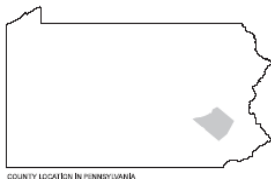


Berks County Association of School Retirees



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Civic Duty to Support Local Elections



Russell J. Diesinger
BCASR President

NEXT MEETING!

Thursday,
September 19, 2024
at Berks Career &
Technology Center
East Campus –Oley

Our daily news is filled with national politics and the airways are flooded with advertisement about the national election in November. I am not happy with all of this and sometimes I just need to turn it off! As I reflect on my adult life, I have always been involved in politics. As a teacher of a course in U.S. Government, I was required to pay attention. For four terms (16 years) I served as a member of the Exeter Township School District Board of School Directors and served as the Exeter Township School District representative to the Joint Operating Committee of the Berks Career and Technology Center. I remember attending those meetings and wondering why there was no one in attendance. I remember being deeply concerned about the lack of participation in those elections. My message for this edition of our newsletter is a reflection on the importance of our civic responsibility in all aspects of our community and especially local elections.

The daily decisions of local government have a more direct impact on Americans than most of the laws and regulations made in Washington, D.C. It tells us where we can live, how we can use the real estate that we own, what our children will learn and where they can go to school. These positions and those who serve are important to our community.

Almost everyone knows who the presidential candidates are, but many don't know who is running for supervisor, mayor, commissioner, or school board. This November let's pay attention and do our "homework". Let's take care of business at home and make informed decisions about who will serve our communities. Yes, it's important to vote, but it's equally important to cast an educated vote that reflects your personal beliefs and vision for the community where you live.

Russell J. Diesinger, BCASR President

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PASR Announces \$5,000 Stock Your Classroom Grant

PASR, in service to its mission, has partnered with Grove Financial & Associates, to offer educators a grant of up to \$5,000 this year. Applications are available on the PASR website at: https://www.pasr.org/classroom_grant/

Deadline for application is September 16, 2024.

BCASR Officers and Committee Chairs

Current Slate of Officers

President	Russell Diesinger	610-207-7384
Secretary	Brenda Stein	610-406-2313
Treasurer	Donna Spiers	610-376-5216
Past President	Candice Hartranft	484-256-7573

Standing Committee Chairs

Community Service	Sharon Heckman
Membership Recorder	Joanne Wojszwillo
Membership	Brenda Stein
Social Services Memorial Honor Fund	Joanne Wojszwillo
Educational Support	Sandy Heath
Berks County Community Foundation	Karen Braucher
Programs	Elizabeth Schmoyer
RECREO/Fundraising	Pamela Taylor
Retirement Planning	Candice Hartranft and Joanne Wojszwillo
Legislative & L-PEC	David Haughney
Membership Benefits & Services	Candice Hartranft
Public Relations	Mary Ann Zerkowski
Nominating	Candice Hartranft
Newsletter Editor	Brenda Stein

Berks County Sub-Chapter Presidents

BCASR has eight sub-chapters that serve the local school districts and communities throughout Berks County. Listed below are the current Presidents:

BORSEA (Boyertown/Oley SD)	Barry Kulakowsky	blkulakowsky@gmail.com
East Penn (Brandywine/Fleetwood/Kutztown SD)	Joyce Sturtevant	jgtsturtevant@gmail.com
Hamburg/Schuylkill Valley	Vicki Dissinger	vickdiss@aol.com
Muhlenberg (includes Reading-Muhlenberg CTC)	Luanne Reese	lreese@comcast.net
Reading (includes Reading-Muhlenberg CTC)	Pat Reinik	creinik610@comcast.net
South Berks (Governor Mifflin/Wilson/Wyomissing SD)	Janice Eisenbise	eisenbise.janice@gmail.com
TWEAD (Twin Valley/Exeter/Antietam/Daniel Boone SD)	Pat Beaton	wishe@ptd.net
Western Berks (Conrad Weiser/Tulpehocken)	Dennis B Harman	dennis1254harman@gmail.com

Note: School retirees from the Berks County Intermediate Unit, the Berks Career and Technology Centers, Reading Area Community College and Kutztown University are eligible to join any sub-chapter.

COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY

The Berks County subchapters have dedicated numerous services to their local communities and schools. Listed below are their endeavors for 2024:

Boyertown/Oley - The chapter made a monetary donation to the Oley Valley Food Bank and to the libraries in the Oley Valley School District. In addition, a collection of food items and monetary donations were made to Preston's Pantry*.

*Preston's Pantry Project began in the Boyertown Area Multi-Service Community after the July 11, 2019 flash flood that took the lives of young Preston, his mother Pamela, and his baby sister Evelyn. Preston believed in helping people who needed it most. www.facebook.com-Preston's Pantry

East Penn (Brandywine/Fleetwood/Kutztown) - Food donations were made to the Kutztown Food Pantry, Friend, Inc. Grants were given to the three school districts and three regional libraries.

