



# GCREA Newsline

February 2021  
Volume 8 Issue 3

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION GCREA.org

**2021  
NEXT  
GCREA  
MEETING**

**Friday Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>  
10:00  
Virtual Meeting  
via ZOOM**

**Details to be emailed  
to you.**

**President:  
Penny Clavijo  
President-elect:  
Tina Duncan  
Secretary:  
Ellen Sumner  
Treasurer:  
Debra Ault-  
Butenko**

**Fellowship  
Support  
Service**

## From the President Penny Clavijo



Greetings Fellow GCREA Members,

I hope this greeting finds you experiencing some positivity and hope as we embark upon this new 2021 year. My thoughts and prayers are with those of you who have been impacted by the COVID-19 virus through illness, or unfortunately, loss of a loved one. I am happy to hear many of you have already received the vaccine, and I look forward to the time that we can all meet face-to-face. Until that time, we will meet virtually. Our next meeting will be virtual February 19, 2021 at 10:00 am. A ZOOM link will be sent to you in February through our email communication. Please let Emmett Mullins ([emmettmullins@gmail.com](mailto:emmettmullins@gmail.com)) know if you need assistance with setting up ZOOM. Emmett will be hosting our GCREA February meeting on ZOOM, and he is available to assist you as needed.

As we move into February, the month of LOVE, I encourage you to continue to focus on those you love and those who love you. I often tell people I love them, and I feel the same about all of you in GCREA. Though I may not have met you or know you personally, we have a common bond and connection as Gwinnett County Public School Retirees and more importantly Educators.

I often hear the statement, "Once an educator, always an educator." I cannot agree more with this idea. Just because we are retired does not mean that we have stopped being an educator. I know I roll into teacher mode sometimes in a store when a child runs by me down an aisle. My inner teacher comes out and I give, "the teacher stare." Or better yet, I snap my fingers at my husband, Johnny, when attempting to get his attention. That gesture is met with a stare from him back at me, followed by the statement in a loving tone, "I am not one of your students."

We are fortunate to have chosen a profession that allowed us to be of service to others, especially children. As an educator, we had the incredible opportunity to foster a love of learning within our students and guide them to be productive citizens and people of integrity. We all believe that students can learn and succeed, and it is critical as an educator to foster an environment that enables students to be effective leaders, develop a positive self-image, be respectful and take responsibility for their learning and help build a sense of ownership and pride within the entire learning community. In our retirement life, we still encourage and support those in our community to be their best and build a sense of community and self-worth.

As educators and life-long learners, we in GCREA value and respect the need to collaborate with and support others in our community, making time to volunteer, to learn from each other, sharing our knowledge, talents, and often mentoring others in our profession. I feel it is imperative now more than ever to support those in the education profession. My daughter-in-law, Carroll Clavijo, is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in Rome, Georgia at West End Elementary School. I have enjoyed sharing her journey as an active teacher as her school navigates through this pandemic. The “new normal” of virtual teaching and ensuring their students are engaged and feeling connected, not only with her, but to their classmates as well, has been at the forefront of her and every teacher’s mind I am sure. It is wonderful to talk with Carroll and other active educator friends and continue to feel their joy of helping and supporting their students to push themselves to be the best they can be. This is the glory of education and the joy we all receive from being in this wonderful profession.

A way that GCREA is supporting and mentoring is with your generous donation to our Fundraiser this year. We exceeded our goal and raised \$7000 to support the GCPS Book Mobile and Scholarships for GCPS teachers and future educators.

Thanks to YOU and your generosity as an organization, YOU have allowed us to support students in GCPS at Harbins Elementary School on January 29 with the GCPS Book Mobile. The mission of the Book Mobile is: “Putting books into the hands of children”. Your generous donation has afforded us the opportunity to have the Book Mobile visit Harbins Elementary School and spread the love of literacy to their students by providing each student a book to carry home for their personal library.

Our Scholarship Committee will be busy this month collecting applications for our Teacher, College, and High School Student Scholarship winners for 2021. We look forward to celebrating these nominees and meeting them at our May meeting.

I appreciate our Executive Board and their continued efforts to work as a team and support our goals and initiatives and honor their commitment and role as an officer this year. Each one is doing his or her part to ensure all members are engaged, connected, and informed. Thank you to all members for your continued insight and support as GCREA members.

