

The

sta Open Line

Local #2999

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO, AFT and NYSUT Local #115

Vol.7 No. 4



December 2003

Mark Your Calendar

December

4 - Unit 7 GM Mtg.
4 - Unit 8 Ex. Bd.
10 - Rep Assembly
11 - Unit 8 GM Mtg.

January

5 - STA Ex. Bd. Mtg.
14 - Rep Assembly
22 - Teacher Ctr. Open House
3:30-6:00 PM

Take Me Out To The Ballgame

Anyone interested in developing a baseball unit incorporating newspapers? If so contact **Anne Marie Voutsinas** at the Teacher Center x4217.

Fowler High School Is Recognized

Fowler has been awarded honorable mention in the College Board 2003 Inspiration Awards because of its efforts to help it's students meet the challenges they face to succeed in school and go on to college. As an award the school received three books to supplement the college counseling library and \$1,000. College Guidance counselor, **Howard Kligerman**, initiated the application which reflects the hard work of Fowler students and staff.

Helpful Hint

If you're having difficulty obtaining textbooks for your students, please submit to **Building Committee** for discussion. STA will then compile the info using the minutes from the meeting.

NYS AFL-CIO

Scholarship Available

This scholarship is worth \$8,000 and is for a 2004 high school graduate. Call STA for the application at x4526.



Have you sent in your contribution for Vote Cope? You may send it via the school mail. If so, thank you...if not please do so as soon as possible. Thank you.

*In Stormy Times
Vote Cope Is A
Ray of Hope!*

469 Days Without A Contract for Units 1, 4, 8 & 10 93 Days for Unit 7

It Was A Memorable Evening Sponsored By the New York State United Teachers

On Wednesday, October 29, 2003 the STA held its annual Education/Leadership Conference at the OnCenter. This year we had over 300 members attend the workshops, cocktail hour, and dinner. The dinner each year is sponsored by NYSUT and NYSUT Benefit Trust. **Bernie Perry**, who is the NYSUT regional director, assists with the planning of the workshops and speaker selection.



The members in attendance honored our President **Kate McKenna** for the many hours she spends promoting the STA and our union's initiatives in the community. Kate was also recognized for diligence in trying to get the contracts settled for all the bargaining units. Kate received a standing ovation from

all the attendees and guests.

The Syracuse Teachers Association presented the Professional Partnership Award in memory of **Pat Hall-Hough** to her husband Sam and daughters Sarah and Christina. Pat was remembered for her professionalism and dedication to the children in the city schools.

STA also recognized area state legislators and state senators for their support of the Syracuse City School's students and the school district's projects. Receiving the awards were Assemblypersons **Bill Magnarelli, Joan Christensen**, and State Senators **John DeFrancisco** and **Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann**. Also introduced

were members of the Board of Education, common councilors, and county legislators.

The guest speaker for the evening was **Thomas Hobart**, President of New York State United Teachers. President Hobart encouraged the attendees to stay strong during these contract negotiations and to continue supporting the negotiating teams. He also spoke about the different components of the union the groups that make our union strong. He congratulated the STA for strong union presence in the community and for all the benefits our union members provide to the children of Syracuse.

The evening concluded with the drawing of the door prizes.

We are already making plans for next year's conference. We will be returning to the OnCenter and are looking at the last Thursday in October. We would like to double the number of attendees next year.

Thank you to everyone who attended. It was a great evening!



--Dave Kirby
Conference Chairperson

Unique and In The Middle

The National Middle Schools Association unveiled a revised position paper, "This We Believe", recently. The executive director, **Sue Swaim** stated, "we haven't gotten targeted and focused on what is unique about teaching at the middle." For example, teacher prep programs may place candidates into existing programs that are geared to grades K-8 or 7-12.

"This We Believe" is a document that includes 14 points the group deems essential for a high-quality middle school. Release of this document is timely in that many educators agree that middle schools are in need of improvement. This new updated list of revisions specifically addresses the need for high-caliber leaders in middle schools.

