

PASR Times

Pennsylvania Association of
School Retirees Newsletter



March 2020

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President's Message

Judith L. Schaffer, PASR President



As your current PASR President, I urge you to support the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund Committee (SSMHF) financially. For the past several years, the amount processed to our members in need has exceeded the incoming donations as more and more of our older members are asking for help from our organization.

Our organization's Mission Statement begins – "To serve others in need," and the SSMHF has a long history of doing just that.

The Memorial Honor Fund was established in 1964 by Dr. Robert B. Taylor, the first Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Retired Public School Employees Association. The initial account deposit of \$10,000 was increased through wise investments and individual contributions. Today this account is facing a deficit due to increased demand.

1964 also saw the establishment of a service committee called Social Service due to a recommendation from the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA). In 1992, these two committees blended to become the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund. Today, the SSMHF is considered the *heart of PASR* and it needs your support.

This Committee exists in each Chapter of PASR so that we may provide local assistance and service to our members. Volunteers provide expressions of kindness, sympathy, and care to thousands of our members in need each year.

What Does the SSMHF Committee Do?

- Provides cards to "shut-ins" on birthdays and other special occasions.
- Visits members confined to or temporarily confined to homes, hospitals, and nursing/assisted living facilities.
- Provides moral support during bereavements.
- Purchases and delivers gifts and flowers when appropriate.

- Works with PASR Membership Chairs to help update older members' records.
- Provides financial aid via properly executed State applications.

Each Chapter handles these responsibilities in their own unique manner with a group of volunteers.

How can you help?

- Make an individual contribution today!
- Honor a deceased friend through a Memorial Donation.
- Honor a living friend with a contribution in their name.
- Consider a Legacy Bequeath to SSMHF in your will.
- Report member illnesses to your SSMHF Committee.
- Volunteer to become a member of the SSMHF Committee in your Chapter.
- Provide new ideas for SSMHF fund raisers.

I urge you to send a contribution directly to PASR headquarters or via your Chapter's Chair today. Secure a contribution form from your SSMHF Chair or use the form provided on page 15 of this newsletter.

All checks should be made out to PASR with SSMHF written on the memo line. The checks are deposited in a separate account used only by the SSMHF.

We can't let this vital Committee's work end after 56 years.

I don't want to see it collapse under my watch!

Be a part of Judy's "Save the SSMHF Team" in 2020! My check is in the mail. Is yours?

Give a donation now!

Donate Online: <https://www.pasr.org/member-donate-ssmhf/> (member login required)

Donate by Mail: Use the form provided on page 15

Executive Director's Report

By Mark A. McKillop, Executive Director

During the past few years, there has been a great deal of change at PASR. The members of the Board of Directors (and all of the leaders in our Association) have set the tone and provided the leadership necessary to develop greater transparency, increased communication, creative thinking, and the atmosphere necessary to move PASR in a positive direction. This has led to greater enthusiasm and optimism throughout the Association.

Communication and transparency are complimentary. With the increase in the number of communication methods available to us, we recognize the need to adjust and change the way we interact with our members.

What started with faxes and emails has led to social media, smart phones, podcasts, and texting. Some people watch more "television" on their computer than any other device.

The change and transformation of available communication technology has led to an overall change in communication strategy. This phenomena is not unique to PASR. Many similar organizations and associations have indicated that they face the same types of challenges with adapting to these changes.

Conveying messages to our elected officials has also changed fundamentally in recent years. According to

the people who work in the General Assembly, emails have now surpassed letters as a preferred method of contact.

While it's true that many aspects of PASR have in fact changed, we must never lose sight of our mission and our goals. Even with change, there are fundamental values that govern our decisions.

One of the greatest challenges facing PASR is the increased need to convince recent retirees that there is value in belonging to our Association. Understanding our options is the first step to overcoming this challenge. No matter what lies ahead, we will do whatever is necessary to adjust and help PASR grow.

Decisions have been made in the best interest of our Association with an eye toward the future. Growing PASR remains a consistent goal. I am constantly aware that every hour our members contribute on behalf of PASR is a volunteer hour, and wanted to let our members know that I appreciate all that they do to contribute to PASR's continued success.

It is important for us to remember that our greatest strength is the fact that we are a "retiree only" Association. We are able to speak with one voice and work toward the same goals.

