

# OCTA Advocate

A newsletter for members and friends of the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association



## JANUARY 2023

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**Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!**



Carrie Patane  
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy  
VP Grievance



Jess Burrige  
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill  
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane  
Treasurer



Michelle McManus  
Secretary



Dan Rose  
VP Newsletter

## Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane



**W**ith the inevitable turning of the calendar, we inch closer and closer to a sense of normalcy, building upon the successes of the previous year and continuing to push newly elected lawmakers at the local, state and national level to provide the academic and emotional support that was promised to our students.

We must continue to build relationships and partnerships with colleagues, fellow unions, parents, community groups, and organizations as we all play a significant role in turning campaign promises into palpable action for our students.

As dedicated union members and activists, we have an obligation to our profession (and our students) to stay informed and well-versed on the topics and conversations surrounding education, including the challenges we must overcome on our way to better serving our populations and our communities.

I hope you have an opportunity to read one of the articles from our affiliates' magazines including [The Truth About SEL? It Works](#) from the most recent edition of the [NEA Today](#) and maybe even take an opportunity to submit some writing after reading [Remembering Your 'Why'](#) from the January / February edition of [NYSUT United. Magazine](#).

Whatever goals and aspirations you have in this new year remember that you are not alone on this evolving journey! It is through relationships and togetherness that we will begin to reap the fruits of our labor. **I wish you all a happy and fulfilling new year and hope you will join us on Friday, Feb 3rd at Lighthouse Lanes for some camaraderie and activism as our brothers and sisters compete to make a difference for their favorite charity!**

In solidarity,  
Carrie

## Congratulations to December OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



**Kevin Morgan** has been teaching in the Oswego City School District for 10 years now and is originally from the Saratoga Springs area. Kevin's favorite part of teaching is making connections with the students and fellow teachers at the Oswego Middle School. He believes that the more connected we are as a community of learners the easier it is to make the content and learning both fun and real for the students. Mr. Morgan loves being able to help a student connect the content to their personal experiences, while also respecting views and opinions that might be different. Kevin chose social studies because he believes we all have a responsibility to make the world a better place. This can be accomplished, says Mr. Morgan, through setting goals for the future, by understanding where we are today, and by knowing that we've been shaped by our past.

Although this is her first school counseling position, prior to starting at Leighton **Shelagh Vinluan** worked as a mental health therapist and has over 20 years of experience working with children. Her favorite part of school counseling is that she is able to help students through challenges they are having. Shelagh says that Leighton is a very welcoming school and that she feels that everyone works collaboratively in the best interest of the students. Shelagh lives by the quote, "The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something..." by Randy Pausch. Shelagh has nine children and enjoys being outdoors, writing, singing, playing video games, attending concerts, and yoga.



**Hope Mazuroski** has been in the teaching profession for 33 years now (17 at KPS) and also serves as an OCTA co-president. Hope is on the KPS Social Committee, KPS Club, and School Improvement Team. Mrs. Mazuroski is a teacher representative for our home and school association and also coaches for Battle of the Books, serves as a mentor for new teachers, and hosts practicum and student teachers as well. Hope is also dedicated to our district all summer long and has been with the bookmobile since its start 11 years ago! Her advice for a new teacher would be, "Always remember you are a lifelong learner; it's okay to ask for help from mentor teachers around you; be organized and think ahead-always have a PLAN B; you are always on 'stage' and your passion and energy with how you teach will transfer to your students. They will want to learn!" THANK YOU HOPE FOR ALL YOU DO FOR OUR

DISTRICT! KPS is lucky to have YOU!

This is **Kristen Spedaliere**'s first year teaching and she is loving it so far! Her favorite part of teaching is making a difference in students' lives and getting to know her students. Kristen's favorite thing about Leighton is how friendly and helpful everyone is. Kristin lives by the quote "Everything happens for a reason." Kristen is from downstate New York.