As I close, I want to encourage those of you who are not yet a member of the state Georgia Retired Educators Association (GREA), to login to their website and join our lead state organization. GREA serves as an umbrella organization for GCREA. The Georgia Retired Educators Association is a direct network for us through our Legislative Committee members who meet with Georgia legislators in an effort to

influence and provide insight into decisions that impact retired educators with TRS and SHBP.

Again, I LOVE all of you and appreciate your continued support!!!

Sincerely,

Penny Clavijo

GCREA President 2020-2021

## Executive Board Meeting

1/25/21



## Sunshine Updates

Thank you to the many members who have sent the following information and updates to Joyce.

**Kathy Jones** was sad to report that her beloved husband of 48 years, Tom, passed away peacefully recently due to Covid complications.

**Clarissa Rice** also lost her husband of 48 years, George. George Willis Rice Jr. died on November 12, 2020 in Alpharetta, Georgia at the age of 85

**Linda Hall**, a Lifetime member of GCREA, died on August 9, 2020. Linda worked at Gwin Oaks Elementary for many years, retiring as Administrative Assistant. Sadly, her husband, Harold, died a few months before her death. They had two sons. She will always be remembered by those who worked with her. She was a bright and always upbeat person.

**Jane Bowery** had a stroke and is recovering at Emory Rehab Hospital, 1441 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30322. Cards would be appreciated.

Shelia Sosebee, daughter of GCREA member **Jean Biggers**, reported that Jean has had a stroke and other health complications. Jean's health appears to be declining and she will begin hospice care. Shelia and her family would appreciate your thoughts and prayers at this time. You may send cards to Jean's home and her husband Bob will make sure they are shared with her.

Jean Biggers

672 Wildcat Drive

Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043

We would love to hear from you with any Sunshine Updates. This can be hospital or illness update, sympathy notice, or a celebration such as a milestone birthday, anniversary, etc. We want to hear from you and keep us connected.

**Please send your updates to:**

**Joyce Parks**

[parkopet@gmail.com](mailto:parkopet@gmail.com)

**770-963-4589**

## HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR GCREA MEMBERSHIP LATELY?

So, you say, “What a question to ask!”. Of course, we have thought about our GCREA membership! Well, since we have not been able to meet since last February, maybe that question is not so strange. We miss our meetings and our friends and our activities. HOWEVER, our goals are still in place, our scholarships are still to be given and our volunteer work is still needed. So let’s think about GCREA for a few minutes. We need our organization to be strong and vibrant, especially during this time of sequestering. We need new members, and we need to keep our coffers filled.

Now I have another question for you – How long have you been a LIFETIME member? We have many Lifetime members, many of whom we never see or hear from. If you have been a Lifetime member for more than six years, your membership check of \$160 is no longer contributing financially to our present organization. If you are interested in keeping GCREA strong, perhaps it is time to rethink your membership. In addition to being a Lifetime member, you can also become an ADD member. This addition would simply deduct \$2.09 from your Gwinnett retirement check each month. That money is then sent to GCREA by the county each month. Several of our members have already made that move and it is a great help to our organization. If you are a Regular member paying your \$25 dues each year, you can convert to ADD anytime as well. This makes it so much more convenient to continue your membership without writing a check each summer. It is an easy move to make.

Here is how! Simply fill out the following form and send it to your Membership Chairman – which is ME! I will make sure it gets to the GCPS Retirement office and voila!, it is done. I hope you will give it some thought. And while you are thinking, ask a retired friend to join us too. ADD is the way to go! We will be meeting again in person someday and when we do, we will still be strong and vibrant! Retired teachers ARE classy – just no longer in a classroom!!

Many thanks and blessings from your Membership Chair - Terrie Adkins



Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gwinnett Automatic Dues Deduction**

My signature below authorizes GRS (Gwinnett Retirement System) to deduct \$2.09/month from my GRS pension payment. This authorization will remain in effect until I choose to terminate it by notice to the Treasurer of Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association.

I understand that this service is provided as a convenience for GCREA and its members by the Gwinnett Retirement System and that GRS assumes no responsibility for my membership in GCREA.

