



HEART: The Association of Retired Howard County Public School Personnel

www.howardrspa.org

Contact: 443-535-2574

Howard County, MD

November, 2020

From the Co-Presidents' Desks.....



Happy holidays to all HCPSS retirees! It is hard to believe that we are about to embark on the holiday season, which will be quite different from the past. We hope everyone is safe at home, healthy, and has found ways to stay busy and active during this time.

Your Co-Presidents have remained quite busy with the organization. MRSPA continues to hold meetings and ask for our assistance. At the Presidents' Meeting, we discussed the importance of maintaining while continuing to increase our membership. Howard County remains in the top tier of membership increases; however, we are down from last year.

While you are home, and perhaps looking for things to do, please

contact some of your retired friends and encourage them to join HEART and MRSPA. Those of you who are HEART only members will hopefully consider joining MRSPA as well. During these challenging times our pensions are more important than ever, and MRSPA continues to lobby on our behalf to ensure that the pension system is healthy and intact. Your MRSPA membership is important since there is always power in numbers! Please consider joining MRSPA as well as HEART.

Another topic of importance is community service! Now, more than ever, community and charitable organizations need our help. At the Presidents' Meeting, several county representatives spoke of drive-thru community service collections. During our October General Membership Meeting, we discussed this idea and spoke about doing the same. To that end, your Co-Presidents are setting up a community service drive-thru for the two organizations HEART has supported in the past, *Comfort Cases* and the *Howard County Food Bank*. On Thursday, December 10, 2020 we will hold a community service "drop off" in the Wilde Lake High School Stadium Parking Lot. We will also choose a snow date should the need arise. You'll find more information about the event in the Community Service section of the newsletter.

We hope that you all stay safe and remain healthy, and we look forward to seeing you at our next HEART General Business Meeting/Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 8th**. Be sure to "zoom in" and join us!

Best,

Addie & Sue, Co-Presidents



H.E.A.R.T. Minutes

10/13/20 General Meeting

NOTE: This meeting was held virtually through the Zoom app due to the current conditions of COVID-19.

Business Meeting:

Sue Mascaro, Co-President, called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm. **Ronnie Bohn**, Vice President, was recognized for creating today's PowerPoint for the meeting. **Addie Kaufman** acknowledged we have 51 participants for today's meeting. Ronnie delivered the blessing.

Janet Zimmerman, Secretary, stated the minutes from the last general meeting, held on March 10, 2020, were published in the April 2020 newsletter. No corrections were received. **Addie** moved to accept the minutes. **Genee Varlack** seconded the motion, no objections were made, and the minutes were approved.

Ellen Hill, Treasurer, gave the financial report. (Checking = \$14,754.40; Other Checking = \$18,997.62; Scholarship = \$45.00). Ellen responded to a question about the two checking accounts. The previous board split the checking into two accounts. The first account is day-to-day financial actions. The other checking account supplements scholarships and our Turf Valley December luncheons to keep down the cost. Our goal is to spend down from this larger account.

Addie Kaufman reported on MRSPA News. Addie attended the Leadership Meeting on Sept. 16, 2020 with leaders around the State. George Denny, Jr. is the new MRSPA president. Community Service during COVID was discussed including the need for pet supplies for local shelters as well as a contactless drive-through food collection for the MD Food Bank and local pantry. A list of needed items was sent in advance. There was discussion of HEART sponsoring a contactless food drive in different parts of the county at some of our high schools. We could do the same for Comfort Cases to support those in need. Comfort Cases has requested monetary donations. The Howard County Food Bank will also accept checks. Dates need to be scheduled.

Communication was discussed. We are still in need of one or two volunteers to create the newsletter. It is a huge means of communication for us. **Scott Pfeiffer** is our new webmaster. Members are encouraged to check out the new website at: <https://www.howardrspa.org/> (password for members is "HEART2017"). Our website could also include HCPSS school openings, links to COVID resources, health benefits, etc. We could also initiate a phone tree for those not comfortable with information through email.

There was discussion of possibly creating a cookbook of recipes to sell to fund scholarships. Some school districts partnered with local restaurants and part of the income would go to our scholarship funds. Some districts are requesting monetary donations.

Membership numbers continue to increase. As of Sept. 30, 2020 we have 14 new members (a 14.9% increase). We have 54 unpaid members who will be contacted by executive board members. Kudos to those who are assisting with recruiting new members.

Sally Smith, our Area Representative for MRSPA, provided an update. Other counties are struggling to keep in touch.

She said hello from George Denny. MRSPA **protects** our pension and keeps an eye on legislation that will protect our rights. MRSPA remains **connected** through their website and visits with the county chapters. They **serve** with scholarships and community service. Sally congratulated H.E.A.R.T. for the largest increase in members in 2019-2020 and the largest increase of 3%.