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Thanks to all Those Who Make PASR's Mission a Reality

Each spring, the *PASR Times* is dedicated to honoring exceptional members who continue to go above and beyond to serve not only the public education system, but also fellow retirees and members of their communities.

Choosing which members to honor each year is no easy task when you consider that 63% of PASR's State and Chapter members volunteer more than 300 hours each year, that another 37% of PASR's membership are politically active volunteers, and that over \$65,000 is donated in support of educational initiatives and scholarships through PASR each year.

At PASR, we understand that many of our members who chose to pursue a career in the public education sector did not do so for the money and benefits that were offered, but because they had a desire to serve others, work with children, and/or help shape a better society.

This spirit of altruism which drove many of our members into education remained with them into retirement, and it is because of these exceptional members that PASR proudly fulfills its mission to "serve others in need and help one another enjoy retirement."

Awards in 2019 were given to those who showed excellence in community service through our Volunteer of the Year Awards, those who showed excellence in legislative initiatives through the Fred A. McKillop Award, and those who provided outstanding service to fellow members of PASR through the John J. Dillon Service Award.

This issue will also outline the Chapters that presented Laretta Woodson awards to current public school employees, the Educational Support Grants that were awarded for specific educational initiatives in public schools throughout Pennsylvania, the scholarships that were given to students who plan to major in education in college, and the recipients of Media Awards for outstanding news coverage of PASR events.

It also seems appropriate that we thank those in PASR leadership roles who make not only honoring deserving members with these awards possible, but also help to keep our Association running: The Board of Directors, Region Directors, State Committee Chairs, Chapter leaders, and Chapter Committee members and Chairs. Without the work that each of you do, PASR could not be as effective an organization. You make us "PASR Proud!"

2019 Media Recognition Award Recipient

One of PASR's lesser utilized awards is the Media Recognition Award. Each year, PASR Chapters are encouraged to give Media Recognition Awards to local news outlets who provided thorough and impactful coverage of PASR initiatives or events.

Awards can be given for any type of media, including newsprint, websites, social media, blogs, vlogs, radio, television, podcasts, and video. Each Chapter is permitted to nominate one recipient per year for the Media Recognition Award honor.

We encourage PASR members to submit articles, photos, and/or press releases to local news outlets about the good they are doing in their communities and schools to help raise awareness of PASR's impact in local communities and to help PASR's membership grow.

In 2019, only one Media Recognition Award was given. The recipient, *The Clearfield Progress* newspaper, was presented with the Award by the Clearfield County Chapter for their prompt publishing of articles and photos submitted by the Chapter. The Region 5 Director at the time the award was given, Elsie Straub, told PASR that she "[has] never had an article not printed that [she] submitted" to the *Progress* for publication.



2019 John J. Dillon Award Recipients

The John J. Dillon PASR Service Award provides the opportunity for Chapters to recognize individuals that have given service to the Association. Dr. John J. Dillon was a Past President of the Association and was a consummate PASR volunteer. He held a record thirty-eight positions in PASR, ranging from the Chapter to the State level.

Dr. Dillon retired from the Superintendent's position in the Brentwood Area School District in 1986. Continuing his concern for education and his peers, he immediately became a member of PASR. During his twenty-one years as a member, he provided tremendous service to the organization. He was greatly involved at the Chapter and Region levels, but was also highly involved at the State level where he served as President of PASR in 1994 and 1995.

PASR wanted to develop a way to recognize the outstanding service provided to the Association by individual volunteers at the Chapter, Region, and/or State level. Because Dr. Dillon was such a valued member, the PASR Board of Directors decided to name this recognition award in his honor.

An annual listing of the John J. Dillon PASR Service Award recipients is produced, framed, and hung on display at PASR Headquarters in the John J. Dillon Hall of Fame. Additionally, a certificate is provided to the Chapter President for presentation by the Chapter to its honoree.

2019 John J. Dillon Award Recipients Were:

Alle-Kiski - Anne I. Balint

Armstrong - Joyce P. Leard

Berks - Brenda A. Stein

Blair - Elizabeth M. Goulionis

Bucks - Linda J. Peters

Cambria - Frances A. Rhoa

Carbon - Kathleen M. Merluzzi

Cumberland - James R. Fissel

Dauphin - Sandra M. Novotni

Delaware - John Della Guardia

Erie - Diane Grzelak



Pictured Above: Mary Kay (Kay) Poeth receives the Snyder County Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees' (SCPASR) John J. Dillon Award from SCPASR Chapter President Beth Rearick.