Recent research conducted at the University of Illinois at Urbana found a correlation "...between the implementation of the kinds of practices found in the position paper and an increase in student achievement."

According to Ms. Swaim, "middle schools must implement all the recommendations to be successful and not simply pick and choose". Here are the components of a well-regarded middle school according to the Middle Schools Association:

- Educators who value working with young adolescents and are prepared to do so;
- Courageous, collaborative leadership;
- A shared vision that guides decisions;
- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment;
- High expectations for every member of the learning community;
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning;
- An adult advocate for every student;
- School-initiated family and community partnerships;
- Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory;
- Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to

- diversity within the current student population;
- Assessment and evaluation programs that promote high quality learning;
- Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning;

- Schoolwide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety; and
- Multifaceted guidance and support services.

In conclusion...**Middle School Teachers Rock!**

--Lilli Rastegar



James Parker (Shea)
Joanne Kammers (McKinley)

Friends and Colleagues

Inside...

- President's Desk • Unit 8
- STARS • STA Rally • LRS Update
- Discipline • Unit 10
- TA Workshops • SRP's
- Teacher Ctr. • Application
- Wish List

From the President's Desk... Kate McKenna



District *personnel* must answer the phones with, "Syracuse City School District where students and learning come first." Does this mantra convince anyone? If the kids really did come first then the people who work directly with them would be respected for the work they do every day with children.

Contract Negotiations Stalemated Again, Why?

Members often ask why negotiations between the district and the STA take so long. There is not one simple answer and what follows is based on an assessment of the historical evidence and of the present state of labor-management relations between STA, the board of education and district administration.

A Quick History

An analysis of settlements since the late 70's shows the interval between the expiration of contracts and settlement widening from 1 to 2 months to 1-2 years. This lengthening interval coincides with the abolition of the Unit 1 salary schedule. Members' salaries are frozen, in effect, at the last level negotiated in the expiring contract. The members have subsidized district finances throughout these freezes, especially in years when small or no retroactive raises were bargained. Pattern bargaining by the district often led to other STA unit settlements being delayed until Unit 1 negotiations were concluded successfully.

Work Stoppages

STA has never had a strike. The dedication of members to their students inhibits the likelihood of work stoppages. Additionally, the Taylor Law prohibits striking and imposes penalties including 2-for-1-salary loss. Funding Financial conditions have also impacted negotiations. This would include periodic, then chronic, negative budget years as the city withdrew needed support for education. Independent audits have shown that the district's financial management structure has not met generally accepted accounting procedures and has demonstrated, material weaknesses that have compounded funding inadequacies.

Priorities

The board of education has adopted the irresponsible practice of not including money in the next year's budget for raises when contracts are being negotiated. In the past 5 years, funding for instructional purposes has decreased as an overall percentage of budgets. During this same time period, funding for administrative purposes has increased as an overall percentage of budgets. This has caused an \$8 million swing in resource priorities.

Impact on Education

Staff Recruitment/Turnover - A shared stated goal in the current negotiations is to attract and retain qualified staff to work with our students. Why? Because research has determined the strong link between the experience and credentials of teachers and the success of their students.

Our recent instructional gains are threatened, however, by the increasing rate of staff turnover. For example, the district has experienced the loss of 26 qualified teachers to other districts since last June! Staff continuity is critical to maintaining gains. At it follows that salaries that rank in the lowest part of county districts and stalled contract talks discourage teachers from coming to or staying with the district.

Loss of Community Confidence

Community confidence in the district weakens during these ultra-marathon negotiations. Parents want to know that the teachers and support staff at their children's schools will stay and be invested in the whole school community. Further, parents and students should not have to guess whether their teachers are fully certified. Unfortunately, the list of teachers working with emergency credentials last year totaled over 50. If parents lose confidence they may move their children to charters, private and parochial schools or other districts altogether. *Is this how "students and learning come first?"*

Staff Morale

Staff morale is at an all time low. The 2002-03 school year ended without new settlements. Deep budget cuts realigned staff at the school level and cost many their jobs. Families with increasing costs found that the raises given in July of 2001 were inadequate to meet the financial reality of 2003.

