

The logo for the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU) is centered at the top. It consists of the letters "UPSEU" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white oval with a blue border. The oval is set against a background of stylized American flag stripes in red, white, and blue.

**UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION**  
**IS *M.A.D.E.* FOR YOU! *Making A Difference Everyday!***

Fall 2020

# THE ADVOCATE

## Thank You Essential Members!





**United Public  
Service Employees  
Union**  
*Making a Difference  
Everyday*

**Our Mission**

UPSEU is committed to being the preeminent organization representing public sector employees by providing professional, on-site representation, superior negotiations, and adherence to democratic principles which maintain the integrity of the union for the benefit of our members and their families.

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The Advocate is published bi-annually.

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# A Message from President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr.

As I look back on this time last year, I remember writing my Fall 2019 President’s Column encouraging members to reach out and help others by donating to food banks, providing socks to the homeless, connecting with neighbors who live alone, or doing chores for the elderly or disabled. I wrote about the numbers of hungry and homeless, as well as lonely seniors in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Little did I know how much more would be needed in 2020. So once again, I call upon each of you to make a difference, and if you can help others, please do so.

No one has been untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic, many you are dealing with grief over the loss of a loved one, having anxiety or fear for yourself or loved ones, experiencing frustration caused by the isolation or struggling with unhealthy coping mechanisms. Feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, fear and grief are all very real human emotions and understandably common, especially in times like these. These feelings stem from our lack of control over the situation and outside forces, however, there are many resources available to help you. On the next page, we have posted a list of resources we have gathered from the CDC, NIH, and the NY, NJ, CT and MA government websites to make it easier for you to reach out.

There are also things you can do to help both your mental and physical health. Although these may seem like common sense, we often forget to prioritize eating healthy, exercising and getting adequate sleep. Beyond those basics, studies have shown that meditation can ease symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as have a positive impact on your overall health. Taking breaks from watching upsetting news and instead connecting with those you have lost touch with, is also good advice. While it is important to hear the facts from trusted sources, don’t let it overwhelm or dominate your psyche. It can also help to reach out to others who are experiencing the same issues as you, or to those less fortunate.

Studies have shown that in times of stress and anxiety, an increase in the use of drugs and alcohol very often occurs. Over time, this increase may lead to abuse or addiction. It has never been easier to get help through organizations such as alcoholics anonymous, narcotics anonymous, and al-alon (help for family and friends dealing with an addicted person.) In fact, you don’t even need to leave home, as meetings are held virtually almost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all over the world. You can even log on to a virtual meeting in Ireland, Australia, or anywhere else in the world.

Most importantly, realize that no one is immune to stress and anxiety, so do what you can to improve your own health and well being. And don’t be afraid to reach out if you are feeling overwhelmed by sadness, depression, anxiety or the feeling of wanting to harm yourself or others. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for help. Your UPSEU representatives can lead you in the right direction, as well as maintain the strictest of confidentiality.

Over the upcoming holiday season and into the new year, we wish you all good health, good friends, good food and good times, and like last year, we hope that you will help others. This year we add our hope that you will reach out if you should need help. Remember, we are all in this together, we are stronger together, and we will make it through these tough times!

# Helpline and Hotline Resources

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
If imminent danger call 911

**Veteran Crisis Line** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Helpline** 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

**Find Treatment for Substance Abuse** [www.findtreatment.gov](http://www.findtreatment.gov)

**National Domestic Violence** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

**National Trevor Project (LGBTQ Teen Crisis)** 1-866-488-7386

**OK2Talk Helpline (Teen Helpline)** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Crisis Text line** Text SIGNS to 741741 for 24/7 anonymous, free, crisis counseling

## **WORLD-WIDE VIRTUAL HELP MEETINGS**

Online access to meetings all across the globe 24/7.