Fayette - Ruth C. Walters

Franklin - David B. Barr

Greene - Colleen Valosen

Juniata - Carolyn N. Baker

Lebanon - Sandra L. Gahres

Lehigh - Thomas R. Stephens

Luzerne/Wyoming - Carol L. Williams

McKean - Charlotte M. Stoughton

Mercer - Paula E. Haehnel

Northampton - Evelyn M. Kilpatrick

Perry - Wendy D. Day

Philadelphia - David Kaplan

Pittsburgh - Eileen A. Gavin

Snyder - Mary Kay Poeth

Somerset - James C. Patton

Susquehanna - Karen T. Holbrook

Venango - Patricia A. Ralph

Westmoreland - Debra L. Schoming

Bob Marko Receives the 2019 Fred A. McKillop Award

By Mark A. McKillop, Executive Director

The Fred A. McKillop Award is named after Fred McKillop, a former PASR Lobbyist of over 35 years. Fred had a passion for ensuring the success of PASR and worked on PASR's behalf to pass legislation beneficial to our members. The Award was the idea and inspiration of a long-time member of PASR from Delaware County, Steve Kupsov. The Fred A. McKillop Award is given out each year to a long-time member of the Legislative/Political Education Committee (L/PEC) whose work has made a noteworthy impact. In 2018, the very first award was presented to Steve Kupsov at the PASR Leadership Development Conference in State College.

For 2019, we are very proud to announce that the second Fred A. McKillop award recipient is Robert (Bob) Marko from the Allegheny Chapter. The award was presented at the 2019 Western Pennsylvania Leadership Development Conference held in Grove City.

Bob's contributions to both PASR and the L/PEC are numerous and extensive. Bob has been the long serving Treasurer of the L/PEC and has been a tireless worker on behalf of PASR members in our quest to obtain our legislative goals. This, especially, includes our recent push for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for our members in greatest need. PASR is a better organization because of selfless members like Bob.



Pictured Above: PASR's Executive Director Mark McKillop presents the Fred A. McKillop award to recipient Bob Marko. Left to right: Mark McKillop, Bob Marko, and PASR President Judy Schaffer.

2019 Volunteer of the Year Award Recipients

"To serve, not to be served" is the motto for PASR's Community Service Committee. The motto was originally promoted by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired educator from California, for both of the national organizations she founded: the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) in 1947, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in 1955.

Recognizing that individuals can significantly enhance the quality of their lives during retirement through volunteerism, PASR created the Community Service Committee in 1964. Through this Committee, PASR has helped members identify volunteer opportunities and promote community service projects for more than four decades.

In retirement you can enjoy the best of both worlds by maintaining the freedom you earned to do what you want when you want, and by continuing to perform valuable services in your community through volunteerism.

PASR has Community Service Committees in nearly every County in Pennsylvania that help members identify volunteer opportunities and catalog the services that school retirees are providing to their communities on an individual or group basis. Many Chapters even publish community service directories listing organizations in need of volunteers.

The individuals listed below were awarded the 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award by their Chapters for the generous work they performed throughout their communities in 2019.

Berks - Judith L. Reitz

Berks - Gertrude M. Mikus

Lehigh - Eugenia A. Emert

Northampton - Jacqueline Griffin

Pittsburgh - James W. White

Pittsburgh - Dr. Crystal Gunn-Tucker

2019 Laretta Woodson Award Participants

PASR's Laretta Woodson Awards are named in honor of Dr. Laretta Woodson, a retired English teacher from Eddystone School District and PASR member. She attended West Chester Teacher's College where she earned a degree in Secondary Education in English. She received her Master's Degree from Columbia and Doctorate from Temple University.

After joining the State Association as a life member in 1988, Dr. Woodson rose through the ranks of PASR and assumed many esteemed positions within the organization. Laretta was highly instrumental in helping PASR become what it is today. She faithfully served the retired school employees in the Delaware Chapter and Region 1 for many years in numerous capacities.