Staff and other resource reductions at the school level have resulted in our members being pressured to take on the work of laid off colleagues. Class sizes have increased. Computer labs are shut. Staff coverage during meals has been decreased. School safety has been compromised. Supply money for the 2004-05 school year has been cut again. The list seems endless. *Is this how students and learning come first?*

Respect for the level of skill, knowledge, professionalism and dedication that we bring to all of our jobs has been lost. Witness the impact of decisions imposed from district office rather than reached through true collaboration. Faux task forces and committees begin with a foregone command and control administrative agenda. Then the resulting policies and procedures end up as our responsibility to carry out- this in an environment of ever increasing accountability and ever decreasing resources. *Does anyone come first in this equation?*

Remedies?

Some of these are purely financial. We must work with all parties to increase state and city aid to our schools. The remainder of the remedies rest with identifying and electing school board candidates/commissioners who will take responsibility for the fiduciary and educational duties they are/have been elected to carry out. New commissioners-elect Ned Deuel and Nancy McCarty have pledged to do this. Budgets must be aligned with instruction. And scrutiny of district spending must be an ongoing board priority.

VOTE-COPE

Last year NYSUT used a portion of our VOTE-COPE contributions to support candidates who overrode the governor's awful education budget. Locally, STA supported Deuel and McCarty's successful candidacies along with common councilor races. This will assist us in gaining a majority of commissioners and councilors working to support the district effectively. *Let's really make students and learning come first!*



A Thousand "I's" Equal A Resounding "WE"

Hear ye! Hear ye! We stretched from Almond Street to Irving Avenue...we were jammin' with our eyes on the prize...contracts! The tune was simple - whistles blared in rhythmic tones, a chorus of hearty voices responded to patterns emitted from bullhorns. Units 1,4,7,8,and 10 rallied

together for a single cause. Representatives from the teaching associations of Liverpool, Hannibal, North Syracuse and the Labor Council marched side by side with us. All levels were represented; pre-k, elementary, middle, and high school. Together we produced a cacophony of sounds heard blocks away. Even the rain couldn't stop us. The message was loud and clear: **WE are the union, the mighty, mighty union!"**

--Lilli Rastegar

Unit 8



*Caring for Children
We Make A Difference*

Nancy Peluso, President
STA x4526

Teaching Assistants Have Class

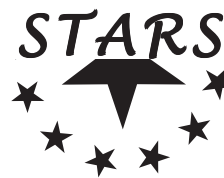
Do we ever!! I want to express my most heartfelt gratitude to the teaching assistants who participated in my first in-service-**TEACHING ASSISTANT KEY CONCEPTS**. We certainly proved that learning can be fun. Professional development is so important for those of us in the "trenches;" I feel a sense of satisfaction in this in-service and will focus on future sessions designed for TA's. These pictures (provided by *photographer extraordinaire* - Jackie Saddler, Seymour) show participants experiencing various impairments during the "Disability Awareness" sessions.



Sandy Marsallo-Seymour, Joyce Farrell-Grant, Wanda Beech-Elmcrest, and Joanne Croffut-Salem Hyde constructing a tower.



Marylynn Guida-Corcoran, Deb Krupa-Porter, and Barb DiMarchi-Salem Hyde showing off their paper tower.



At the organizational meeting of the Syracuse Teachers Association Retirees (STARS) on September 19, 2003 the following officers were elected:

Joanne Heisler	- President
Bonnie Nash	- 1st Vice President
Catherine Wagner	- 2nd Vice President
Elizabeth Hakanson	- Treasurer - Recording Secretary
Kathleen Scutt	- Corresponding Secretary

The announcement of the newly formed STA Retiree Chapter was met with great enthusiasm. In response to our letter inviting retirees to join the retiree chapter over 200 membership applications have been received. Retirees are looking forward to the opportunity to stay involved with members of our profession and being kept in touch with important issues such as insurance. Chapter meetings which are partly social, partly business and partly informational, provide an opportunity to be with STA colleagues.