**Cheri Beck** is currently in her 4th year as the OMS Literacy Coach, but has served the OCSD in many different roles including Elementary Classroom Teacher and Literacy Specialist, OCTA Mentoring Coordinator and Professional Developer for nearly 30 years! She is a pleasure to work with and positive at all times. Cheri is a constant volunteer and a wonderful team member!

We are very fortunate to have her aboard at OMS (and here in the Oswego City School District). Thank you for all that you do for us, Cheri.

Fitzhugh Park is proud to honor our school librarian **Mrs.**

**Serena Waldron** for this month's OCTA Spotlight! This is Serena's tenth year at FPS. Serena often says that she "absolutely LOVES cultivating a love of pleasure reading and helping kids see themselves as readers. There's nothing like looking out over a class during a read aloud, seeing every face completely engrossed, and knowing we're having the shared experience of getting lost in a story." In addition to being a fantastic school librarian, Serena also runs Battle of the Books for FPS, organizes library helpers and assists with stage crew for the school musical. She is currently the VP of CNYSL, and a member of the NYS Battle of the Books committee, Committee Chair of the NYLA/SSL 3 Apples Book Award and the Conference Curator Co-Chair of the NYLA 2023 Annual Conference. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our students, Serena!



**Sarah Williams** teaches World Lit and AP English at the Oswego High School. She goes ABOVE and BEYOND to ensure that seniors are successful and ready for college/life next year. She spends countless hours during her planning, lunch and after school meeting with students to improve their writing for school, college applications and scholarships. She also attends many events her students participate in outside of the school day. She is a phenomenally hard worker, supportive co-worker, and devoted mother.

**Do you know an OCTA member who works hard at what they do?**

**Someone whose efforts seem to go unnoticed?** *Someone who always seems to have positive energy? Do you know an OCTA member who deserves to be in the SPOTLIGHT? Then nominate them to be cast in the monthly OCTA spotlight! This section of the newsletter and website will highlight one (or more) OCTA member(s) per month. Send the candidates name, along with a brief description of what makes them special to [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org). Send your nomination today!*





## OCTA Scholarship Committee in search of new members!

Submitted by Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc - OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs

### OCTA Scholarship Committee

The OCTA Scholarship Committee is looking for volunteers. Every year, the scholarship committee organizes fundraisers (such as Jeans Week & payroll deduction) which allow the committee to award graduating OHS seniors with valuable scholarships in the spring. If you would like to participate in this year's committee, please email Korrine LaDuc & Meghan Donabella.



### Jeans Week - Save the Dates:

February 13 - February 17

Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc

OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs




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### **OCTA Newsblast January 2023**

*Highlights from our January OCTA Meeting*

**Union Dues 2022:** Your last paycheck of 2022 and your W-2s will show the amount of union dues that you paid for this year.

**Safety:** Safety in the buildings was a discussion at our last OCTA Meeting. Dr. Calvin and his team are taking the concerns of safety very seriously and are having conversations related to safety. A plan is being developed. This plan includes meeting with OHS Faculty and Staff, meeting with the Health and Safety Committee, an OHS Public Address, ongoing professional development and school programming updates, and finally, updates to safety protocols and the Code of Conduct.

**\*District Safety Hotline: The number is 315-341-2056.** If you have a safety concern the district has a confidential safety hotline. (Students and families can call this number too! Feel free to share.) There is also a BUTTON at the top of the oswego.org website that says "TIP LINE". Students need to be made aware of this so they can report any



safety/bullying issues.

**Get your teams for bowling!!! Captains - fill out the form!**

<https://forms.gle/tqdu9JEeSJJe8xbFL9>

Times: **FRIDAY, FEB 3rd.**

**Secondary:** Arrive after **2:45** - Bowling starts at 3 p.m. Winners will be announced after the last team finishes. We expect to announce winners around 5 p.m. Winning team will win back their \$60.00 entry fee.

**Elementary:** Arrive around **4:00**. Bowling should start around 4:15 and be done by 6:00 p.m. Winners will be announced by 6:30. (Note: A Friday night bowling league starts at 6:30.)