**All membership issues and transactions, including refunds, remain the sole responsibility of GCREA.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (REQUIRED)

\*\*Social Security OR School ID number\*\*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

Terrie Adkins  
3846 Carriage Gate Drive  
Duluth, GA 30096

## **Remember to Turn in Volunteer Hours before February 15th**

You may have more hours than you realized in this unprecedented time, I would like to report your efforts to the GREA office by February 15th. Many of you have volunteered in “new” ways during this time. We have found gracious ways to help others during the past year. If you have completed any of the following activities from March 2020 and February 2021, consider it volunteering.

- **Driving a friend or neighbor to an appointment or store**
- **Donating food to a Food Bank or Church**
- **Cooking meals or snacks for the elderly or injured persons**
- **Donating items or time to a Charity Event (Walk for Alzheimers)**
- **Making masks or gifts for first responders**
- **Tutoring in person or online for free**

The Volunteer form is available for you to fill out on the GREA website. Follow the steps below and send the Google docs form to me by February 15th and I will be most grateful.

- 1. Click on Members Only and enter the password**
- 2. Look for forms on the right side of the screen**
- 3. Click on Volunteer Hours Form**
- 4. Open as a Google Sheet or Download to your own computer**
- 5. Fill out the form and save it.**
  - a. For more detailed instructions:**
    - i. log into the Members Only section of our website**
    - ii. and [click here](#) for instructions.**
- 6. Send the file to me at [cellobird@hotmail.com](mailto:cellobird@hotmail.com)**

Thank you for all you do and have a great day!  
Kimberly Rooker, Volunteer Hours Coordinator



## **GCREA Annual Fundraising Campaign Success!**

### Funding Scholarships and GCPS Book Mobile



GCREA Members, YOUR generosity helped our 2020-2021 Fundraising Campaign EXCEED our goal of \$5000 to reach \$7000. Approved at our Executive Board meeting in January, GCREA will support two Teacher Scholarships, two High School Student Scholarships, and two College of Education Student Scholarships this spring. Each scholarship recipient will be awarded \$1500. The Scholarship Committee will be working on accepting and reviewing applicant submissions through the spring and will we will honor each winner at our May 2021 GCREA meeting.

Members who donated to the Fundraising Campaign were sent a letter from GCREA in the mail that you may use for your tax records and documentation. Those letters were mailed early in January. Should you have any questions about your receipt, please communicate with our GCREA Treasurer, Debra Ault-Butenko. A HUGE thank you to Debra for her efforts to collect the funds and mail a receipt to each member who made a contribution.

All GCREA members who donated to the Fundraiser will have their name entered into a drawing for a package stay at The Jekyll Island Club Hotel on Jekyll Island, Georgia. We will have this drawing LIVE at our February 19, 2021 Member meeting. The winner does not need to be present to win. The Fundraising Committee will communicate with the winner of the Vacation Package after the drawing on February 19, 2021.



**Jekyll Island Club  
Resorts**

## “Putting Books into the Hands of Children”

GCREA’s Fundraising efforts allowed our organization to sponsor the Gwinnett County Public Schools’ Book Mobile at Harbins Elementary School on Friday, January 29, 2021. GCREA members Penny Clavijo, Tina Duncan, and Deloris Mullins volunteered on behalf of GCREA and were able to assist with providing all 902 students present in grades K - 5 with a bookmark from GCREA and a free book for them to take home for their personal library. The students and staff at Harbins Elementary School were extremely grateful for this opportunity, and our volunteers were very impressed with the impeccable manners and kindness of the students they met throughout the day.

Harbins Elementary School’s Media Specialist, Keith Conner, and Principal, Dr. Jennifer Chatham, were gracious hosts. They were excited to share their new Media Center remodel with those volunteering, and we know the students will enjoy the various creative use of space in their new Media Center.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve our GCPS community. Spreading the love of reading and literacy with children and supporting the Mission of the GCPS Book Mobile of “Putting Books into the Hands of Children” is an excellent way for us to continue to be involved with our school system. Thank YOU for your continued support of GCREA and our fundraising campaign.



**Editor's Note:**

The next edition of the Newline will be published April 1, 2021

Deadline for articles is March 23, 2021

sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com

**Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association**

**1826 Prospect View Drive**

**Lawrenceville GA 30043**



#GREAistheBEST #FellowshipServiceSupport #CheeringForGREA  
#JoAnnTomlinson,GREAPresident