The Syracuse Teachers Association Retirees (STARS) has been established within the Syracuse Teachers Association for the purposes of:

- maintaining the ties of professional unity between active and retired members
- representing and promoting the interests of retired members
- providing a forum for exchanging information of interest and benefit to retired members and for the expression of their views

Membership is open to all Syracuse City School District retired members who have been members of STA and NYSUT. The cost to join the chapter is \$25.00 per year. This will provide members with a copy of the STARS Newsletter and simultaneous membership in the STA retiree chapter, NYSUT (Council 7) and AFT. The December meeting will be a holiday luncheon at LeMoyné Manor.

If you know of colleagues who have not yet become members of the STA Retirees (STARS) please urge them to join--all are welcome.

If you have any questions please feel free contact me at **Stars88@aol.com** or leave a message at 472-6374.

--Joanne M. Heisler

Labor Relations Update

by Lin Ramsey Golash and David Reed

Negotiations

We have meeting scheduled with the PERB Mediator for Units 1, 4, 8 and 10, but in order to get a settlement we need ALL members help. Watch for Weekly Memos.

How to Deal With A Payroll Problem

HOW TO DEAL WITH A PAYROLL PROBLEM

- 1) Put the problem in writing to Payroll and send a copy to the STA. Payroll (like other non-administrative departments) is currently understaffed. Telephone calls are not the best way of getting problems resolved. Chief Reps have a contact sheet in buildings.
- 2) If you have not had a response from Payroll within 2 weeks, call the STA. We will put the problem on the agenda of our weekly meetings with payroll.

Attention Special Ed Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants assigned to Special Education are eligible to receive the series of Hepatitis B shots at no cost from the SCSD. We have asked Personnel and Health Services to get us a list of TAs newly assigned to Special Education. If you have not yet been offered the shot, please send me a note in the School Mail, listing your name, school, and current assignment. If you are having difficulty being released for a shot, also send me a note.

Health Insurance Update for New Members

New employees are eligible for health insurance on the first day of the next month following their start date. (If you were hired in September, you are eligible on 10/1. If you were hired in October, you are eligible on 11/1. etc.). If you have not received health insurance to date, please call the STA for assistance.

Grants

Southern Poverty Law Center offers 2 grants
 Eligibility: Mix Award: Youth-directed activist project. Tolerance Award: K-12 Teachers
 Deadline: Open
 Funds: Mix Award: \$250. Tolerance Award: Up to \$2000
 Contact: "Grant Name", 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery AL 36104; 334-956-8200; fax 334-956-8488; mixitup@tolerance.org or <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/expand/gra/guide.jsp>.

Mix It Up Grants: Funds youth-directed projects that focus on identifying, questioning and crossing social boundaries in schools and communities with collaboration from disparate groups and visions of future plans.
 Teaching Tolerance Grant Program: Funds teachers seeking to implement tolerance and youth activism projects in their schools or communities. Projects are typically small, resourceful, and student focused, have clearly defined goals and outcomes, are economically sound, involve volunteers when possible, and are sustainable.

Special Education and Discipline

Procedural Requirements of IDEA: *Student threatens classmates with nail then sticks it in Teacher's finger.* (Quinlan's Special Education Law Bulletin, October 29, 2003.)
 Citation: School Board of Collier County, Florida v. KC, 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, NO. 00-16642 (2002)



KC was a learning-disabled student with behavior problems. When she entered the fifth grade, the school board acquired a special portable classroom and had it customized to meet he special needs.

KC evidently exhibited behavior problems at the start of sixth grade in late August, and her mother kept her home for three days. After she returned, KC's teachers thought her behavior was improving but were concerned by her trouble finishing in-class assignments at school. They believe her mother aggravated this problem by helping her with the work she took home to finish.