**Alcoholics Anonymous** <https://aa-intergroup.org/>

**Al-Anon Family Groups**  
<https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/electronic-meetings/>

**Cocaine Anonymous** <https://ca.org/meetings/>

**Co-Dependents Anonymous**  
<https://coda.org/find-a-meeting/on-line-meetings>

**Crystal Meth Anonymous**  
<https://www.crystalmeth.org/cma-meetings.html>

**Families Anonymous**  
<https://www.familiesanonymous.org/meetings/virtual-meetings/>

**Heroin Anonymous**  
<https://heroinanonymous.org/covid-19/>

**Marijuana Anonymous**  
<https://marijuana-anonymous.org/find-a-meeting/>

**Narcotics Anonymous**  
[https://na.org/?ID=virtual\\_meetings/](https://na.org/?ID=virtual_meetings/)

**Parents of Addicted Loved Ones**  
<https://meetings.palgroup.org/meetings>

**Young People Recovery**  
<http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org/virtual-event-schedule>

## **HOTLINES AND HELPLINES BY STATE**

### **Connecticut**

**COVID-19 Information**  
<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

**Mental Health Crisis Services** call 211

**Department of Child and Family Services**  
[dcf.covid-19@ct.gov](mailto:dcf.covid-19@ct.gov)

**Substance Abuse** 1-800-563-4086

**Domestic Violence** 1-888-774-2900 or visit online at  
[www.ctsafeconnect.org](http://www.ctsafeconnect.org)

**Rent and Evictions during COVID-19 Crisis**  
[www.ctlawhelp.org](http://www.ctlawhelp.org)

**Child Abuse Neglect** 1-800-842-2288

### **Massachusetts**

**COVID-19 Information**  
[www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information)

**Mental Health Crisis Services** call 211 or 508-532-2255  
or text c2t to 741741 (Call2Talk)

**Department of Child and Family Services** 617-748-2000

**Child Abuse** 800-792-5200

**Substance Abuse** 1-800-327-5050 or [www.helplinema.org](http://www.helplinema.org)

**Domestic Violence** 1-877-785-2020

**Suicide Prevention** 1 877 870 HOPE (4673)

**Teen Suicide Prevention** 1-877-252-TEEN (8336)  
3pm to 9pm M-F 9am to 9pm Weekends

### **New Jersey**

**COVID-19 Response** 8:30am to 4:30pm M-F  
(general questions) [askdcf@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:askdcf@dcf.nj.gov)

**NJ Human Services Organizations** [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) (24/7)

**Mental Health Association of NJ** 866-202-HELP(4357)  
8am to 8pm 7 days

**Crisis Text Line** text "NJ" to 741741 (24/7)

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
1-800-572-SAFE (7233) (24/7)

**Department of Children and Families** 1-855-INFO-DCF  
(463-6323) 8:30am to 4:30pm M-F

**Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline** 1-877-NJ Abuse  
(652-2873) (24/7)

**2nd Floor Youth Hotline** 1-888-222-2228 (24/7)

**Children's Emotional and Behavioral Health**  
1-877-652-7624 (24/7)

**MOM2MOM** Peer support for moms of children of special needs  
1-877-914-MOM2(6662) (24/7)

### **New York**

**Crisis Text Line** Text GOT5 to 741741  
(Frontline Workers – Text FRONTLINE NY)

**COVID Information** 1-888-364-3065  
[www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov](http://www.coronavirus.health.ny.gov)

