

# OCTA Advocate

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



## JUNE 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

Across our country, schools have become quiet once more. Another school year has come and gone. Sitting in my comfy desk chair, I savor these final moments. For solace. For reflection.

Every end-of-year brings with it mixed emotions. We lose students we care about, students we have seen mature and develop, students who made us smile, cringe, laugh, even question why we got into this field in the first place. But it is important to remember that all of our students, ALL of them, provide us equal opportunities for growth. No matter how challenging a student may seem, the teacher-student relationship is reciprocal in nature.



This is a powerful realization. One that needn't be confined to the classroom.

For if a classroom, a school, a district, a country, cannot build and foster relationships with both give and take, relationships with reciprocity at the core, then what chance do we all really have?

Although recent [union victories in NYS Legislation](#) are reason to be optimistic, right now, our [public school system is facing unprecedented attacks](#) aimed at destabilizing, disrupting, defunding and ultimately destroying these relationships and partnerships we have all worked so hard to construct with our students, parents and administration.

The [resulting chaos happening in multiple states like Florida](#) make it all too clear that we must be the voice not only for public schools and the right of ALL to a free, unbiased education, but for the downtrodden and vulnerable kids, those who are feeling most threatened and unsafe in this time of political unrest and repression. We must be the models, the voices of reason in these tumultuous times.

So as I look now across my empty classroom and begin plans for next school year, I smile, knowing that my influence has no bounds. Not here. This is my classroom. These are my kids. And, as always, we have each other to lean on. We are union strong.

In solidarity,  
Carrie

## **Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!**



**Carole Lloyd** (OMS) has been teaching for 16 years, using various resources to engage her students. Ms. Lloyd says that she is inspired when she observes the 'lightbulb moment' when a student grasps a concept or when she sees successful students years later. Carole appreciates having the opportunity to help students develop good moral character, and to help them reach their full potential. Outside of the classroom, Carole enjoys multiple outdoor activities including hiking (she is working on hiking the NYS Adirondack 46 high peaks, running half marathons, traveling, live music, sports, playing the flute and piano, eating dockside at Rudy's, Lake Ontario sunsets and pyrotechnics (she works for Grucci). Ms. Lloyd also loves to look after her mother and daughter.

This is **Emily Ball's** (CER) first year as a school counselor in the Oswego City School District. When asked what attracted Emily to the field of education and counseling, she said it was the meaningful connections that can be built with students. Emily says that she felt that having a safe space and adults to connect with at school is important, so Emily tries to provide that for all of her students. Emily went on to say that the students she counsels are great people, and being able to help them learn the social emotional skills to be successful in life is truly rewarding. Outside of school, Emily loves to spend time outdoors in the sunshine and read.



**Trina Mills** (OHS) is retiring after a lifetime of service to the OCSD. In addition to being an engaging educator, Trina has served as tennis coach, turnkey trainer for teachers, community volunteer, OHS parent, as well as integral force behind the OHS Sunshine Fund. Trina is a tireless teacher and a congenial colleague whose presence in the high school will be impossible to replace.

**Karin Button** has been an educator at OHS for more than 25 years. During her career she has helped countless students learn about life through teaching Spanish. Karin's love of Spanish and enjoyment of the language has inspired some of those same students to go on to become Spanish teachers themselves. Karin especially loved taking students on trips to Mexico, and felt privileged to be their tour guide and teacher on their first trip away from home. Karin has chaperoned extra-curricular activities and events in her years at OHS and loves reuniting with former students who have many wonderful memories of her class. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, Karin!





**Maria Kaleta** (OHS) has been an educator at OHS for 26 years. Her colleagues appreciate how she helps by sharing advice and resources. She is always present for the students at their performances, games, and dances, and posts newspaper clippings any time one of them is featured in the local news. Maria's car is almost always one of the last ones in the parking lot, which attests to her level of dedication to the school and its students. In her retirement, Maria looks forward to spending more time with her family, reading, and traveling, but we hope to continue to see her around at school events.

**Kris Jorgensen** (CER & FPS) came to the Oswego City School District in 2014. Since then, she has been fostering a love of music in all of the children she has taught. Kris arrives early and stays late when a student needs and wants extra help or practice. She spends countless hours before school helping prepare students for their NYSSMA solos, all-county auditions as well as band concerts. Kris can always be counted on to give lots of encouragement and praise to her students who greatly appreciate her.