On September 13, KC found a nail outside her portable classroom. She threatened her classmates and school staff with it, succeeded in sticking it into her teacher's finger, then hit and kicked several other staff members. KC concluded this disturbance by phoning her mother to report her teachers were trying to murder her.

KC's parents kept her home for the next three days. After a meeting with the principal, KC was formally suspended for seven additional days. A new individualized education plan. (IEP) was developed for her on Sept. 26, and KC returned to school on Sept. 30.

KC was no less willing to cooperate, and her mother began coming to school with her. Instead of deferring KC's teachers, KC's mother effectively took over KC's classroom instruction herself. KC's parents permanently removed her from school in early October.

KC's parents and the school board both asked for a due process hearing concerning KC's original and new sixth-

continued on page 4

An Idea for Student Discipline

A hot button to push in our district is the one labeled "student discipline." When activated, it's guaranteed that every head will turn in a crowded room and everyone will have a story to share. Recently, STA members have raised concerns regarding special ed students and discipline. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is very clear and specific on this issue. For short-term suspensions, 1-5 days, disabled students are to be treated the same as their non-disabled peers. For cumulative short-term suspensions, suspensions that total 10 days, a manifestation determination is required. In other words, for students whose suspensions from school (in school and out of school) add up to 10 days, a manifestation determination is needed. What is a manifestation determination? It is simply a hearing where a Committee on Special Ed (CSE) determines if the student's misconduct is a manifestation of—that is, caused by—the disability. A careful review is made of the following:



- In relationship to the behavior subject to disciplinary action, were the student's IEP and placement appropriate?
- In relationship to the behavior subject to disciplinary action, did the district fail to provide services consistent with the IEP?
- Did the student's disability impair his ability to understand the impact and consequences of his behavior?

continued on page 4

Date Changes for TA Workshops

Jan. 6 - Collaborating with Related Services - Teacher Center
 Jan. 20 - Autism Fundamentals - Teacher Center
 Feb. 9 - Serious Fun in the Classroom - STA
 TBD - Reading Strategies - STA
 TBD - Reading Strategies - TBD
 Apr. 6 - Emotionally Disturbed Fundamentals - Teacher Center
 Apr. 21 - Working with Challenging Students - STA
 June 2 - Brain Compatible Learning - Teacher Center

At least two weeks before the planned workshops, each TA will receive a letter indicating date, time and procedure to follow in order to attend the workshops. Call STA x4526 if you have any questions.

Unit 10's "Health Beat"

Ann O'Hara, President
 VanDuyn

In keeping with December's theme in the open line I am discussing special education and how Unit 10 employees contribute in this area. As occupational and physical therapy assistants we directly service children with special needs. If a student has OT or PT on their IEP we provide services to hopefully enable the student to become more independent and proficient in their school setting. These students can range from learning disabled to severely multiply handicapped. Our students are typically in inclusion settings or self contained classrooms but can also be in a regular education class receiving their special education services through pull out services. The types of things we may work on in occupational therapy may be, but not limited to, upper extremity strengthening, visual motor skills, fine motor skills, self help skills, and handwriting. In physical therapy students may work on strengthening, weight bearing, ambulation, wheelchair mobility, self help skills, and learning to be more independent in accessing their school environment.

In both occupational and physical therapy we work from goals generated by a team and put on student's IEPs. We code and write new goals for a student's annual review. We fill out and submit with the report card quarterly progress notes for the parents. We keep attendance for Medicaid purposes and sometimes assist the supervising registered therapist with the evaluation process.

Along with the occupational and physical therapy assistants the school nurses are a valuable component of the special education process. They are responsible for compiling medical data for students' committees on special education meetings in addition to providing medications, tube feedings, and medical assessments for students with special needs.

As you can see Unit 10 has a daily direct effect on our students with special needs in the Syracuse City School District. We can be seen in a variety of places doing a variety of services all for the children of our district.