**Office of Mental Health Support** 1-844-863-9314  
[www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)

**Alcohol, Drug, Gambling Addiction** 1-877-8HOPENY  
(846-7369)

**NYS Domestic Violence** 1-800-942-6906

**NYS Office of Children & Family Services**  
1-800-273-6906

**Child Abuse Hotline** 1-800-342-3720

**Veterans Health** 1-888-VETSNY (838-7697)

**Senior Citizen Help** 1-800-342-9871

### **All States**

**Employee Assistance Program (HCAMS)**  
1-888-828-7826 [www.unionsupport.org](http://www.unionsupport.org)

# CONGRATULATIONS 2020 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## Paul T. Burch \$1,000 Awards



**Therese Mierzejewski**  
Social Work  
Concordia College

Daughter of Stephanie Denya  
City of Meriden



**Julia Papanicolaou**  
Psychology/Biology  
University at Albany

Daughter of Julia  
Mahopac CSD



**Mikayla Schmidt**  
Biology  
SUNY Cortland

Daughter of Susanne Petitto  
Three Village CSD



**Megan Rainey**  
Chemistry  
Rhodes College

Daughter of Paul  
Borough of Hawthorne

## Dependent \$500 Awards

<i>Member</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Employer</i>
Olga Abreu	Sabrina Viteri	Roosevelt UFSD	Michelle Dunnings	Ashton	City of Hackensack
Christine Aiello	Julia	Town of Islip	John Fierro	Samantha	Sachem CSD
John Alexandro	James	Uniondale UFSD	Lisa Genovese	Ryan	Brookfield Public Schools
Hiam Atallah	Michael	Regional SD #15	Alex Gillespie	Kayla	West Islip SD
Akeem Bamigbola	Imoleayo Abdul	Sachem CSD	John Glavan	Hana	Locust Valley SD
Cheryl Blamires	Todd	Town of Lewisboro	Kara Heller	Elizabeth	Madison PS
Donna Bolognini	Nicholas	Hewlett-Woodmere SD	Angela Homapour	Kayla	West Hempstead UFSD
Angela Bongiorno-Fenick	Victoria	West Hempstead UFSD	Nichole Hutchins	Kaitlyn	Oneida County
Nancy Boyd	Thomas	Town of Islip	Marilyn Lokken	Ellie	Town of Waterford
Brenda Brown	Delainey	OU BOCES	Jennifer LoSordo	Robert	Sachem CSD
Gina Brown	Michael	Borough of Hawthorne	Susan Loura	Michaela	Darien Public Schools
Marie Brown	Alexandra	Three Village CSD	Lena McCaffrey	Rose	Town of Wilbraham
Allison Burke	John Thrasher	Ridgefield Public Schools	Alan Metivier	Ashley	Waterford BOE
Kelley Caiazza	Christopher	Town of North Greenbush	David Paul	Lauren	City of Troy
Natalie Carbone	Logan	Islip SD	Elizabeth Pendergast	Kiley	Rensselaer County
Susan Ciaburri	Carolyn Kelly	City of Danbury	Isabel Puppolo	Julia	City of Springfield
Susan Clar	Emma	Churchville Chili CSD	Paul Rainey	Matthew	Borough of Hawthorne
Ciorstan Conran	Orion Cummings	Town of Lewisboro	Sonja Roddy	Griffin	OU BOCES
Nicole Cring	Allison	Brockport CSD	Anne Santello	Nicholas	Town of East Haven
Chris Daly	Emilia	Town of Ridgefield PD	Dean Schreiner	Meaghan	Northport-E Npt SD
Erin DeCapua	Caitlin	New Milford BOE	Diane Severino	Zachery	Trumbull BOE
Jane DeGennaro	Martin	Columbia County	Tracie Stanton	Allison	Southington Public Schools
Angela DiSpirito	Gabriella	Oneida County	Jeanmarie Vivian	Nicole	New Miford BOE
Todd & Kathleen Duncan	Ashley	Rensselaer County	AnnMarie Zapolski	Kevin	Town of Islip
			Michele Zatz	Mitchell	NHP-GCP SD

## Member \$500 Awards

<i>Member</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Employer</i>
Christopher Bachand	Rocky Hill Public Schools	Kiera Derrig	Village of Lynbrook	Erin O'Hara	Town of Islip
Allison Ball	Darien BOE	Kelly Flynn	Town of Mahwah	Luz Palermo	City of Springfield
Mildred Bernstein	Commack UFSD	Cheryl Ann Koral	ES BOCES	Mariana Pavic	OU BOCES
Marina Capraro	Town of Killingly	James Landhauser	Town of Islip	Anne Risler	Town of Colonie
Shirley Conyers	E. Haven SD	Michele Landis	Marlboro CSD	Jessica Rosado	Darien Public Schools
Bethany Czernicki	Rensselaer County	Ashley Lanzaro	Stamford PS	Charles Shaver	Ogdensburg Police
Wallace Dennison	Town of Mahwah	Andrea Mazz	Hicksville Public Schools	Shannon White	Town of Islip
				Mary Willis	Stamford Public

Thank you to our Scholarship Committee UPSEU Vice President Kim Nowakowski, Ellen Pleasant, Jamison Facticeau, Beverly Greco, Ellen Mari, Maureen McKay, Geraldine Nigg, Evelyn Overton, Frank Sequenzia, Deborah Stevens, and John Wosnjuk.