Regarding COVID-19, Sally stated how we respond to COVID affects our outlook. Zoom is a great way to keep in touch with people. Some people have more family time and are enjoying that. Sally shared some positive quotes including *Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today* (Thick Nhat Hank) and *Tough times never last but tough people do* (Robert Schatter).

Committee Highlights:

Gene Streagle, Legislative Committee, gave updates to our retiree health benefits as well as legislative updates. Gene shared that our benefits booklet was mailed to members. David Lerner is our new leader at the board for our benefits. Our rates increased a little but not significantly. Previously we were 3% less than active participants. The next 2 years will increase 1.5% per year to level premiums. **Dental is completely changed.** There is a default system for dental if you do not do anything. For example, if you are currently enrolled in Delta Dental PPO the default provider will be through CIGNA for 2021. Similarly, retirees currently enrolled in the CIGNA DHMO plan will automatically be moved into the AETNA DMO plan for 2021. Vision increased 2% which is reasonable. Also, they all have some type of hearing aid policy. Normally hearing aids run \$3,000 but we negotiated a price around \$1,500. Most people will stay with Express Scripts. Members can Google Howard County Public Schools Benefits office. There are 3 virtual meetings for questions about benefits, 10:30-4:40 (with a break from 12:00 to 1:00) on Oct. 20, 28, and Nov 2. Gene suggested even if you don't have a question you might want to listen to the questions of others. You must register in advance at www.hcpswellness.com. Phone numbers for questions about benefits: (443) 589-1940 **and** (855) 245-9479. Gene mentioned Express did something with pharmacies without notifying us; however, it has been corrected. Our new contract has language to make sure this does not happen again. Kelly Associates is our partner in our benefits. Gene said he is very pleased with our benefits. For the legislative update, Gene stated that our legislative brochure may be updated. Amendment #2 in the election indicates funds shall go to education and nowhere else.

Kim Sullivan Necrology Committee, stated she appreciates members informing her when a member passes. Kim learned of the passing of the following HEART members since our last meeting: Reathia Emmerich passed in 2015 at age 92; Grace Dixon (12/29/19) at age 95; Frances Peters (2/28/20) at age 90; Linda Flanagan (3/6/20) at age 70; Helen Holden (3/9/20) at age 102; Angela O'Neill (9/23/19) at age 80; Shirley Meighan (4/28/20) at age 95.

Sue Mascaro gave an update on social activities. Toby's Dinner Theatre dates include Shrek on April 22, 2021 and Godspell on June 3, 2021. Capacity at Toby's is smaller (due to restrictions) but we will not be able to offer more than 4 tickets per person. Our discounted tickets are only \$40.00 each. Longwood Gardens for early December is canceled.

Corita Oduyoye, Elections Committee, stated that **Genée Varleck** and **Anne Swartz** are no longer able to commit to the position of Co-Vice Presidents at this time. Genée is willing to commit to a task with an end date such as the newsletter. Anne may be able to commit to such a task with Genée. Sue and Addie will connect with Genée and Anne. We are very appreciative of their offer of assistance. Corita stated we need to reach out to find a new Vice President or Co-Vice Presidents.

Future H.E.A.R.T Meetings: **Ronnie** stated that the December 8, 2020 at 12:00 pm will be virtual, **not at Turf Valley**. The format for the March 9 and May 18, 2021 meetings will be determined.

JoAnne Horan discussed members who prepaid for luncheons in 2019-2020. Their funds will be transferred to a future luncheon. Our luncheons are canceled because we follow the HCPSS schedule. Door Prizes were awarded. The following five (5) attendees won a gift card to Amazon: **Carol Yanek, Linda Durey, Alberta Hall, Kay Brooke, and Nancy Malwitz.**

In closing, Sue and Addie thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. Everyone stay safe.



HEART NEEDS YOU!



We Need You!

HEART is in need of candidates for the VICE PRESIDENT position. Please consider sharing your talents & expertise with our organization. The Job description and responsibilities are listed in the Bylaws of HEART, which can be found on the HEART website.

If interested, please contact: Corita Oduoye, Sue Mascaro, or Addie Kaufman

SCHOLARSHIP

By: Co-chairs, Fran Razmus and Donna Streagle,

The pandemic has not been good with regard to raising money for scholarships. We are, however, appreciative of any funds that have been received. We do accept donations. Should you want to donate to the scholarship fund, possibly try what some of our members do. Take the amount of years that you have been retired and donate one dollar for each year. It may not individually be a large amount of money, but multiple donations like this will add up.

Last spring, we did not give any scholarships to high school students. We did give scholarships to college students who had previously received them. Don't know what this coming spring will bring. Eventually, the pandemic will be past and we will get back to giving scholarships as we have in the past.