Hamburg Area/Schuylkill Valley - Members made a monetary donation to the Northern Berks Food Bank. This year a student scholarship was awarded to a senior at Schuylkill Valley High School.

Muhlenberg—This year members donated items to Keystone Military Families for "Stockings for Soldiers", notebooks/pens to Berks Literacy Council, and activity items benefitting young children for the Nurse Family Partnership.

A student scholarship was awarded to a Muhlenberg senior pursuing a degree in education.



Reading – Personal care items and a monetary donation were made to Mary's Shelter earlier this year. Gift cards were donated in May to the residents at Mary's Shelter for summer fun—



movies, eating out, and shopping!

South Berks (Gov. Mifflin, Wilson, Wyomissing) - Members prepared a meal for Safe Berks and donated personal care items and gift cards for teenagers at Mary's Shelter. South Berks did fundraising this year to support the educational foundations in all three school districts.

TWEAD (Twin Valley, Exeter, Antietam, Daniel Boone) - Two teacher grants were awarded to staff members in the Daniel Boone School District. TWEAD participated in the "Wreaths Across America" program in December.

Western Berks (Conrad Weiser, Tulpehocken) -

Members donated gift cards to homeless students in both school districts. Teacher grants were given to both school districts. Members delivered blankets and scarfs to Opportunity House and members volunteered to pack weekend bags in the elementary schools.

BCASR—Collectively with subchapters, BCASR made a \$620 donation to sponsor a student in the Berks Youth Chorus Program. Members also made a donation of learning supplies for the Second Street Learning Center in Reading. In March the executive board prepared a meal for 40 residents at Safe Berks. BCASR supported the PASR PA Feed Initiative with a \$100 donation and a \$50 donation to the Social Services Memorial Honor Fund in memory of Mr. James Gilmartin, Past President of BCASR.

BCASR Fall General Membership Meeting

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Berks Career and Technology Center East Campus

- address: 3307 Friedensburg Road, Oley, PA 19547
- phone: 610-374-4073



Schedule for Meeting:

11:15 AM—Registration

11:30 AM—Business Meeting

12:00 Noon—Tour of the facility highlighting the various shops and students at BCTC

12:30 PM—Lunch

BUSINESS MEETING—will include recognition of Laurretta Woodson Award recipients, Volunteer of the Year recipient, and the Social Services Memorial Honor Ceremony.

SPEAKER– Dr. Michael Stauffer, Executive Director of BCTC

MEAL—Choice of two entrees, salad, freshly baked bread, salad, iced tea/water, and dessert.

COMMUNITY SERVICE—Donations for “**Blessed Beginnings**” will be collected at the meeting. Donated items include bath towels, hand towels, wash cloths, trash bags, band aids, shower curtain & hooks, kitchen towels, paper products, Ziploc bags, cutting board, bakeware, dinnerware set, beverage mugs/cups, can opener, cooking utensils, and blankets.

COST—\$23.50/person, payable to BCASR.

BCASR September 19, 2024 Meeting at BCTC East Campus—Oley PA

Send registration to: Donna Spiers, 302 Park Avenue, Temple, PA 19560.

Donna’s phone contact is: 610-376-5216

GUESTS ARE

WELCOME!

Please register any guests who plan to attend the meeting.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Deadline for registration is Monday, September 9, 2023

Lauretta Woodson Award Recipients for 2024

Recipients for this year's awards are from the Tulpehocken Area School District. Both candidates have been selected by school administrators in recognition of their dedicated service in schools.



Amanda Minnich, Professional Educator Award Recipient

Amanda Minnich, is the recipient of the 2024 Lauretta Woodson Professional Educator Award. Amanda has been teaching in the Tulpehocken School District since 2007 and is currently teaching Spanish and ESL at the high school. She finds learning about other cultures both challenging and rewarding as students move into the district. Amanda was recognized for stepping up to meeting the individual needs of her ESL students while managing the increase in her caseload. Amanda exemplifies the Lauretta Woodson Award for her outstanding work with ESL students in the Tulpehocken School District. Amanda was nominated by High School Principal Christopher Hamrick.



Wendy Fisher, Educational Support Award Recipient

Wendy Fisher is the recipient of the 2024 Lauretta Woodson Educational Support Award. Wendy has worked in the Tulpehocken Area School District for 20 years. For the past 16 years Wendy has been the administrative assistant/secretary at the Bethel Elementary School. She describes her work at the elementary school with the staff, parents and students as a career highlight and privilege. She enjoys seeing the kindergarten students grow through their elementary years until they graduate to middle school. Wendy's positive attitude and friendly personality along with her dedication to the Tulpehocken school community shows she is worthy of the Berks County Award. Wendy was recommended for the award by Bethel Elementary Principal Andrew Guers.