**The cost** per four-person team is **\$60.00** (\$15.00 per person). Each team (if possible) should put together a **basket to be raffled** off. Do a re-gift basket, lottery, wine is always popular or whatever you can think of. The **cost includes** two games of bowling, shoe rental, pizza, and soda. Bar specials will be offered.

OCTA will be putting together lottery boards to be raffled off. All money raised from basket raffles and lottery sales will go towards the winning teams' charity of choice. Spectators are welcome! (Please - No youth under 21.)

**Legislation updates:** NYSUT - Andy Pallotta in Albany advocating for several issues including:

- universal free lunch to make it permanent, reform APPR to give local control, eliminate receivership, expand NYC class size legislation to rest of state, [improvements to tiers 5 & 6 of NYSTRS](#)
- Passing workplace violence prevention act to include schools [Work Place Violence Prevention Act Info](#)
- John Mannion has been officially elected by 10 votes!
- Legislative Agenda:  
<https://united.nysut.org/issue/january-february-2023/union-lays-out-ambitious-legislative-agenda/>

**Appointments-** If you would like to meet with Carrie Patane or invite her to a meeting at your building use this link <https://calendar.app.google/cS7sbsLLfiCvnoSn6> to choose a time.

**Chain of Command-** The district has created a Chain Of Command chart for members to reference when there are questions or concerns.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QheLANDRSrIGXVQ0E8yfk5I4hYreTeSGmFDZGmg2sOA/edit?usp=sharing>

### **OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kc9DjnHtYkQTqCKMI2iw4Krey8BFebZtAO5i1wM05Gs>

**COVID Phone Numbers** OCSD **Employee** COVID Hotline: 315-341-2055 OCSD **Student** COVID Hotline: 315-341-2050

**CALL TO REPORT COVID POSITIVE CASES!** We no longer need to call to report symptoms. You can call for advice if you like, but it is not required.

### **Peer Support Line offered**

NYSUT Member Benefits has launched the [Peer Support Line](#), a confidential, peer-to-peer, dial-in helpline free to all members and their families. Staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals, this service will provide support and referrals to callers seeking assistance on a wide array of personal, family, and work-related problems. For more information or assistance, call 844-444-0152.

## Know Your Paycheck Deductions:

Check your stub to make sure you are receiving the appropriate deductions for each paycheck:

**FICA** is social security

**MEDI** is Medicare

**FEDERAL** is federal tax

**STATE** is state tax

**D/I OCTA** is disability insurance

**HI10F15%** is 10 month family health

**MED/DENT** is your flex spending account

**DFBOCTIN** is your OCTA Dental Insurance

**VISFIND** = Vision individual

**OCTA28+** is your union dues

**OPL** is city library contribution

**NYSUT** = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.)

**INSREIMB** = Insurance Reimbursement (in Dec) for those off step

## OCTA Building Leadership 22-23

### CER

Terri Stacy

Ted Beers

### FPS

Erin Wilder

Julie Tubolino

### KPS

Mary Lynne

Maxwell

Hope Mazuroski

### FLS

Michaela Kearns

Amy Armet

### MIN

Crystal Mason

Amy Sullivan

Keri Hunter

### OHS

Gina Iorio

Heather Sugar

Robert Dumas

### OMS

Jeff Brown

Alison Anderson

Mary Alice

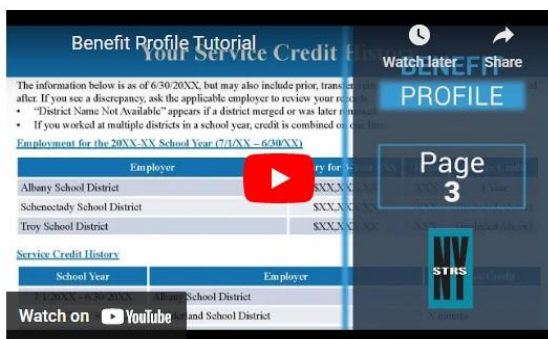
Brennan

### Substitutes

Ed Stacy

## Learn to read (and understand) your NYSTRS benefit profile!

### Benefit Profile Tutorial



Your Oswego New York State Teachers' Retirement elected delegate Dan Rose attended the NYSTRS annual delegates meeting in Saratoga Springs during the first week of November. The most recent edition of your [NYSTRS benefit profile](#) was sent out to all NYSTRS members in November. Your benefit profile provides a wealth of information, and is available to all members with a [MYNYSTRS](#) account. To learn more about how to read your benefit profile, [view this tutorial](#).

## Dental Benefits Reminder!

submitted by OCTA Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt



Just a friendly reminder from OCTA Dental: **Please take note of the Plan language that stipulates enrollees are entitled to two cleanings/preventative visits per 12-month period**, and Visit A and Visit C of such visits need to be scheduled a minimum of **12-months and one day from each other**—For example, if you went to the provider on June 20, 2022 (Visit A), then if your next visit was December 23, 2022 (Visit B), your next visit would need to be scheduled on June 21, 2023 (Visit C) or later in order to be covered—

Providers always try to do their best to properly schedule and space appointments, but ultimately the responsibility rests on members to ensure that their appointments are properly spaced based upon the Plan language as described above—

Please also know that 12-month periods are all individual and based upon when you have your first visit with your provider and use your coverage (For example, if you go to your provider in June, then your 12-month period is from

June-June)—The 12-month period is NOT based on the school year or calendar year of January-December—

Please feel free to reach out to OCTA Dental at: [octadentalplan@gmail.com](mailto:octadentalplan@gmail.com) should you have any questions about this or anything else dental related!

**DENTAL DID YOU KNOW?!** You can create your very own Delta Dental Login and Mobile Account and in turn gain access to various helpful tools related to your dental insurance? [GO ONLINE TO MANAGE YOUR DENTAL PLAN!](#)



### Resources at your fingertips

Go online to manage your plan



Whether you need to check your benefits or select a new dentist, you can do it all with Delta Dental's online tools.

#### Create an account

##### What you can do:

- Check your plan details and eligibility.
- Browse claim history.
- Download plan documents.
- Find an in-network dentist.
- View your member ID card or print a paper copy.
- Update your settings to paperless.



**Try it out:** Go to [deltadentalins.com](https://deltadentalins.com) and choose **Log in** to create an account or log in to your existing account.

**Tip:** Access your benefits info on mobile, tablet or desktop!



# OCTA Bowling Tournament

*Friday, February 3, 2023*  
*Lighthouse Lanes*



**Secondary (approx. 2:45 - 5:00) Elementary (approx. 4:15- 6:00)**

*We have 18 teams registered for Friday. If anyone is still interested in playing, we have room for 5 more teams.*

*I would love to see some more secondary teams!*

***Spectators are welcome! There will be some great baskets donated by the teams and a 50/50 raffle in order to support the winning team's charity. Spectators are asked to make a minimum \$5 donation at the door and will be given raffle tickets for their donation. Raffle tickets will be available for all to purchase. Tickets will be \$2 each, 3 for \$5, 7 for \$10, or 15 for \$20.***