MSRPA Committee

Addie Kaufman, Co-President of HEART has been asked to serve on a MRSPA committee that will create a statement, which reflects current times. The committee, of which Marshall Peterson (retired HCPSS principal) is also a part, met on November 12, 2020. Discussion revolved around the history of MRSPA, life experiences of members, changing times, and acceptance and celebration of differences and change. Big ideas included the importance of equity, inclusion, shared values, use of our voice to influence change, safety, comfort, and ability for any member to become actively involved in the organization. As MRSPA continues to serve retired school personnel and associate members, the evolution of the organization and necessity to change and reflect current times is a focus. Addie will keep HEART members apprised of the committee's progress.

Looking for the most up-to-date information from your organization?
Visit our website at <https://howardrspa.org>. Like us on Facebook:
Search for HEART, *The Association of Retired Howard County Personnel*.

Next Meeting Date: December 8 (Virtual meeting through Zoom)



In Memoriam

by: Kimberlie Sullivan

Those we love don't go away, They walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near, Still loved, still missed and forever dear.
(author unknown)

Roger Bryan



Roger Bryan

Roger Bryan was born in Cambridge, MD, on March 26, 1922. He passed away on October 21, 2020, at the age of 98. Roger earned a BS degree in physical education from Morgan State College and his MA degree in administration and supervision from Columbia University; he also completed advanced coursework at other institutions. He inspired multitudes of students and colleagues throughout his career in education. Roger began teaching and coaching in Somerset and Talbot Counties. He then came to Howard County where he taught physical education at Rockland and Northfield Elementary Schools. Prior to his 1983 retirement from HCPSS, Roger was area supervisor for physical education. A man of great faith, he was an active member of Elderslie-St. Andrews United Methodist Church. Roger was a veteran of World War II (ETO) serving in the 370th Infantry, the 370th Regimental Band, and the 301st Army Ground Forces. His wife (Helen), two sons, three daughters, 16 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-great-grandchildren survive him. Roger was predeceased by his first wife, a daughter, and 5 siblings.

Angela O'Neill



Angela O'Neill

Angela O'Neill's life began in Baltimore, MD, on April 22, 1940. At the age of 80, she passed away on September 23, 2020. Angela was a graduate of Trinity Preparatory School and Baltimore College of Commerce. During her 13 years of service to HCPSS, Angela was a special education assistant at Centennial High School. She retired in 2000. She was a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church. Angela is survived by two sons, a daughter, five grandchildren, and three brothers. She was predeceased by her husband (H. Frank O'Neill) and one brother.





New Members

Membership numbers continue to increase. As of Sept. 30, 2020 we have 14 new members (a 14.9% increase). We have 54 unpaid members who will be contacted by executive board members. Kudos to those who are assisting with recruiting new members.

Recent Retirees

Name	Location	Position	# Years
Alexander, Linda	NES	Elementary	23
Carothers, Jacqueline	BMMS	Social Studies	34
Heinlein, Eric	BMMS	Reading	36
Kalivoda, Karen	WTES	Elementary	31
Portalea, Debra	LES	Elementary	35
Oswald, Sally	HES	Elementary	32
Seifert, Jeanne	SJES	Elementary	21

GET SOCIAL with HEART

TOBY'S Dinner Theatre: Planning for a Spring Return!

We are all hoping that in 2021 things begin to return to “normal,” and talk of successful vaccine trials and new treatments support that optimism. Over the last several years, our members have enjoyed many wonderful performances at Toby's Dinner Theatre, including *Grease*, *Kinky Boots*, and *A Christmas Story*. In anticipation of a healthy, safe spring, we have gone ahead and scheduled two shows at Toby's for our members.

Our first show is rescheduled from this past spring... The joint is sure to be jumping on **Thursday, April 22nd** for ***Shrek, The Musical***. Everyone's favorite ogre is back in this hilarious stage spectacle based on the Oscar-winning, smash hit film. And of course, let's not forget the wisecracking Donkey, a feisty princess who resists her rescue, and a cookie with an attitude! Throw in a short-tempered bad guy and over a dozen fairy tale misfits and you've got the kind of mess that calls for a hero, and his name is Shrek.

Unfortunately, current health and safety concerns have prevented us from scheduling one of our regular holiday shows at Toby's, but how about celebrating Christmas in July? Join your HEART colleagues for ***Elf, the Musical***, on **Thursday, July 22nd**. This is the hilarious tale of Buddy, a young orphan who mistakenly crawls into Santa's gift bag and is transported back to the North Pole. With Santa's permission, Buddy embarks on a



journey to New York City to discover his true identity and help New York remember the meaning of Christmas. This modern day holiday classic is sure to make everyone embrace their inner ELF.

Because seating may be limited if COVID limitations are still in place, be sure to contact Sue via email (scmascaro@gmail.com) or cell (443-878-6883) to reserve seats today! Tickets for HEART members and their families are still only \$40, a considerable discount over the box office cost.