--Michele Kearney

sta Open Line

The Open Line is published monthly September to June at STA, 909 Butternut St., Syracuse, New York 13208. Tel. (315) 472-6374. STA is affiliated with NYSUT, AFT and AFL-CIO.

Editor In Chief: Kate McKenna: mckenna@syrteach.org

Editor: Kelly Abt: kelleenabt@yahoo.com

Managing Editor: Cathleen A. Danboise: cdan@syrteach.org

Contributing Writers:

Nancy Peluso - Unit 8 (STA)

Ann O'Hara - Unit 10 (VanDuyn)

Lin Ramsey Golash - LRS (STA)

David Reed - Staff Attorney (STA)

Lilli Rastegar - 1st Vice President (STA)

David Kirby - Unit 1 (Fowler)

Discipline...

continued from page 3

- Did the student's disability impair his ability to control the behavior?

The committee makes a determination by reviewing evaluative data and information from all sources, including parents. The same procedure is followed for long-term suspensions that will be more than 10 days. If there is no manifestation (i.e. no connection between the handicapping condition and the behavior), disabled students are treated the same as their non-disabled peers, with the exception that they are entitled to free appropriate public education even if they are over the compulsory school age of 16. If disabled students are suspended for illegal drugs and alcohol they are treated the same as non-disabled students, except they are entitled to free appropriate public education even if they are over the compulsory school age of 16. If there is a manifestation in cases of dangerous behavior such as carrying a weapon, the school can hold an impartial hearing to move the student to an Interim Alternative Education System (IAES) for up to 45 days if they present an immediate threat. The school district can also file for an injunction if the student is an immediate threat.

So, go ahead, push the "student discipline" button when the need arises. Yes, special ed students get referrals. Yes, special ed students may get assigned to in-school or out of school suspension for inappropriate, illegal or dangerous behavior. Please do continue to make students accountable and responsible for their actions. Remember, as educators we are responsible for maintaining the instructional integrity of our classrooms.

--Lilli Rastegar



Your Teacher Center

Just for You, Too...

Can I Use This Tomorrow?

A common concern teachers have and sometimes voice when attending workshops or inservice courses is: "This is all very interesting, but what do I do tomorrow?" In an effort to respond to this valid concern, the Syracuse Teacher Center has expanded staff development opportunities to include a demonstration classroom.

Vince Sgambati, a staff developer with the Syracuse Teacher Center, is currently teaching fourth graders during a language arts block (10:00 - 12:00) at Blodgett Elementary School. Instruction is informed by much of the work he has done with teachers over the past few years. As a staff developer/practitioner, Vince is turning theory and research into classroom practice.

Classroom Instruction that Works, by Marzano, Pickering and Pollock is the central text used to inform his practice. More specifically, Vince is designing classroom procedures and instruction around Marzano, Pickering and Pollock's research findings in the areas of similarities and differences, summarizing, reinforcement and recognition, practice and homework, nonlinguistic representation and feedback. Explicit instruction of reading comprehension and writing strategies with ample opportunity for guided and independent student practice in a workshop environment is a critical part of the classroom. Language arts instruction is informed by Keen and Zimmerman's *Mosaic of Thought*, and an integration of reading/writing workshop ideas with focused teacher directed instruction. Of course all instruction is also informed by the ELA assessment. How do we teach in the direction of the test and still maintain instructional integrity? In other words - how do we not "parallel task" our kids to death, but help them succeed on assessments?

So how does all this apply to you? Vince is currently meeting with a number of teachers at several schools in our district. The Syracuse City School District's Office of Accountability has allocated funds to compensate teachers to review the materials, examine the practices and discuss the thinking behind the materials and practices used in this classroom. Funds are also available to compensate substitute teachers if classroom teachers wish to observe in the demonstration classroom. Contact **Vince Sgambati** at 435-4217.