BCASR Volunteer of the Year Recipient for 2024



Beth Harner,
Volunteer of the Year

Beth Harner, retiree from Schuylkill Valley School District, is the recipient of this year's Volunteer of the Year Award. Beth's teaching career included teaching a foreign language for fourteen years and later she became the Middle School Librarian. Since retiring in 2015, Beth volunteers her time with Berks Encore Meals on Wheels-Strausstown Center. She delivers meals to residents of the Hamburg area several days per month traveling over 40 miles each trip. Beth also volunteered preparing income tax filing with Berks Encore. Beth is currently the Vice President of the Hamburg Area/Schuylkill Valley Association of School Retirees subchapter. Her dedication to the retirees' association is very complimentary in supporting the programs and functions of both the local and county organizations.

2024 Student Scholarship Winner



Chelesa Hurley
Scholarship Winner

Twin Valley senior Chelsea Hurley, is the recipient of BCASR's academic scholarship. Chelsea will attend Division I Quinnipiac University in the fall to major in Elementary Education. Chelsea will play lacrosse for the Quinnipiac Bobcats. At Twin Valley, Chelsea was a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Mini-Thon, and Student Council. She was also a member of the varsity soccer, basketball and lacrosse teams all four years at Twin Valley High School. Chelsea volunteered serving the community at Helping Harvest, the Salvation Army, Nolde Forest, New Journeys, Rock Hollow Woods, and the Twin Valley Pantry. During her four years at Twin Valley she maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Teacher Grant Recipients for 2024

Three teacher grant recipients from the Berks County Community Foundation were awarded earlier this year:

- Brandywine Heights Area School District, Grades 2 through 5 gifted, for "Kindness Passion Project"
- Schuylkill Valley Middle School, grade 6, ten Easi-Scopes for ELA lessons
- Wyomissing Area School District, grade 3, materials for the STEM program

Teachers may submit requests for grants to the Berks County Community Foundation at www.bccf.org

BCASR Travel Plans

BCASR announces plans for a two-day bus trip to Hyde Park, NY and the Culinary Institute of America in Spring 2025.

Dine & Donate Fundraiser

BCASR is sponsoring a Dine & Donate fundraiser on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at Lilli's Ranch House in West Lawn from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the student scholarship program. A basket giveaway will be part of the event. (No coupon needed.) Come out and support this event!

PASR Benefits and Services Update

New Benefit—A new benefit "Better Help" providing counseling services is now available for all PASR members. The service provides one free month of counseling with 4 sessions, and then a 15% discount for continued services after the first month.

Visit pasr.org to see additional benefits and services available to members.

Members may use the QR code for PASR benefits shown here →



Successful BCASR Retirement Workshop

BCASR sponsored a Retirement Workshop for prospective retirees at the Berks County Intermediate Unit on Saturday, March 23, 2024. Seventy-three people attended the workshop which included presentations by Marrella Financial Group LLC, HOP Insurance, and PASR.

BCASR is committed to helping future retirees plan their retirement with informational seminars regarding decisions they will make as they begin a new chapter of their lives. The workshop is free to all participants planning to retire from the public schools in Berks County.

Next year's workshop is planned for Saturday, March 22, 2025.



Kelly Dygert, PASR Representative



Paul Marrella,
Marrella Financial LLC



Attendees at the Workshop



Wanda Tracey,
HOP Insurance

Spring Meeting at Alvernia University



Left, Sister Carol Ann
Right, Sister Shawn Kathleen

The April 18, 2024 General Membership Meeting was held at the McGlinn Conference Center on the campus of Alvernia University. The program featured Sister Carol Ann as “Magically Yours!”. Surprising, she was quite entertaining and enjoys performing her magic.

Special guest speaker was David Smith, Organizer of **PA Schools Work**. David shared with members the need for equitable funding for public schools across the state. For more information on the 7-year plan, visit the website: <https://paschoolswork.org/7-year-plan/>

BCASR NEWS

Berks Chapter of PASR

A publication of the Berks County Association of School Retirees.

BCASR
Brenda Stein, Editor
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**PASR Mission Statement—To serve
others in need and help one another
enjoy their retirement.**



Check on PASR with this QR Code!

Open your smartphone to the camera. Point the camera at the QR code to view the link to PASR. Click on the link.

Receive the BCASR Newsletter Electronically!

Members may sign up to receive the BCASR newsletter electronically for both the yearly March and August newsletters.

If you would like to join the group newsletter email, please send your email address to:

bstein425@gmail.com