Celebrating Spring at Longwood Gardens with HEART

Prior to the pandemic, HEART scheduled a May 27th visit to Longwood Garden's 1,000+ acres of vibrant flower gardens and beautiful woodlands. Rest assured that if the new year results in a lessening of health and safety concerns, we'll reschedule a visit for late spring or early summer. HEART is also considering a visit to St. Michael's on the Eastern Shore... be sure to monitor HEART's website and Facebook page for the latest news on social outings.

Serving with Heart



Serving our community has taken on added importance, due in large part to the pandemic and the additional stresses being felt by individuals and families. To meet our goal of "serving," HEART supports three local service organizations. These organizations, Comfort Cases of Maryland, the Howard County Food Bank, and the Salvation Army of Howard County provide much-needed support to children and families in both our local community and throughout the state.

On **Thursday, December 10th, from 10 to 2**, HEART will host a **Donation "Drive-By"** event to support both the Howard County Food Bank and Comfort Cases. Join me and fellow Co-President Addie at Wilde Lake High School's stadium parking lot (to the left of the main building) to drop off your donations to support these critical. How will you find us? Look for the large black pick-up truck and the light blue jeep - large vehicles for what we hope will be a large number of donations - and the two "masked" ladies hanging by the tailgates.

If you're interested in donating to the food bank, we'll be collecting nonperishable food and personal care items. Items of need include **cereal, peanut butter, tuna, healthy snack foods, and infant products including formula, baby food, and diapers**. For Comfort Cases, which supports children entering foster care, items of greatest need include **holiday pj's for infants to teens (large sizes are often overlooked, e.g. women's small), new or gently used books, and personalized care items (lotions, deodorant, haircare products)**.

Thanks in advance for supporting HEART's latest community service project; we hope to see you - and your generous donations - on December 10th! Our snow day... I'm sure we all remember those... is scheduled for December 17th; same time, same place.



Thanksgiving COVID Safety Strategies



Traveling increases your chances of contracting coronavirus. It can also increase the spread from one community to another. On November 5, the state renewed its travel advisory. Marylanders should avoid travel to and from states with a 10% positivity rate or higher. If you choose to travel to or from states above that threshold, you must get tested and self-quarantine before returning.

Safest Travel Choice on Thanksgiving

From what we know about how the coronavirus spreads, the safest choice is to stay home when you can – even on Thanksgiving. This is especially important if you or someone you love are at high risk of severe symptoms from the virus. You also shouldn't travel if you're feeling sick, exhibiting coronavirus symptoms, had a positive coronavirus test or were exposed to someone with the virus.

Highest-Risk Travel Choice

If you do travel, especially to spend Thanksgiving with people you don't live with, be aware that this is a high-risk activity. Staying home or in your local area during Thanksgiving 2020 is highly recommended. If you *must* travel, you can reduce your risk if you:

- Travel in a car only with people you live with instead of using public transportation.
- Limit or completely eliminate stops in public places, if possible. This includes rest stops, restaurants and gas stations
- Avoid being a house-guest in someone else's home and instead rent a house, cabin or hotel room and stay only with people from your own household

See more **Thanksgiving COVID Safety Strategies** at

<https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/fighting-covid/message-community/thanksgiving-covid>

Program News for December

Due to the ongoing pandemic and keeping the health and safety of HEART members at the forefront, HEART has canceled the reservation for our annual holiday luncheon at Turf Valley Resort. However, plans are already underway for our 2nd virtual meeting, so...

HEART held its first virtual meeting for our October meeting, and the Executive Team was thrilled that close to 60 members joined in for the event. If that opportunity passed you by, be sure to join us at HEART's next virtual **General Membership Meeting**, scheduled for **Tuesday, December 8th** (see link below). Meeting topics will include HEART business updates from the Executive Team and a guest speaker presentation. We are also planning for some holiday "fun," much like we enjoy when we celebrate in-person at Turf Valley.



Program News for December cont...

As our members know from past experience, we've always sponsored a food or clothing drive during our December luncheon. Those drives have always met with huge success, thanks in part to the excellent attendance at the holiday luncheon. But not to worry, HEART is not going to let the holiday giving spirit and the generosity of our members pass us by. Instead, we will host a donation "drive-by" event the week of our meeting to support the needs of our community; additional details can be found in the community service section of the newsletter.

Of course, the most important part of the program is always your participation! Please join us via Zoom on December 8th to hear the latest news from HEART, reconnect with friends and colleagues, and maybe even win a virtual door prize!!

HEART General Membership Meeting*

December 8th, 12:00 to 2:30 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81224425987?pwd=MG1nYWxFeTI3SnczY21WWCtQdFFEUT09>

Meeting ID: 812 2442 5987

Passcode: 659170

*Members who are not experienced with the Zoom platform are welcome to contact Sue (443-878-6883) for assistance.