***50/50 tickets will also be available for \$5 each or 5 for \$20.***

***Take a look at the teams and the amazing organizations they are supporting:***

Session:	Team Capitan	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Charity
Secondary	Sarah Kimak	Mark Bankowski	Jason Guild	Robert Donnelly	Blessings in a Backpack
Secondary	Korrine LaDuc	Tiffany Pauldine	Shelly Kocher	Kristine Murray	St. Jude's
Secondary	Jane Crossman	Michelle Cooper	Cindy Zuber	Kristie Tonkin	Blessings in a Backpack
Secondary	Clare Donovan	Chris Van Gorder	Rodolfo Pena Barrios	Bryan RaPray	Michelle Wink Foundation
Secondary	Eric McCrobie	Tiffany McCrobie	Kevin Morgan	Josh Lerch	Michele Wink Foundation
Secondary	Alison Anderson	Amy Leopold	Missy Russell	Sue Roik	Blessings in a Backpack
Elementary	Michelle McManus	Michaela Kearns	Sarah Ruggaber	McKenna Sesselman	Blessings In A Backpack
Elementary	Natalie Hollenbeck	Fred Donabella	Tom Wiegand	Jim Hartmann	Golisano Pediatric Cancer Unit
Elementary	Kory Donovan	Stephanie Steiger	Jennifer Sharkey	Lisa Edwards	Down Syndrome Association
Elementary	Shannon Isham	Michelle Dunn	Kristen Steele	Kate Bowman	Child Advocacy Center of Oswego County
Elementary	Alicia Hafner	Heidi Hulsizer	Aaron RaPray	Jess Bye	Blessings in a Backpack
Elementary	Tim Barbeau	Kristy Bletch	Brooke Farnsworth	Julie Tubolino	Blessings in a Backpack
Elementary	Teresa Lee	Laurie Kelly	Jessica Johnson	Denise Evans	Stuff a Bus
Elementary	Shannon Kane	Alyssa McMahon	Claudia Chetney	Lauren Neil	Oswego Book Mobile
Elementary	Christine Oleyourryk	Morgan Burnham	Allie Yule	Caitlyn Krueger	Oswego Book Mobile
Elementary	Kim Chwalek	Nicole Cleary	Katelynn Kron	Zach Waugh	Oswego County Autism Task Force
Elementary	Keeghan McSweeney	Stacie Roberts-Waterhouse	Carol Janice	Alea Amyot	Minetto HSA for the Playground
Elementary	Tracy Shannon	Tanya Wadsworth	Abby Molinari	Stephanie Nolf	Golisano's Children's Hospital



### NYSUT offers certification assistance

We know that certification in New York State can be complicated and stressful. To help members through the process, NYSUT offers a wide range of free webinars, with several specializing in topics like Career and Technical Education, Students with Disabilities and Teaching Assistant certification. [Sign up now for webinars through March.](#)



### Union celebrates encouraging State of the State message

Thanks to union advocacy, the governor's [State of the State address this week](#) reflected many of our legislative priorities for the coming year. It's encouraging to see the governor [reaffirm a commitment](#) to building a world-class public school system that supports New Yorkers at every stage of their educational lives. The promise to fully fund Foundation Aid is historic and will dramatically improve the lives of students, educators and families across New York.

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## CNY/OC Teacher Center

### 2023 Winter Offerings

We are pleased to offer a variety of courses this winter. We believe that the best learning is for teachers by teachers and appreciate those who have designed courses for their peers and for those who engage in ongoing learning. If you are interested in running a course, please contact the center director, your school liaison or complete a [proposal form](#). Please visit [our website](#) for more information, current offerings and links to our professional lending library. We have a variety of professional texts, topic resources and technology gadgets available.

### Course Descriptions:

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (including LGBTQ+)  
 SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING & MENTAL HEALTH  
 COMPUTER SCIENCE & DIGITAL LITERACY  
 LITERACY  
 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS  
 EDUCATOR WELLNESS & PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT  
[FULL MLP CATALOG](#)



# Union lays out ambitious legislative agenda

By Ben Amey

[ben.amey@nysut.org](mailto:ben.amey@nysut.org)



Looking ahead to the 2023 legislative session, NYSUT is focused with optimism and purpose. The union is hoping to expand on victories from the 2022 legislative session and continue the fight to improve working and learning environments for students and educators, said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

One of the union's major pushes this year is fixing Tier 6.

"We scored our first victories toward achieving tier equity last year, when vesting for Tier 6 was cut years to five," Pallotta said. "Now we have to continue our fight to stem the ongoing teacher shortage, get more young people to enter the profession."