Upon her passing, she bequeathed a sum of money to PASR to be used for the support of public education. This bequeath included \$100,000 that was given to the Delaware Chapter to establish a scholarship fund. Because of her generous donation, the Delaware Chapter is able to award two \$5,000 scholarships to high school students pursuing teaching careers each year.

This year, the Delaware Chapter Laretta Woodson Scholarship winners were Sarah Hughes of Penncrest High School (Rose Tree Media School District) and Zoe Demetriades of Upper Darby High School (Upper Darby School District).

The purpose of the *Laretta Woodson Recognition Program* is to not only remember Laretta, but to also honor one teacher and one support professional for doing an outstanding job within a district or school. Chapters select the award recipients and then present them with a certificate and PASR pin.

Chapters may present the award in a variety of ways and are encouraged to utilize this opportunity to secure positive publicity for both the school and the Association. For example, the presentation could be done at a school board meeting, city council meeting, or even at an award or graduation ceremony. Each Chapter is eligible to present the Laretta Woodson Awards to one support professional and one teacher per fiscal year.



Pictured Above: The Erie County Chapter presented the Laretta Woodson Award and the Helen Clark Page Scholarship (a scholarship unique to the Erie Chapter) at their June 2019 meeting. From left to right are Woodson recipients from the Iroquois Elementary School, Brenda Tombaugh (secretary) and Susan Grant (teacher). On the far right is the Helen Clark Page Scholarship recipient, ShiAnn Conners, from Mercyhurst University. Her award was for \$1,500.

This year, Chapters from around the state participated in honoring support personnel and educators, including: Region 1—Delaware Chapter; Region 2—Berks and Carbon Chapters; Region 3—Bradford/Sullivan, Luzerne/Wyoming, Monroe, Susquehanna, and Wayne/Pike Chapters; Region 4—Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, and York Chapters; Region 5—Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Mifflin, and Snyder Chapters; Region 6—Alle-Kiski, Armstrong, Bedford, and Cambria Chapters; Region 7—Greene Chapter; Region 8—Beaver, Butler, and Clarion Chapters; Region 9—Erie (pictured), Venango, and Warren/Forest Chapters; and Region 10—Clinton, Lycoming, McKean, and Potter/Tioga Chapters.

Mark Your Calendar for the 2020 Leadership Development Conference!

Thursday, November 5, 2020 at the Midwestern Intermediate Unit
Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at the Berks County Intermediate Unit
Thursday, November 12, 2020 at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit

Legislative Update

The Importance of Making Your Voice Heard

By Mark A. McKillop, Executive Director

The Board of Directors and the leadership of PASR believe it is vital to keep our membership updated on our legislative activity, especially due the importance of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to our members. PASR has no higher legislative priority. For this reason, I have included a summary of PASR's current COLA efforts on page 9 of this issue of the *PASR Times*.

However, to make the most impact, we need to have as many voices from our membership heard by legislators as possible. This means we need *you* to contact your legislators.

We are asking for you to send any form of communication, whether it be a phone call, email, fax, or even a Facebook message or Tweet to both your **State Senator** and **State Representative**.

Even if you are reading this issue of the *PASR Times* on a weekend, calling the office of a State Representative and leaving a voicemail will have an impact. There is nothing wrong with sending an email and making a phone call. Receiving multiple messages from our members will have a greater impact.

Please tell your legislators that:

"We are asking you to support a COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) as part of any pension reform bill."

Many thanks for anything you can give to this communication effort.

How to find your Representatives

By Address

The following website will allow you to find your State Representative or Senator by entering your address. To send an email, click the letter symbol under the representative's photo:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

By Representative Name

If you already know the name of your State Senator or State Representative, the following documents list representative names by district and include their Harrisburg office phone numbers:

State House

<https://www.pasr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Members-of-PA-House-9-16-2019.pdf>

State Senate

<https://www.pasr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Members-of-PA-Senate-9-16-2019.pdf>

On a personal note, I want to add my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to Bob Marko who was the 2019 recipient of the PASR Fred A. McKillop award. During my time at PASR, working with Bob has been a pleasure.

L/PEC Internet Donations Direct:

<https://www.pasr.org/member-donate-lpec/>

Or, you can donate by signing into the PASR Members' Only section at <https://www.pasr.org>. Then, click the Donate tab, and select Legislative/Political Education Committee Fund. This will open a Contributions page where you can enter your payment information. Then click the red "Send my Donation" button to complete your donation.

