



GCREA Newsline

June 2020

Volume 7 Issue 5

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

GCREA.org

2020
NEXT
GCREA
MEETING

TBA

President:
Jan Calkins
President-elect:
Penny Clavijo
Secretary:
Teresa Nichols
Treasurer:
Sara Lee

Fellowship
Support
Service

From the President - *Jan Calkins*

Well, to say this had been a record-breaking year would be an understatement! We started off with a bang with a lengthy list of goals and a wave of enthusiasm from all of you. As I look over the goals I set, here is what I see; we met or exceeded all of these goals. Our GREA membership increase hit 10% early in the year and we closed the year with a total increase of over 15%!!! We made a great increase in our support of our members who are restricted to home or assisted living settings and as a result these members have felt so much more supported and cared for. We tried some new technology adventures and overall saw some success. I am confident Penny will continue in this area in this coming year!

It has been a joy and a pleasure to serve as your President this year. I wish we could have come together for our last three luncheons, but I appreciate so much Sharon Larkin's willingness to do the needed extra work to put out a special edition of the Newsletter to share with you the scholarship winners. It was a particularly remarkable group of winners in many ways. I have enjoyed getting to know more of you more personally. I think of all of you daily, especially now during this health crisis. Please keep doing what you need to do to keep yourselves safe. As of now I have not heard of any of our members getting the virus and I hope that is the case.

As we head into next year, we are going to need to count on all of you to be our ambassadors with your friends and colleagues who are retiring. Please reach out to them and share the opportunity to become a member of GCREA and GREA. Especially now with the financial impacts of this virus we will need a strong presence at the capital to hold fast on our TRS account.

Finally, I cannot close without some thank-yous! To my indomitable President-Elect Penny Clavijo, who stepped in so often to “rescue us”; to find us new places for our luncheons, get our walk for Alzheimer’s organized and served as the brains behind our very successful auction to raise funds for our scholarships. To Sara Lee, the most organized and responsive person I have ever known! Even during her recovery, she was always there to help me as needed with all the financial matters. To the exiting officers and committee chairs; Sara Lee, Teresa Nichols, Nita Killebrew, Rosa Fite, Pat Carr, Murla Crawford and Beth Thompson. I could write a book about each of these folks. They did their jobs so well that they left huge holes. But I am so thankful that new folks have stepped into these positions and have already shown how competent and enthusiastic they are to serve in these positions. A special thanks to Barbara Wilson, her work as our communications chair and her generous donation of her beach house for many years made an exceptional contribution to our funds for our scholarship efforts.

At this moment, none of us know what next year will bring, but to borrow a phrase from the pandemic whether we can get together physically, “we are together apart”! Thanks to all of you for a great year!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS & CHANGES by Terrie Adkins (new membership chair)

What a strange year we are experiencing! Our leadership team is doing a remarkable job of keeping us in the LOOP! Admittedly, it is hard to “Reach out and Touch” new members when we are confined to our homes or hidden behind masks! However, keeping ourselves and others safe and healthy is a priority at this time. There are ways to “Cheer for GCREA and GREa” even under these circumstances. If you know of someone who is retired or retiring or just not in our LOOP, try reaching out by phone, email or written note (preferably in a cute card!) and let them know our organization is fighting for them and needs their support. Our retirement funds are a big topic right now. The economy has eaten into them and certain members of the Legislature are hungrily eyeing them. We are not in eminent danger at the moment, but we need to be vigilant. GREa is right there keeping watch for us. The more members we have, the bigger our voice. Let’s keep talking up our organization.

As we all know, change happens. For the past several years, Murla Crawford, with the help of Stephanie Hodgkin, has been our Membership Chair and she has done an OUTSTANDING job keeping our records in order and our membership up to date. She has now passed the “Feathered Aegis” on to new hands. **Terrie Adkins (ttadkins@sprynet.com)** is assuming the Membership rolls and duties, while **Jan Calkins** will be editing the handbook. Please make note of these changes and if you have any information pertaining to either, please feel free to contact the appropriate person.

The summer is upon us and we are still mostly in “stay at home” mode, so this is a good time to look through your handbook from this year, call those you haven’t seen in a while to check on them. Ask if their information has changed and update us on what you find out. It takes a village to raise a child and it takes ALL OF US to keep our GCREA organization strong and healthy. Please do your part! Blessings to you!

GCREA is pleased to announce an additional scholarship recipient, Thint Voel.

Thint Voel

I humbly thank the Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association for awarding me the GREA Student Scholarship. Your Association's generous contributions to my educational funding will help me to earn a baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development and acquire the Childhood Development Associate Credential. I will be attending Georgia State Perimeter College for my first two years of college and then plan to transfer to Georgia State University to complete my degree.