Union members in Tiers 5 and 6 have significantly diminished benefits and must work longer before they can retire. "As unionists, we know that something that affects one of our members affects all of our members," Pallotta said.

The union's legislative agenda also includes recommendations from the NYSUT Safe Schools for All Force. In addition to expanding the community schools model, (see [Pages 17-20](#)), the union will s

[Read Full Article](#)

# Check out all your union membership has to offer!

## LEGAL SERVICE PLAN

Plan benefits include:

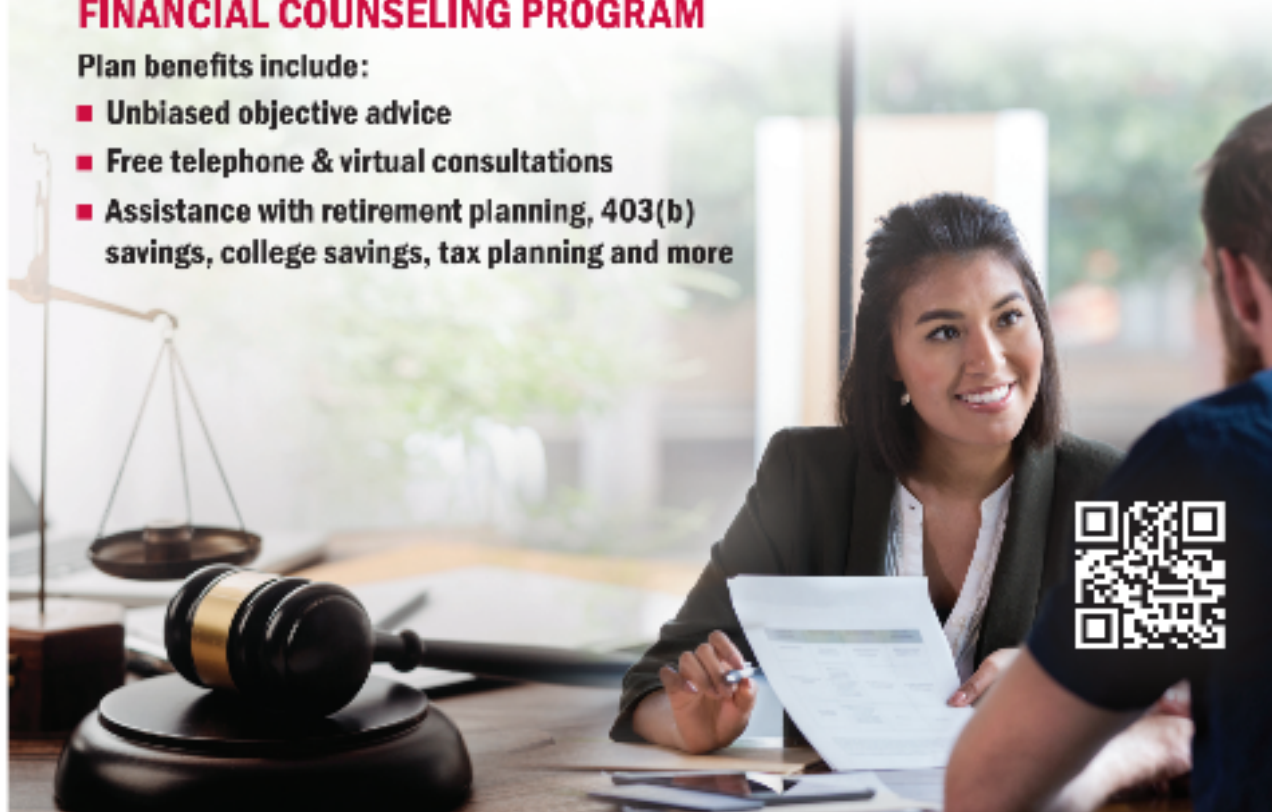
- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters



## FINANCIAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the right,  
visiting **[memberbenefits.nysut.org](https://memberbenefits.nysut.org)**  
or calling **800-626-8101**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Jan-Feb 2023