L/PEC Mail Donations:

PASR L/PEC, 878 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Make Contribution Payable to L/PEC

Amount: \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Address _____

Current COLA Status

By Mark A. McKillop, Executive Director

1. HB-1960 remains in the State House Appropriations Committee. In its current form, this bill would combine the investment offices of both PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System) and SERS (State Employees Retirement System).
2. The supporters of HB-1960 believe that the passage of this legislation would result in long term cost savings to both retirement systems. To date, there is no definitive number attached to this bill.
3. PASR does not support the passage of HB-1960 without a COLA and we are watching this bill very closely.
4. In our discussions with members of the legislature, we have found significantly more support for a COLA focused on Pre-Act 9 retirees.
5. For the record, PASR supports a COLA for all of our members. If we are successful in passing a COLA for pre-Act 9 annuitants, we will immediately start to work on an increase for all members.
6. Since any legislation needs to pass both Houses of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, we are also working with our allies in the Senate to see if we can first start the process there before seeking House support.
7. Once again, we want to thank our many members for their overwhelming response and outreach to members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly during last year's deliberations surrounding HB 1960. Our advocacy and that of our allies—the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA); the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and others—in support of a COLA was a significant factor in derailing the legislation.



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2019 Educational Support Grant Recipients

PASR is about much more than school retirees. It's about doing good in your community and continuing to support public education. This is why PASR created Educational Support Grants. It is the goal of PASR's Educational Support Committee to help fill the voids in educational funding left by budget cuts and the decrease in state subsidies for education. Each year, PASR headquarters distributes \$750 to each of our 12 instate Regions (a total of \$9,000) to assist Chapters around the state, with many Chapters and Regions raising funds and making additional donations.

When headquarter's grants are combined with donations and grants at the Chapter and Region level, **over \$65,000 is donated annually** to support public schools by PASR at the Chapter, Region, and State levels in the form of Educational Support Grants, scholarships, Laretta Woodson Awards, and additional special project funding.

The following pages highlight some of the ways Educational Support Grants were used throughout the PASR Regions and Chapters in 2019.

Region 1

Delaware awarded a grant to Kathleen Cain of the Westbrook Park Elementary School (Upper Darby School District).

Montgomery awarded a \$750 grant to the Culinary Arts Department of the North Montco Technical Career Center.

Region 2

Berks awarded \$275 to Exeter Junior High School teacher Heather Kelly for the purchase of podcast equipment. Berks also awarded \$425 to Thomas Carver for a computer science drone project.

Carbon gave a grant to establish bee houses to help with pollination. An iPad was purchased for an art student to facilitate the student being able to follow the history of art production through senior high. A grant was given to purchase multiplication bracelets for all third grade students. A final grant was given to purchase "pristine questions" to help a scholastic team practice prior to a competition.

Lehigh split a \$1,000 grant between two groups. The first was a multidisciplinary group of teachers from Catasauqua's Skeckler Elementary School to create an outdoor learning center. The second group used grant monies toward the purchase of robots for the school's technology program.

Northampton gave a \$1,000 grant to Kim Stetser, a fourth grade teacher, in the honor of Dr. Bill Brackbill, a retired educator from the Nazareth Area School District and PASR volunteer. Kim used the grant to purchase SNAP science kits for the Nazareth Intermediate School for use in their science and math departments.

Region 3

Region 3 awarded a total of \$3,100 in educational support grants that was distributed by five of their seven Chapters.

Bradford/Sullivan gave \$150 to a third grade teacher for a Single Grow Light Stand and Tray for learning about plants.

Luzerne/Wyoming gave \$250 to an 8th grade teacher for an amplification system to use when interviewing veterans and \$250 to a business teacher to purchase personal finance software to teach about credit and investing.

Monroe gave eight \$100 grants to the Stroudsburg Area School District to support various projects, including the purchase of basic digital watches for runners, a project to enhance positive social skills for Emotional Support Learners, supplemental resources to help students engage and connect with science, to assist needy students with purchases for daily living, to modify curriculum in a Learning Support class, to help take part in the Embryology program, to add three more garden beds to a student greenhouse, and to purchase a “Learning about Engineers” book set and a “Robert Mouse STEM” activity set.