Fitzhugh Park would like to recognize the wonderful **Mrs. Kathy Pecora and Mrs Tammy McCauley** on their upcoming retirements! Our school couldn't be more grateful for their time, energy and positive contributions to our community; they will be sorely missed. Mrs. McCauley will remember watching children overcome obstacles while gaining confidence. Tammy says she will miss the "funny things that kids say at the darndest of times." She added that she "has been blessed to work with wonderful people over the years and made many friendships." During her new-found freedom, she will be looking forward to traveling with her husband and taking up some new hobbies while also spending her free time with friends and family.



Mrs. Pecora visibly enjoyed making connections with the students here. Kathy noted how much she also enjoyed their hugs, their stories and getting to know them personally. When asked what Kathy will miss the most after retirement, she said that she "will miss the feeling of being needed as well as the close daily interactions with coworkers - who are like family." But, if every day is a Friday, Kathy can look forward to "spending more time with family, no alarm clocks, no schedules, and spending more time on hobbies."

FPS treasures you, Mrs. Pecora and Mrs. McCauley! And we will miss you!

## Dental Benefits



submitted by OCTA Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt

### **For Members Retiring:**

Please be advised that if you want to participate in the dental insurance program as a retiree, you **MUST** be enrolled as an 'active' participant.

### **Non-participants must enroll before retirement.**

If you have any questions regarding this or any OCTA Dental related matter, please feel free to reach out at: [octadentalplan@gmail.com](mailto:octadentalplan@gmail.com).

Thank you!

## Retirement Filing Made Easy

Deciding when to retire takes a lot of thought. One part of the process that is easy: Filing online!

The easiest way to file your application, provided you are at least age 55, is online through your [MyNYSTRS](#) account. The online application is designed to ensure you don't inadvertently miss a step or make a mistake that would cause the application to be rejected. Simply log in to your account and select My Retirement > Application for Retirement.

You can save and store data as you go, so you don't need to complete the application in one sitting. When you return to the application, you'll see which sections are complete and which you still need to finish. You'll also have the ability to modify previously completed sections. [READ MORE! CLICK HERE!](#)

**Congratulations to the class of 2023 Retirees!!** Rachel Baker (OMS) Karin Button (OHS) Val Donovan (FPS) Crystal Dudley (FPS), Maria Kaleta (OHS), Tammy McCauley (FPS) Trina Mills (OHS) Kathleen Pecora (FPS) and Lisa Shultkie (OHS)



**DUES PROPOSAL 2023-2027**

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



[NYSUT DUES PROPOSAL: Complete Document](#)



**The 2023 OCTA Scholarship Committee selected  
12 recipients of this year's scholarship.**

**Below are recipients of the 2023 OCTA Scholarship:**

- ❖ Kiara Barton
- ❖ Jordan Caroccio
- ❖ Mia Fierro
- ❖ Christina Kaleta
- ❖ Leon Lin
- ❖ Sean Metcalf
- ❖ Brayden Miller
- ❖ Gavin Mills
- ❖ Nealy Pippin
- ❖ Teagan Ross
- ❖ Austin Symborski
- ❖ Marisa Wallace

Here are approved Jeans Weeks for 2023-24:

\*October 30-November 3, 2023

\*February 12-February 16, 2024

Thank you!

## Premium Calm Service - Now Available!

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce the availability of the **premium Calm subscription** as a free benefit for all NYSUT in-service members.

The premium Calm subscription provides in-service members with unlimited access to the full library of content at **calm.com** and in the Calm app, which can be utilized via a desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device (iOS or Android).



In-service members can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older) to receive their own premium Calm subscription. Dependents can only be added through the **calm.com** site (not the Calm app); dependents will then receive their own premium Calm subscription.

### LEARN MORE:

Visit <https://www.calm.com/b2b/nysut-member-benefits/subscribe> to create your Calm account now (Note: This is a dedicated URL for NYSUT members).

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## OCTA BLAST: June 2023

*Highlights from our June 2023 OCTA Meeting*

**NEW Limit on Professional Development Hours:** In order to settle a potential grievance for external professional development denials, and in an effort to provide opportunities for more members to participate in external PD before the contractual limit is reached, the District and the Association have signed a memorandum of agreement which will limit individuals to 45 hours of external PD offerings between July 1 and December 31st of 2023. If there is still money available for external PD after December 31st, the rest of the PD will be available without a limit. This agreement will also allow any unspent OCTA Summer In-Service money to roll-over into our PD fund which could potentially increase the total amount of external PD funding available. We followed the contractual limit and allocated 30,000 for OCTA-designed in-district summer in-service and currently have 35,000 available for compensation for attending external professional development offerings (with prior approval) through MLP.