# CNY AREA LABOR FEDERATION

NIGHT AT THE SYRACUSE CRUNCH



## FRIDAY, MARCH 31

VS BELLEVILLE SENATORS

7 P.M. // UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY ARENA

Bring Non Perishable Food items  
to donate to Feed Our Vets

**TICKETS ONLY**



# \$18

TO ORDER TICKETS:



Tickets available at the CNY Area Labor Federation office.  
Email [cnyalf@gmail.com](mailto:cnyalf@gmail.com)

-OR-

Order online at [www.syracusecrunch.com/cnylabor](http://www.syracusecrunch.com/cnylabor)  
using promo code: Labor

GROUP TICKETS PRESENTED BY:

**DUNKIN'**

CONTACT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ UNION: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF TICKETS \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$18 = \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT METHOD: CREDIT CHECK (payable to Syracuse Crunch)

CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ SEC CODE: \_\_\_\_\_



315-473-4444 | [WWW.SYRACUSECRUNCH.COM](http://WWW.SYRACUSECRUNCH.COM) | @SYRACUSECRUNCH | #SYRCRUNCH

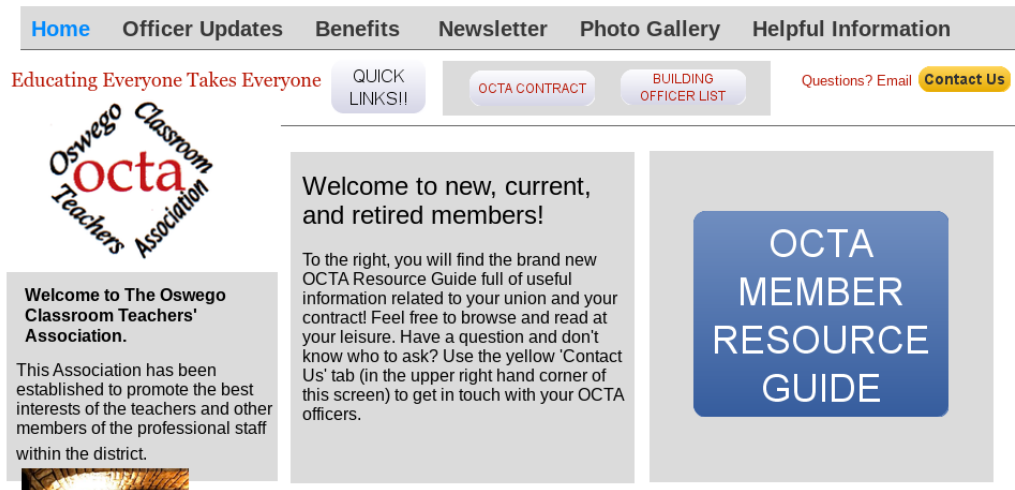




## Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!!!!?

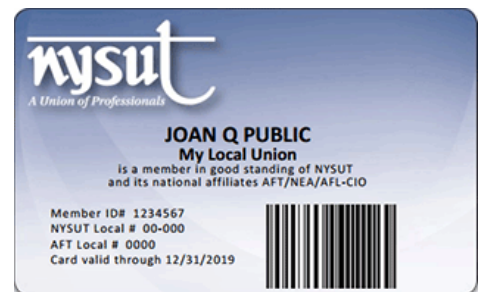
Click on the screenshot of the homepage below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide!

### Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association



## Need A Quick NYSUT Membership Card?

[Login here and download a PDF of your membership card.](#)



To request a replacement for this card, call NYSUT at 1-800-342-9810 ext. 6224

*OCTA Advocate* is published by the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association, West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Oswego, NY. **President:** Carrie Patane, **VP Grievance:** Kim LeRoy **VP Negotiations:** Jessica Burrige **VP Political Action:** Jenn Cahill, **VP Newsletter:** Dan Rose, **Secretary:** Michelle McManus, **Treasurer:** Mike Patane. Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