Susquehanna gave two \$150 grants. One for supplies for a family math night and one for a gas line to a dedicated tank to the furnace and melting pot to assist production classes with their projects. Other grants were: \$300 for a 6th grade field trip to Keystone College so students could learn about careers and possibilities for their futures, \$225 for materials to develop fine motor skills in kindergarten, and \$225 for materials to implement an inquiry-based learning unit related to Newton’s Laws of Motion.

Wayne/Pike gave four \$150 grants. These were used to purchase magnetic sound cards to teach word structure by manipulating word parts, to purchase a K-5 student centered wellness curriculum called Project H.A.P.P.I.N.E.S.S., to fund a high school science teacher’s attendance at the international Science and Technology Educators Conference and Symposium, and to purchase wobble chairs for kindergarten.

Region 4

Dauphin presented a \$400 grant to Lynn Mangle, a teacher in the Millersburg School District to be used for the District’s Science Olympiad Team Project. Dauphin also awarded two \$1,000 scholarships. The first was presented to September Nguyen of Central Dauphin East who will be attending Messiah College with a major in Elementary Education and a Minor in Special Education. The second was awarded to Nakiah Baker, a Halifax student who will also be attending Messiah College to study Secondary Education and English as a Second Language Education.

Franklin presented a \$200 grant to Brian Baine, a 5th grade teacher at Greencastle Antrim Elementary School to purchase a Google Home Hub to incorporate technology into the classroom and to purchase professional development courses on sketchnoting, a research based method of note taking that has been proven to increase retention of information for students. Dauphin also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to senior Nicholas Ehko who will be pursuing math education at Geneva College.

Lancaster awarded a number of grants to local educators. They included \$500 to Reamstown Elementary Phys Ed Instructor Tamara Armstrong for the purchase of a Speed Stacks Sport Pack which promotes ambidexterity and hand-eye coordination. \$500 was also presented to a Hans Herr Elementary 5th grade teacher for the purchase of aquaponics equipment and supplies that will be used to educate students about how communities can use the science of aquaponics to help produce food while protecting the earth’s resources and environment. A third \$500 grant was given to Leola Elementary 2nd grade teacher Nicole Campbell to purchase equipment and supplies for a “Guinea Pig STEM project” that challenges students to use math, engineering, and other 21st century skills to design and build a guinea pig cage. Other grants given by Lancaster included:

- \$495 to 4th grade Park Elementary teacher Michael Deiter for the purchase of tools for a “Weather Tools and Data Collection” project.
- \$300 to Columbia High School science teacher Lindsey Garrett for a mBot Robots project.
- \$400 to Gerald Huesken Middle School science teacher Olivia Greter for a “Martian Colonization Project.”
- \$250 to Cocalico High School Spanish teacher Erin Kreger to be used towards a Multicultural Night.
- \$300 to Reidenbaugh Elementary School Nurse Jacqueline Phillips for the purchase of wellness pedometers.
- \$200 to Park Elementary School Nurse Jodi Haberstroh and Learning Support teacher Alicia Shirk for tactile stimulation materials to help students who are hyperactive or have problems sitting still in a classroom.
- \$300 to Providence Elementary 4th grade teacher Amanda Summers to use towards a “Student Choice Reading Initiative” project.
- \$220 to Warwick High School Family and Consumer Science teacher Kimberly Sweigart for the purchase of a “Garment Designer” computer program that allows students to create and print patterns for garments of their own design.

Lebanon gave a total of three \$300 grants.

Region 5

Clearfield presented a \$750 grant to Moshannon Valley School District’s 4th grade team for their project entitled “Engineering and Beyond!” that will provide students with an interdisciplinary curriculum that encourages reading, math, and science skills while also developing technology and problem solving skills.

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2019 Educational Support Grant Recipients

Continued from page 11

Region 6

Alle-Kiski presented a \$750 grant to teacher Laura Fleischer Proano to use towards the purchase of a license for *CoSpaces for Education*, a digital platform that will allow both middle school Math students at Highlands Middle School and high school Spanish students at Highlands High School to develop their STEAM skills and global competence by building virtual worlds.

Region 7

Westmoreland awarded \$750 to Grandview Elementary School teacher Anna Maria DeFabo for the purchase of musical instruments and course materials that will be used to complete the formation of a World Drumming Experience and to design, pilot, and implement a Ukulele Program at the school.