### What is the difference between in-service and external PD?

In-service is offered by the district and no prior authorization is required for attendance. Once you enroll and attend the class, the district instructor submits the attendance sheet and the member is compensated for their participation. The offerings are determined by the district's Title 1 funds or other grants and focus on district initiatives and priorities.

External Professional Development is offered by Citi, Nysut ELT, the Teacher Center, or other external organizations. We have a contractual limit of \$35,000 for external PD. The individual wishing to take a course must get prior approval through a form on MLP. After attending the course, proof of completion must be provided within 30 days and a payroll invoice form must be submitted in order to receive payment for participation in the PD offering.

**OCTA Scholarship:** Thanks to your generous support for OCTA Jeans Week and payroll deduction OCTA Scholarship was able to give out 12 scholarships totaling \$6300. Thanks to Meghan Donabella, Korinne LaDuc and Laurie Kelly for organizing OCTA Scholarship every year.

This years recipients are:

❖ **Kiara Barton** ❖ **Jordan Caroccio** ❖ **Mia Fierro** ❖ **Christina Kaleta** ❖ **Leon Lin** ❖ **Sean Metcalf**  
❖ **Brayden Miller** ❖ **Gavin Mills** ❖ **Nealy Pippin** ❖ **Teagan Ross** ❖ **Austin Symborski** ❖ **Marisa Wallace**

**TCIS Video Refresher:** Anyone who finished the video refresher should see payment in their next check. If you did not take the training, there are refresher courses available over the summer listed in

MLP.



**Oswego Labor Council Speedway Night-** Please contact Jennifer Cahill if you are interested in June 24th Oswego Speedway tickets.

[jcahill@oswego.org](mailto:jcahill@oswego.org).

Take care of your mental health! Available to OCTA members: Follow this link for more information:  
[CALM APP](#)

**Free Member Benefits:** Legal Plan! - <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/free-member-benefits>

A non full days paying member ( $\frac{1}{2}$  time,  $\frac{3}{4}$  dues) can get a free legal assistance plan through NYSUT. This provides members ( $\frac{1}{2}$  time,  $\frac{3}{4}$  dues) a free will and many other discount legal services.



**DISCOUNT New York Yankees and New York Mets TICKETS:**

Tickets for Union Strong Weekend with the New York Yankees and Union Strong Night with the New York Mets are on sale now!

Discounted tickets are available for union members and their

families/friends, and they come with a free t-shirt. Come enjoy a game with your union family! Click on the links below to get your tickets.

[July 21st, 7:05 pm at the New York Yankees](#)

[July 22nd at 1:05pm at the New York Yankees](#)

[July 23rd at 1:35pm at the New York Yankees](#)

[September 2nd at 7:10pm at the New York Mets](#)

### **NYSUT CTLE Seminars:**

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/certification/webinars>

You can receive graduate course or external PD credit for these courses. Be sure to get pre-approval.

### **OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:**

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

### **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/single 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

**TRS**= money you pay into NYS Teachers Retirement

### **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

# Universal Life Insurance with Convalescent Care Benefit

provided by:

**Trustmark**<sup>®</sup>  
benefits beyond benefits

- Innovative universal life insurance product provided by Trustmark<sup>®</sup>, combining life insurance coverage with a convalescent care benefit that can be used to pay for long-term care services.
- **Limited time offer!** In-service members ages 18-64 who enroll between May 1 and June 16, 2023 may qualify for guaranteed coverage (no medical questions) up to \$50,000.
- Retiree members up to age 70 may elect coverage up to \$100,000 by answering some medical questions.

## LIVING BENEFITS FOR LONG-TERM CARE

You could require long-term care services at any point in your life, which could cost hundreds of dollars per day. This universal life insurance program includes a convalescent care benefit that can help pay for these services at any age. Policyholders with a qualifying claim can collect up to 4% of their universal life death benefit per month for up to 25 months -- helping to cover the cost of long-term care services such as an in-home health aide, assisted living facility, or nursing home care.

## LIFE INSURANCE

Protecting your loved ones is one of life's greatest responsibilities. Along with the grief that comes with losing a family member, survivors may suddenly be faced with costly expenses, debts, and a loss of income. Your death benefit can be used to help pay these expenses or for other items such as tuition or savings.

## YOURCARE360 ONLINE RESOURCE GUIDE

This program includes access to YourCare360, providing an online resource that can help to guide you and your family through the caregiving journey.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,  
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.

