@montgomeryschoolsmd.gov or call 240-777-1731.

Future Link Montgomery County (MD) “Where Opportunity meets Potential” Future Link was founded to address issues of inequity and social injustice in our community. Within Montgomery County, significant income and educational disparities exist for our first-



generation-to-college young adults. Volunteers provide services to propel a student to reach their education and career goals by helping these students achieve self-sufficiency. Volunteers work one-to-one with a student serving as Mentors, Career Coaches, Tutors, informational interviewers, resume reviewers, and more. This individualized, intentional engagement keeps students on-track with positive professional role models motivating them to overcome their challenges and achieve success. Visit Future Link at <https://futurelinkmd.org/get-involved/> or call 240-553-3955.

The Truancy Prevention Program is recruiting Mentors. Click on the link to learn more about this important MCPS/Montgomery County(MD) partnership:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ffLLVOvmXBNKiytMrM5Srz4CIExNiQj/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110149433091853627923&rtpof=true&sd=true>

If you're 55+ in Montgomery County MD, be sure to check out classes, sports and wellness, along with multiple volunteer opportunities across Montgomery County. Seniors 60 or over can even sign up for lunch! Please call (240) 777-4999, or visit www.mocorec.com **Some activities are free; some charge a fee!"**

In Memoriam

The following MCPSRA members have passed away.

July 2025

Mary M. Glenn
Marguerite Andrews Sukacz

August 2025

Patricia Bowman
Frances Mae Fox
Kenneth Muir

September 2025

Myrna Ellen Goldberg
Cornell Lewis
Elisabeth Lee McSpadden
James Politis
Synthia Ann Woodcock Dang

October 2025

David Cole Chalfant
Jacqueline R. Chesser
Vivian Fogg
David Kramer
Anna Catherine Ossler

November 2025

Frances Boniface Fountain
Lynn Margaret Wiegand
Kalvana Arvind Patel
Dorothy Florence Welan

Take the MCPSRA Survey by Christina Sutter

MCPSRA is committed to providing meaningful services and supports to our members as we plan for the year. Your input is important to us as we draft plans for this year and the next. Our goal is to provide meaningful programming for our members. Please take a few minutes to complete the brief 2026 MCPSRA Member Survey. We appreciate your time and your responses. Survey results will be shared in the future.

The survey can be accessed at [MCPSRA.org](https://forms.gle/KZnBUr1Sa9UMeY8L6) or using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/KZnBUr1Sa9UMeY8L6>

Paper copies of the survey will be available at luncheons.



Facebook
Public
Page



Check out MCPSRA
on the internet!

Stay
Connected
!

Like



Facebook
Private
Members
Group



Share

Join

And

Follow

AA montgomeryschoolsmd.org

MCPS RETIREES
ASSOCIATION
(MCPSRA)

MCPS
Web
Page



Instagram
Marylandmcsretirees



"It's simple. At Osher, I learn new things from excellent instructors and make new friends with similar interests. What could be better?"

DEBBY VIVARI



"I belong to Osher at JHU because I like nurturing my mind and interacting with peers who share my interests. Through Osher, I'm exposed to different viewpoints from people locally, and from as far away as California... and even England!"

BILL LEWIS



"In-person classes provide an invigorating opportunity to socialize with other members, not only in class but over lunch or coffee. The Zoom classes are convenient and allow us to learn from instructors who are outside the Washington metropolitan area—as far away as Pennsylvania and California."

MILLIE ROGERS

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins offers enrichment classes, field trips, and travel opportunities for adults. Memberships include one, two, four, or six classes per semester. Keep your mind active and have fun like these members do.

For program details, visit osher.jhu.edu, call the staff cell phone at 240-595-2319, or email osher@jhu.edu.

OSHER
LIFELONG
LEARNING
INSTITUTE



(Excuses, Excuses - Continued from page 3)

consonant red and each vowel blue in a list of five words. "I couldn't do my homework last night because I don't have any crayons," was Sarah's excuse. I also remember an incident when a parent rode the bus to school with her child so she could explain to the office why her Sophia was absent the day before and to apologize for Sophia coming to school that day unprepared. "I know that I was supposed to write a note to explain her absence but we don't have any paper or pencils at home so I couldn't." When asked why she just didn't call the school, the mother said they had no telephone either. Obviously, Sophia couldn't do her homework. She had neither paper nor something with which to write. Does this really happen here in wealthy, affluent Montgomery County? Oh yes, indeed it does!

The excitement and enthusiasm that children have for learning at school must not be stifled by economic hardships their families experience at home. There is no excuse for it when we can, and should, be doing something about it! During the twenty-one years of its existence, our **Toolkits Project** has provided nearly 40,000 summer school Title I kindergartners with shoeboxes filled with the supplies they need at home to support their learning at school. It has taken money... LOTS of it! And each year the number of kits requested, and the cost to assemble them, have increased dramatically. But thanks to the generosity and commitment of so many of you as well as organizations, businesses, and communities from Montgomery County and even other states, our project has thrived for over two decades. You can help us to keep it going by completing the form on page 3 and mailing it along with your tax-deductible donation as soon as possible. Checks must be made payable to: **MCPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION** with the word "Toolkits" on the memo line at the bottom of the check. Thank you SO much for your continued caring for and commitment to our county's neediest school children.

Joan Donovan

MCPSSRA LUNCHEON AND BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Argyle Country Club
14600 Argyle Club Road
Silver Spring, MD 20906

If MCPS is closed, luncheon is cancelled. Delayed opening, luncheon is held.

Gathering: 11:00 a.m. Business Meeting: 11:30 a.m. Luncheon: Noon Program: 1:00 p.m.

Menu Choices

Chicken Thighs w/fresh Lemon Parsley Gremolata \$40.00
Brown Rice, Green Beans Almondine

OR

Baked Salmon w/Rosemary, Olive oil and Lemon \$40.00
Brown Rice, Green Beans Almondine

OR

Spinach Tortellini w/ Vodka Sauce \$40.00
Green Beans Almondine

Entrees include: Appetizer,
Rolls and Butter, Coffee, Hot and cold
Iced Tea, Lemonade, Dessert
Appetizer is Tomato and Basil Soup

-----Cut here-----

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Circle Entrée Choice

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Chicken Fish

Email address: _____ Vegetarian

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Chicken Fish

Email address: _____ Vegetarian

Total amount enclosed: _____

Reservation form and check must be received by Wednesday, February 18, 2026. Make check payable to

MCPSSRA. Mail to:

LeeAnn Kaye

3210 N. Leisure World Blvd. #306

Silver Spring, MD 20906

For information: LeeAnn Kaye 301-598-5480 or Trish Bendler 301-540-5160

geolakaye@gmail.com

ANY FOOD ALLERGIES? PLEASE LET ME KNOW!!!

Montgomery County Public Schools
MCPS Retirees Association, Inc.
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 201
Suburban, MD

DATED MATERIAL



**MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting
ARGYLE COUNTRY CLUB**

**Gathering: 11:00 a.m.; Business Meeting: 11:30 am.
Luncheon: 12:00 Noon; Program 1:00 pm.**

Next Luncheon Date February 26, 2026

The MCPSRA Newsletter is published in October, December, February, April, and June.
This is the February 2026 issue.