

FOCUS

ON JERICHO TEACHERS AND THEIR ISSUES

January 2012

President's Message for January 2012

Thank you for all of the kind responses to my retirement announcement. I have also heard the grumblings from those who are closest to retirement (but not quite there yet!) This is definitely not a fun time to be an educator. The Commissioner and NY State Department of Education want you to spend your days preparing your students for tests. The Governor is after our pension. The State legislature thinks we should be able to run all school districts on less than a 2% cap on taxes while not decreasing all of the unfunded mandates they have passed on to us. All of this and we haven't even settled an APPR agreement yet! On the last fact, I can assure you that you are in excellent hands both with NYSUT and here in our local. The JTA APPR Committee has continuously met to

ensure that our agreement is fair and meets the needs of our members.

For the other issues, NYSUT and 35 Nassau locals have banded together to form "Take Action Long Island", a group trying to educate all Long Islanders to the negative effects of the recent tax legislation on public education. We have met for training sessions and our goal is to have our voices be heard not only as teachers but also as parents, grandparents, and home owners and, most importantly, as tax payers. Watch for more information from this group in the near future. We will all need to be involved to stop the destruction of public education here in New York State.

R & D Season, Opening Soon

In February at faculty meetings across the district, members of the Curriculum Committee will be discussing this year's Research & Development (R&D) grant opportunities. This year a PowerPoint presentation will be shown to ensure everyone receives the same information. For those of you not familiar with this process, I will briefly explain it so at the faculty meeting you will have some background and be able to ask more focused questions.

An R&D is a grant that faculty members can apply for to fund a great idea, a unique project, a creative approach, to write new course material or to *significantly* enhance curriculum. It can be collaborative or interdisciplinary. A good R&D is time consuming to plan and to do. It should be "above and beyond" what you could accomplish during the course of your regular teaching assignment and is therefore to be completed outside of school. It must be unique from existing projects or commercial programs.

R&D money is negotiated for the purpose of funding projects. There are two phases to the process. Phase I is the non-competitive

phase. Two thirds of the total number of days available is divided between the faculty members that express interest by completing a "Letter of Intent to Participate." The number of people who intend to participate determines the number of days available for Phase I. For example, if 200 faculty members submit letters then each Phase I would be about 2.35 days.

Phase II is the *competitive* phase. One third of the available days goes to funding Phase II proposals.

Remember that a portion of the money that would go to the funding R&D is being used to offset our contribution to our health insurance contribution, which, as you realize, continues to increase. These factors effect the overall number of days available for projects. Phase II then, is *very* competitive because the same number of people are vying for fewer days

At the faculty meeting you will be shown a PowerPoint and receive a comprehensive packet containing all the information you need to submit a proposal -explanations, applications, selection criteria, and a timeline/calendar.

Jericho Teachers Association

President
Maryann Risi

Middle School VP
Ted Lucher

High School VP
Kevin Brodsky

Elementary VP
Mady Bernard

Treasurer
Ron Verderber

Secretary
Mike Pekor

Benefits Trust
Suzanne Jacobsen

VOTE/COPE
Theresa Cantwell

Focus / Web
Denise Ryder

JTA Office Secretary
Maria Migliaccio x3443

Save the date:
Maryann Risi's
retirement
party will be
held on Thurs,
May 10th
at the Fox
Hollow.
Please mark
your calendar.

NYSUT members: Are your pets protected?

As all animal lovers know, unexpected pet care expenses can quickly become overwhelming. Our favorite four-legged friends (along with exotic pets) are famous for devouring socks, coins and other “treats” that can make for expensive vet visits.

While it’s difficult to anticipate accidents and illnesses, it is important to be prepared for them. It’s also helpful to have some assistance when it comes to routine care for your pet.

NYSUT Member Benefits is here to once again help you save some hard-earned money through our new endorsed pet insurance program.

This Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed program offered by VPI Pet Insurance offers a variety of coverage options for dogs, cats, birds, and exotic pets.

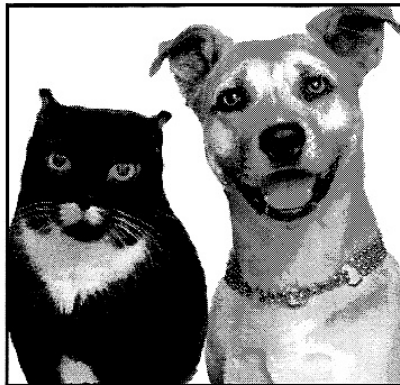
The “scoop” on VPI

VPI – part of the Nationwide Insurance family – has served as the largest and most recommended pet insurance plan in the U.S. since 1982. VPI currently has nearly 500,000 policies in place and occupies 61% of the pet insurance market.

Pets under the age of 10 are eligible for coverage, and medical plans provide benefits for accidents and illnesses – ranging from ear infections to cancer. Optional CareGuard plans provide benefits for preventive care.

It pays to be a member

NYSUT members receive a 5% group discount on the base medical plan and up to a 15% discount if multiple pets in a household are enrolled. There



are a variety of payment options available, including direct bill through your checking account or credit card; payroll and pension deduction will be offered down the line.

Easy submission process

VPI offers an easy, three-step claim submission process with a prompt turnaround for the majority of reimbursements.

- Simply pay for your pet’s medical treatment at the time of service.
- Send the one-page claim form along with your receipts to VPI.
- After meeting your policy’s deductible, your eligible expenses will be reimbursed.

Policyholders can quickly process claims online, via email or fax, and easily keep track of their policies and download pre-printed claim forms through a helpful website.

VPI has an average turnaround time of 12-14 business days for a claim. The best part is that you will know up front exactly what is covered

with your plan and how much you are eligible to be reimbursed thanks to the VPI published benefit schedule.

What to do first

To get started, please contact VPI toll-free at 866-838-3461 (this is a dedicated number for NYSUT members) or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on “Discounts & Travel – Members” and then “VPI Pet Insurance.” There, you’ll find a link to a NYSUT member-specific VPI website. You can also contact Member Benefits at **800-626-8101** with any questions.

VPI Pet Insurance is a NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5% of adjusted gross premium for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Jan./Feb. '12