Region 8

Beaver awarded four mini-grants to educators from Ambridge Area (2 mini-grants), New Brighton Area, and Hopewell Area School Districts.

Butler awarded a \$500 scholarship to a student from Butler County Community College who is majoring in education.

Clarion presented a mini-grant to Clarion Limestone Area Elementary Counselor Erin Hockenberry to use toward the purchase of resources for a Ruling Our Experiences program for 6th grade girls. The program intends to cultivate higher self-esteem and decrease bullying.

Mercer awarded Amber Fusco, a Grove City School District Middle School teacher, a \$100 Mini Grant for Impulse Control Activities in her Autistic/Emotional Support class. Marlina Priester, a Mercer Area School District High School teacher, used her \$100 mini grant to upgrade kitchen equipment in her Family and Consumer Science class. Megan Donaldson, a Sharpsville Area School District elementary Special Education teacher, used a \$100 mini grant for a Lego Mindstorm Robotics project.

Region 9

Erie awarded a \$400 grant to Tyler Stuyvesant from General McLane High School (General McLane School District), and a \$200 grant to Sarah Gornic from Elk Valley Elementary (Girard School District).

Region 10

Clinton awarded a \$500 grant to William Probst, Construction Trades Instructor at Central Mountain High School (Keystone Central School District), for the purchase of materials to be used for building three park benches that will be placed in the Veterans Park in Renovo. A second \$500 grant was awarded to Robin Larvich, school counselor at Robb Elementary, for the introduction of an Emotional Learning Program called "Second Step Social" that promotes social and emotional development for K-8 students.

Lycoming awarded a \$200 grant to a Jersey Shore 7th grade math teacher to fund a "Probability Carnival" that provides games to students that encourage problem solving and peer cooperation.

McKean presented a \$200 grant to a Career Library for the purchase of new materials.

Potter/Tioga awarded a \$300 grant to Wellsboro learning support teachers Krissa Bourrow and Katlyn Sawyers for the purchase of flexible seating for their grade 2-4 students. A \$200 mini grant was awarded to Coudersport instructor Steve Mongillo to be used toward the purchase of a Smartlab 3D printer. A second \$200 mini grant was given to Wellsboro teachers Heather Callahan and Mirissa Ryan for the purchase of alternative seating mats, rugs, stools, and bean bag chairs for their students.

Region 11

Philadelphia awarded Kensington Health Sciences Academy teacher James Hardy a \$750 grant to use towards a Leadership Mentoring Program that links current students with recent graduates who are now attending college in order to provide the students with both academic and life skill support with the hope of fostering future leaders and peer role models.

Region 12

Pittsburgh awarded a \$750 grant to the Kinsley Association for the purchase of supplies for their Kingsley Kids' Kitchen program. The program assists young mothers and their school age children by teaching them how to prepare healthy snacks at home. The program's goal is to combat childhood obesity.



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MB&S Committee Updates: New Benefits and More!

At PASR, the Member Benefits and Services (MB&S) Committee is always on the lookout for new and exciting ways to save PASR members money on services they want or need.

It is a top priority of the MB&S Committee to help keep the cost of PASR programs affordable for our members, and we are happy to announce that the Committee has negotiated to keep the rates for PASR's insurance with Davis Vision and United Concordia the same through June 30, 2021—this is unprecedented, as healthcare and insurances cost continue to rise across the country.

New Home Energy Service Discounts

Another priority of the MB&S Committee is adding new benefits that PASR members will actually use. For this reason, two new benefits have been added to help provide our membership with significant savings on Home Energy Services.

The first of these services is through TankFarm. With the PASR Propane Discount Program from TankFarm, members can save an average of \$300–\$500 per year on propane without sacrificing quality of fuel or service.

By utilizing TankFarm, PASR members will receive exclusive pricing on propane that is typically \$0.50–\$1.00 less per gallon than what most propane consumers pay. PASR members also get a \$50 free propane certificate upon sign up, and a \$100 certificate to use towards the purchase of a new propane tank. Full details on this benefit are available in the Members' Only Section of PASR under the Discounts & Benefits tab.

To sign up for this discount, please visit www.tankfarmgroup/pasr or call TankFarm at 855-976-4141.