# Seven Massachusetts Bargaining Units Join UPSEU Amid COVID-19 Pandemic!!

*We have all had to change how we function at our jobs and homes during this pandemic. You have been fortunate to have guidance from UPSEU representatives and access to our website to help keep you informed and to guide you through these unprecedented times. What if you didn't? Who would you turn to? Several groups had these questions and sought out UPSEU for help.*

It began with the **Greenfield Central Maintenance Department**, who did not belong to a union, and joined UPSEU in April. Greenfield Central Maintenance President and Master Plumber, Steven Chevalier stated during the organizing campaign, "Our department includes licensed, skilled tradesman who work within the schools and city buildings, which set us apart from the rest of the DPW. We have certain professional duties and responsibilities not shared with employees from other departments. That is why it's so important that we join the UPSEU now. Both for the recognition and to make our group more attractive to others who may join us in the future." After the vote he commented, "Thanks again to UPSEU for helping to make Central Maintenance officially in the union!"

**The Deerfield Highway Department**, who were not unionized, also sought our help. In addition the **New Marlborough Highway Department**, another non-union group joined UPSEU. All three bargaining units had the same concerns about who would protect their jobs during a time when municipalities were seeking cost saving measures. Several unionized groups also voted to join UPSEU based on their unhappiness with their level of representation amongst other concerns with their prior unions.

In the **Town of East Longmeadow**, there were two separate bargaining units, **the Supervisors and the Municipal Employees**, which belonged to an association and did not have the backing of a labor union. The secret ballot election process was delayed, however both bargaining units finally had the opportunity to vote to join UPSEU and received the official certification from the State of Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations in June. The Supervisors Unit President Craig Woodward stated, "In the short time that we have been on board with UPSEU, we have developed a solid plan for the upcoming contract negotiations. Communications with our rep has been great, and all

our questions have been answered. Going with UPSEU was definitely the right move for us." Lori Hall, Town Municipal Employees Unit President said, "We are living in an age where fighting for and defending ourselves just isn't enough. We need strength and knowledge behind us, and if you do the research, like I did, you will see that UPSEU will give us both of those things."

In July, the **Greenfield School Custodians and Maintenance Department**, as well as the **Greenfield School Food Service Workers** had the results of their secret ballot elections to leave their current union and join UPSEU, certified by the State of Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations. Both bargaining units were formerly represented by United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE). Each group had the same complaints, which was a lack of representation and failure of the representative to return critical phone calls for weeks on end.

"It has been a difficult year for all of our members, but it is clear that our members appreciate all of the time and diligent work conducted by the UPSEU staff. We recognize that communication is critical for our members and it was imperative for us to keep each of our members informed of their legal rights amidst the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic," remarked UPSEU Representative Roger Stolen. He continued, "UPSEU stands committed to providing the highest level of representation to our members and we are thankful that our members recognize that as well. This could not be more evident, due to the numerous calls that were received during the last several months from our new bargaining units, telling us they received positive feedback from bargaining units that our organization represents."

We welcome these seven new bargaining units in Massachusetts to the rapidly growing UPSEU family!

## UPSEU Welcomes Our New Members

### Enfield School Nurses Vote Overwhelmingly to Affiliate With UPSEU



Melanie Alaimo & Kelly Flanagan



Mary Lou Romano & Diane Stack



Nursing Supervisor Trish Vayda, Jessica Spera  
& Unit President Alyssa Lord

Last November, the Enfield School Nurses Association (ESNA) held a secret ballot election to determine whether to affiliate with UPSEU. The Association was seeking professional day to day representation and the expertise of a labor union for the purposes of contract negotiations. Prior to the election, they relied on outside legal representation for contract negotiations, a dissatisfying experience that inspired them to begin interviewing unions.