This scholarship also honors the many sacrifices my parents have made so that I may have the opportunity of a better life, with safety, education, and a bright future. I have a great responsibility to do my best and pay these gifts and opportunities forward within my community. I look forward to continuing the Association's legacy of educating the next generation with passion and care. Thank you for enabling this opportunity!

My family and I are refugees from Myanmar who were among the fortunate few to resettle in Atlanta, Georgia in 2006. Religion is important to us and our extended Burmese community because we fled religious persecution in Myanmar. Beyond our regular attendance at church, I have participated in work that supports the overall wellbeing of my large family of eight. While this has left me little time for participation in hobbies and extracurricular activities, it has enriched me in other ways. My desire to teach preschool aged students comes from my love of caring for my three youngest siblings who are now 7, 9, and 12. In the fall, I will be joining my two older sisters at Georgia State University's Perimeter Campus. I plan to earn a BA in Early Childhood Education/Child Development and become a preschool teacher. I want to create the same safe, welcoming, and comprehensive learning environment for diverse learners that I found here in Georgia. It is very different from the education I had back home, where people with no formal training would share whatever information they knew with a group of kids of all ages. As a family, we are resilient. We came to this country, learned the language, and learned how to best support each other. As a New American, I have gained a tremendous amount of respect for the sacrifices my parents have made so that I may have the opportunity of a better life, with safety, education, and a bright future. I understand that this gift comes with a responsibility to do my best and to reach back and help those in my community have the same opportunities.



Handbook Changes for 2020-2021, by Jan Calkins

Hi All, I have stepped up to taking over the job of the GCREA Handbook. This is the year we are going to make the transition having a hard cover handbook AND an online handbook on our website in the members only section. Needless to say, a handbook is only as good as its accuracy. Many of you have already received e-mails and texts from me soliciting any changes in your information. Please, PLEASE give this serious thought, let me know of any changes you have and if you are aware of another member who has had changes, share those as well or reach out to them to remind them to let me know. The GOOD news about the online version is that any new members, changes that are not caught now, moves, etc. can be immediately done on the website and we should have a functioning and accurate handbook year-round. As you share your information, please list the phone number that is preferred to you. It would be great if we could list everyone's home and cell, but this little book is getting fatter and fatter and the postage jumps up with just a few more pages. So which phone you list is up to you, just make it the one you actually answer. (SMILE) To save you looking it up, my e-mail is jcalk52@gmail.com and cell phone is 404-731-5105.

Sunshine News

Joyce Parks is now Chair of the Sunshine Committee. Please let her know of any needs among our members. Best contact: parkopet@gmail.com May also phone: 770-963-4589.

This committee will work only if we are notified of needs. Therefore, it really is a committee of all the members of GCREA. Please help us by sending timely information concerning our members.

Many thanks to Rosa Fite who cheerfully and lovingly chaired this committee for 6+ years.

GCREA extends sympathy to :

Family of Sybil Deacon who passed away on May 11, 2020

Nita Chambless who lost her husband on May 13, 2020

Family of Lois Allen who passed away on May 17, 2020

Please join the GCREA in recognizing and honoring the Emeritus Members, Class
of 2019-2020



Barbara Bagwell
92
May 10, 1928

Jack Britt
93
September 14,
1926

Virginia Kraweic
94
February 16, 1926

Sarah Roberts
95
March 1, 1925

Welcome to our 2020-2021 Officers!! *By Jan Calkins*

It has been a joy and a journey to have the honor of being your President this Year!
However, I am thrilled to share with you the new slate of officers for this coming year.

President: Penny Clavijo

President -Elect: Tina Duncan

Secretary-Ellen Sumner

Treasurer-Debra Ault-Butenko

As you can see, we have a whole new “team” and I would be remiss if I did not convey my thanks to our Secretary of so many years, Teresa Nichols and our Treasurer, Sara Lee. Both these ladies have given years of service to our organization. I know the new team will be awesome!

GCRA Goes Virtual



The GCRA Executive Board met virtually in their first ever Zoom meeting on Friday, May 1st. It was good to reconnect and get some business done. We are still hoping to be able to reconnect with all of you in person this fall.



Did You Know....

that GCRA has its own Facebook page? If you are already on Facebook, you may want to check us out. Linda Mason is the page administrator.

THANK YOU TO OUR GCREA 2019/2020 SPONSERS AND SUPPORTERS

Dr. John C. Binkley
Dentist - general practice

15 Collins Industrial Way Ste A
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GCPS Foundation

www.gcps-foundation.org

431 Old Peachtree Rd, NW, Suwanee, GA 30024

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Support to improve the Educational Future of all Students

Editor's Note:

The next edition of the Newsline will be published

Sept. 1, 2020

Deadline for articles is Aug.23, 2020

sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com

Please watch your email and check the GCREA website for further information on the state convention.

The September issue of the Newsline will be posted on The GCREA website on September 1, 2020. Be sure to log in and check it out.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy summer!!