The second Home Energy Discount is being offered through HEAT USA, which provides discounts on heating oil and services. With HEAT USA, PASR members can save \$0.15–\$0.20 per gallon on heating oil.

More details on this service will be available online in the near future and in the June edition of the *PASR Times*.

Online Store Coming Soon

Another way that the MB&S Committee has been working for our members is by making changes to pasr.org that make accessing PASR merchandise easier.

Based on feedback provided during previous Meetings of the House of Delegates, it became clear that members were interested in having easier access to purchase PASR merchandise, including pens, pencils, travel mugs, notecards, pins, and more.

A full PASR online store is currently being designed. The store will be managed by PASR's newest employee, Administrative Assistant Deanna Risser, and will be available later this spring. Full details on the store will be provided in the June edition of the *PASR Times*.

Online pin purchases are up and running on pasr.org by visiting pasr.org/shop (member login required). Pin purchases are managed by PASR Administrative Assistant, Samantha Nguyen.

Important BJ's Wholesale Club Renewal Notice

Please be aware that to keep your PASR member discount at BJ's Wholesale Club, you must opt out of "EZ Renewal" when paying at the store with a credit card. If you do not opt out, BJ's will automatically renew your membership at their standard rate.

Membership and Benefit ID Card Update

PASR Headquarters frequently receives calls asking for PASR membership cards or asking to have new identification (ID) cards sent for their dental or vision policies. With progressions in technology, most companies—including PASR and United Concordia—no longer send physical membership or identification cards.

To use your United Concordia or Davis Vision policies without a card, simply let your eye doctor or dentist know that you have Davis Vision or United Concordia insurance. All they will need to verify your coverage is your social security number.

If you use a mobile device, you can also download the United Concordia and Davis Vision apps to easily access a digital copy of your card.

If you do not use a mobile device, the easiest way to obtain new cards, should you feel you need them, is by logging into the service providers' websites and printing them from your account.

PASR membership cards can be printed from the home page of the pasr.org Members' Only Section by clicking the blue "Print your card" hyperlink under the digital version of your membership card.

PASR's Davis Vision Insurance: MORE Than Vision Coverage

PASR members get more bang for their buck when they enroll in PASR's exclusive Davis Vision Insurance policies. Not only do participants receive free eye exams, frames, lenses, and contacts in addition to great discounts on optional lens treatments for under \$75 per year for an individual (prices for both the PASR dental and vision policies will remain the same through June 30, 2021), they also receive great discounts on hearing aids!

By being Davis Vision Insurance participants, members can save up to 60% off of retail on brand name hearing aids from major manufacturers through the EPIC Hearing Service Plan (EPIC).

These discounts include hearing aids from popular brands like Phonak, Unitron, Hansaton, Resound, Starkey, Signia, Widex, and Oticon, saving participating PASR members up to \$1,050 off the cost of their hearing aids!

To get started with the EPIC Hearing Service Plan, simply contact an EPIC hearing counselor today by calling 1-844-246-0544, or by visiting www.epichearing.com. The hearing counselor can answer any questions you may have about the plan and coordinate your referral to a nearby participating provider. If the provider recommends you obtain hearing aids, an EPIC counselor will contact you to coordinate your coverage and payment. You will receive a 45 day trial period.

To learn more about PASR's Davis Vision insurance, or to enroll online, please log in to the Members' Only Section of pasr.org and click on the Dental & Vision tab. From this tab, you can enroll or renew online, view the PASR Dental and Vision Benefit Summary Sheet, or quickly access the Davis Vision Member Login. To view the full details on the EPIC Hearing Service Plan, simply click on Davis Vision EPIC Hearing Benefit Summary under the Dental & Vision tab.

The SSMHF Needs Your Donations

Please consider donating to the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund (SSMHF) to help unfortunate PASR members who are confined to a residence or in need of support due to illness or age. Because the Fund's investment earnings have declined and because each year more retirees find themselves in need, there has never been a more important time to donate. Any amount you are willing and able to donate is greatly appreciated.

Donate Online: <https://www.pasr.org/member-donate-ssmhf/> (member login required)

Donate by Mail: If you are mailing a donation check, please include the form below and mail both to:

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Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees

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General contact information for PASR Headquarters can be found on the bottom of page 3 of each edition of the PASR Times and on our website, pasr.org



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