The Association interviewed two unions AFSCME and UPSEU. After discussing UPSEU's unique strengths with Regional Director Matt Geer, the ESNA membership recognized that UPSEU was the right fit to service the needs of the bargaining unit. They then voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with UPSEU.

UPSEU Regional Director Matt Geer said, "We are eager to represent such hardworking and dedicated nurses. We have a long road ahead of us, as unfortunately many of their needs went unaddressed over the years. However, UPSEU is dedicated to tackling each and every one of those issues for the betterment of the overall membership."

ESNA President Alyssa Lord said, "The Enfield School Nurses Association was founded in the early 1990's and is comprised of registered nurses. ESNA cares diligently for the medical, mental health and well being needs of students in the Enfield Public School system. As a small association, we faced many challenges and were in search of greater support. After interviewing several unions, we were blown away by what UPSEU could offer us, and the professionalism and expertise of Regional Director Matt Geer. With our new affiliation with UPSEU we have an increased confidence as we return to negotiations and look forward to the many possibilities for us to grow as an association."

### Stamford BOE Security Guards UNANIMOUSLY Vote to Dump Teamsters

As a result of a secret ballot election conducted by the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations (CSLRB), the Stamford BOE Security Guards unanimously voted to dump the Teamsters and join UPSEU.

UPSEU Regional Director Matt Geer stated, "The membership grew tired of the lackluster representation they were receiving from the Teamsters and were determined to find the proper representation. After witnessing the representation that UPSEU was providing to the Paraeducators, as well as the many improvements made at the bargaining table on their behalf, the Security Guards' Executive Board was confident that UPSEU was the union the membership was so desperately seeking. After UPSEU met with the entire membership, it became clear that a huge weight was being lifted off their shoulders, as they knew they finally had a professional, knowledgeable, and experienced labor union to provide them with exceptional representation and expertise at the bargaining table." We welcome the Stamford BOE Security Guards to the growing UPSEU family!

### **ES BOCES Members Overwhelmingly Approve New Pact**

With 88% of the unit voting, UPSEU's Eastern Suffolk BOCES Civil Service Unit members approved a new six year agreement, with 86% voting in favor of its terms. The new agreement includes retroactive wage increases and annual adjustments, increased longevity including a new step, improved promotional adjustments, education stipend improvements for health professionals, increased shift differentials and several other improvements. The most contentious issue during the negotiations was health coverage premiums, since all of the other units were paying more. Ultimately, the issue was resolved through the mediation and factfinding process, to bring a slower increase process over the life of the contract.

Though negotiations once again required the mediation and fact finding process, in the end we prevailed in securing a positive fact finding report which was built on post fact finding as we moved toward securing a fair agreement. The negotiations took place over two years to conclude due to the atrocious initial proposals presented by the agency. However, with the tenacity and patience of the UPSEU negotiating team who sought nothing less than a fair agreement, an agreement was forged. The strong approval gave the negotiating team comfort in knowing that their hard work was appreciated by the membership.

UPSEU's Kevin Boyle commended the tremendous work of the negotiating team who worked tirelessly throughout the process to achieve the agreement. President Boyle stated, "I cannot say enough about the work of the team led by Unit President Tina Fisher and Unit Vice President Mace Scanlon and team members Theresa Bailey, Tom Tennant, Matthew Pavlicek, Mike Greenberg, Julian Hires, Jennifer Schmitz, Laura Donovan and Laura Beatie. They did an outstanding job."

### **Middle Country CSD Monitors Unanimously Approve New Agreement**

A new four year agreement will significantly improve wages for the eighty plus member Middle Country Monitors CSD unit. The agreement focused entirely on wage increases and the addition of new steps at the top of the schedule. UPSEU President Kevin Boyle commended Unit President Theresa D'Amato for her great work and assistance throughout the process.

### **Town of Dickinson Highway Unit Reaches Agreement**



UPSEU's Jose Manjarrez with members Jason Martin & Rennie Smith

UPSEU is pleased to announce that it has reached a three year agreement with the Town of Dickinson. The agreement included wage increases, improved call back benefits, an increase to the equipment and clothing allowance, as well as other benefits. UPSEU thanks the negotiating team members Rennie Smith, Eric Hazen and Jason Martin for their participation. Great Job!