May-Jun 2023

**URGENT  
ACTION  
NEEDED**

Tell your legislators

**FIX**

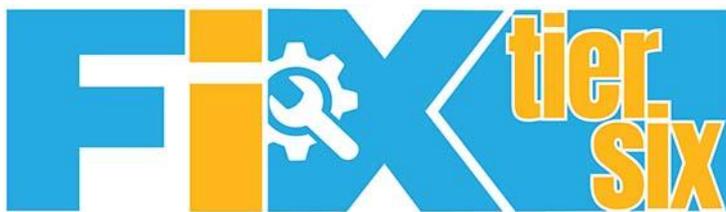
**TIER 6**

[NYSUT.org/FixTier6](https://NYSUT.org/FixTier6)

nysut

“We’re a fighting union and I know we can get this done,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta of union efforts to improve pension benefits for Tier 6 members, who receive substantially reduced pensions as compared to earlier tiers.

Fixing Tier 6 was the focus of the opening plenary session of the NYSUT Local and Retiree Council Presidents Conference. Speakers detailed disparities between earlier tiers, and participants brainstormed and shared best practices on how to activate members to become Fix Tier 6 activists. All agreed that the campaign is a great opportunity to engage new members and highlight union value.



“Fixing Tier 6 is about solidarity, fairness and dignity,” said NYSUT Executive Director Melinda Person. “Thirty years is a career; it doesn’t make sense that some members have to work longer.”

Citing the union’s effort in 2000 to reform Tier 4 by capping member contributions at 10 years and ending early retirement penalties, Person was confident the union can achieve similar reforms for Tier 6 — but it won’t be a quick fix. She estimates at least a decade of work before winning parity with Tier 4.

“Last year we got vesting fixed, next we’re going after age penalties, final average salaries and contribution increases,” Person continued. “We’ve done this before, and we can do this again.”

## Universal Life Insurance with Convalescent Care Benefit

The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed **Universal Life/LifeEvents® Insurance with Convalescent Care Benefit** program, provided by Trustmark (plus **YourCare360® Care Planning Services**) offers added financial protection for you and/or your spouse/certified domestic partner along with access to long-term care resources.

This new program combines:

- **Convalescent care benefits** that can be used to help pay for long-term care services at any age.
- **A life insurance benefit** to help secure your family's financial future.
- **Caregiving tools** provided by **YourCare360®** that offer guidance to manage your and/or your spouse's/certified domestic partner's long-term care needs.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION!!!](#)

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## LATEST UNION NEWS

Keep abreast of union news! Click on the magazines below to begin browsing!!

### [American Educator link](#)



### [NYSUT UNITED LINK](#)





# NYSUT Student Debt Webinar Schedule

*Webinars are available to NYSUT members only.*

[LEARN MORE ABOUT WEBINARS](#)

**Tuesday, May 23**

**4:30 - 6:00 - PM**

[REGISTER NOW](#)

**Thursday, Jun. 8**

**6:00 - 7:30 - PM**

[REGISTER NOW](#)

## 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

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association. At the top is a navigation menu with links: Home, Officer Updates, Benefits, Newsletter, Photo Gallery, and Helpful Information. Below the menu is a tagline "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" followed by a "QUICK LINKS!!" button. To the right are buttons for "OCTA CONTRACT" and "BUILDING OFFICER LIST", and a yellow "Contact Us" button with the text "Questions? Email". On the left is the OCTA logo, a circular emblem with "Oswego Classroom Teachers Association" around the perimeter and "octa" in the center. Below the logo is a "Welcome to The Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association." section with a paragraph: "This Association has been established to promote the best interests of the teachers and other members of the professional staff within the district." To the right is a large blue button that says "OCTA MEMBER RESOURCE GUIDE".

Welcome to new, current, and retired members!

To the right, you will find the brand new OCTA Resource Guide full of useful information related to your union and your contract! Feel free to browse and read at your leisure. Have a question and don't know who to ask? Use the yellow 'Contact Us' tab (in the upper right hand corner of this screen) to get in touch with your OCTA officers.

OCTA  
MEMBER  
RESOURCE  
GUIDE

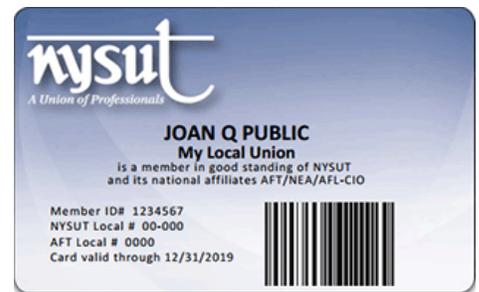
## Thank you to the members of our highway clean up crew!!



## 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.