--Vince Sgambati

Special Education...

continued from page 3

grade IEPs. The hearing officer found the IEPs were procedurally inadequate and had denied KC a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The hearing officer ordered the board to prepare and implement a new IEP. The board appealed to court.

After a trial, the court reversed the hearing officer's decision and gave judgment to the board. The parents appealed.

DECISION: Judgment for the board affirmed.

Judgment for the board was proper because the procedural problems were not serious enough to deny KC FAPE.

To determine if KC's IEP provided FAPE, the court had to determine if the school board had complied with the IDEA's requirements in creating it, if any noncompliance denied KC educational benefit, and if the resulting IEP was reasonably calculated to provide it.

The court agreed with the hearing officer there were IDEA compliance problems, but agreed with the lower court the IEP provided KC educational benefit and had been implemented by staff in a coordinated collaborative manner.

IEPs and Educational Benefit To determine if the IEP provides educational benefit, this court considered "whether: 1. The program is individualized on the basis of the

student's assessment and performance; 2. The program is administered in the least restrictive environment; 3. The services are provided in a coordinated and collaborative manner; and 4. Positive academic and non-academic benefits are demonstrated.

--David Reed, Esq.

Questions? E-mail Dave at:

dreed@syrteach.org

SRPs Have Their Cake and Eat It, Too

Picture this – a festively decorated table covered with oodles of delectable, mouth watering treats and munchies. Home made cinnamon streusel cake, a variety of chocolate laden delights, cookies and pies baked to perfection, crispy chips and spicy salsa tempted palates and teased tummies. The smell of fresh brewed coffee permeated the air in the Social Worker's Suite at Delaware Academy on the afternoon of November 18th. A gracious hostess, **Martha Tamayo de Vergara**, warmly greeted SRPs at the door. Martha, a social worker, organized the event for her Unit 1 and SRP colleagues at Delaware. Her plan was simple and well executed. She asked Unit 1 members for donations, sent out invitations, and then waited patiently to show everyone who attended what "social" in social worker really means. For Martha and Delaware staff it was a way to show SRPs how much they are cherished and their work is appreciated.

All of this began with Governor Pataki signing a proclamation declaring November 18th as SRP Recognition Day in New York State. STA handed out buttons to staff to commemorate the special event. Buttons that said "Proud to be an SRP" and "Proud to Work with an SRP" were a prominent accessory. To the SRPs who work in our district—"Thank you for all you do for our students!" To our colleague Martha, "Thanks for caring!"

--Lilli Rastegar

Member Spotlight Application

The OpenLine would like to begin featuring members who are standouts in the union, the community and/or their profession. Would you help? Please share these applications with members in your building. Anyone may nominate and anyone may be nominated (as long as they are an STA member in good standing). Submit completed applications to **Kelly Abt at Lincoln**.

Date: _____
Member to be Highlighted _____
Building _____ Phone Extension _____
e-mail _____

Reason this person is a
standout: _____

Person submitting
recommendation: _____
Building: _____ Phone Extension _____
e-mail: _____

2003 Holiday Wish List

You can help make this holiday season bright for the women and children staying at Vera House using our outreach services by providing a gift or two from this list. We ask that the gifts you donate be new and unwrapped. Call Christina at 315/425-0818 for more information.

Gifts for Women

- Gift certificates for massage, haircuts and manicures
- Shaving cream, lotion and disposable razors
- Toiletry and make-up cases
- Wristwatches, alarm clocks and clock radios
- Journals, photo albums, disposable cameras and film
- Blow dryers, curling irons, hairbrushes, barrettes
- Hair and beauty products for all ethnicities
- Movies on video
- Baby monitors with batteries
- Pajamas, nightgowns and slippers in all sizes

Gifts for Children

- Movie passes, mall certificates, books, clothes (for teens)
- Games and toys (no war toys or toy weapons, please) for all ages
- Dolls of all ethnicities
- Children's videos
- Lego sets and building lblocks
- Markers, crayons, coloring books, large paper and gel pens