### **Locust Valley Members Extend Agreement**

After engaging with our members related to the unit's goals in the upcoming negotiations, it was determined that continuing the terms of the contract and seeking a continuation of the 2019-2020 raises would be an acceptable approach, short of full negotiations.

After discussions with the district and due to the incredible work of the unit during the pandemic, the district agreed to the unit's position and a new agreement was reached. The unit approved the agreement unanimously. Special thanks to Unit Leader Mike Svitlik and the negotiating team for their outstanding leadership throughout the process.

## Bay Shore SD Security Unit Members Approve Pact



L to R: UPSEU President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr. with members Nazario Carrero, Dayna Giordano, Chief Unit Officer Mike Brown and Richard Sweezey

By a unanimous vote, UPSEU's Bay Shore School District Security Unit members approved a new five year agreement that significantly improves wages annually and adds two new longevity steps. The negotiations were assisted by a PERB mediator. In addition, the contract added new holidays and sick leave days, a new dental and vision plan and a significantly improved life insurance plan. A new snow day provision and improved bereavement was also included amongst other gains, to round out the pact.

UPSEU President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr. commended the negotiating team led by Chief Unit Officer Mike Brown and committee members Nazario Carrero, Dayna Giordano and Richard Sweezey for their outstanding work throughout the process.

## Oradell DPW & White Collar Unit Ratify Contract



L to R: Assistant Shop Steward Gordon Kohles with member Dave D'Angelo and Shop Steward Richard Pickett

UPSEU's Oradell membership has nearly unanimously ratified a new agreement covering a three year term. Contract improvements included an increase in sick time earning and sick bank, as well as significant improvements to all three guides.

The committee consisting of Shop Steward Richard Pickett, Assistant Shop Steward Gordon Kohles, and members Dave D'Angelo and Chrissy Kay did an exceptional job advocating for the DPW and White Collar members.

## Town of Waverly Reaches Agreement



Town of Waverly Member James Brockway & UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Jose Manjarrez

UPSEU is pleased to announce that it has reached a four year agreement with the Town of Waverly. The agreement included, amongst other benefits, an annual increase to wages, an increase to the health insurance buyout and improvements in the call back language.

UPSEU thanks James Brockway for his assistance throughout the process and further wishes him a happy retirement. You will be missed, Jim!

## UPSEU is Made for You

### Westport Association of Educational Secretaries Ratify First Contract

In 2017, the Westport Association of Educational Secretaries executed an affiliation agreement with UPSEU. As a result, UPSEU was certified as the exclusive bargaining representative for all employees in the unit consisting of full time (more than 20 hours per week) clerical workers for the Town of Westport Public Schools. At that time, the membership elected Maryann Garcia as Unit President, Jan Mello as Vice President and Sal Taccone as Treasurer. The unit already had a contract in effect.

Prior to affiliating with UPSEU, the WAES had retained a law firm to handle grievances and negotiate their agreements. President Garcia said, "As we moved through the process it became more and more challenging and more and more stressful. As an Executive Board we did not feel like we were able to attain the improvements we were seeking to our contract and legal fees were mounting. We settled our contract in the early stages of arbitration but we still did not feel we were able to accomplish the goals we set for our association." The WAES membership knew they had to make to change, so they began to investigate the prospect of joining a union and interviewed three different unions. Vice President Mello stated, "The presentation by UPSEU was informative and exceptionally well communicated." President Garcia declared, "As our relationship with UPSEU and Dan Bonfiglio started to develop, it was evident early on that UPSEU was there for us whenever we needed someone to count on, to ask a question or to obtain information."

This time, well prior to the contract expiration, the Executive Board and negotiating team worked with UPSEU to begin preparing for bargaining a successor agreement with the Town of Westport Board of Education. The time spent in preparation and at the bargaining table led to a tentative agreement which included achieving annual wage increases with step movement, seniority based on unit seniority and increased the sick leave accumulation from one hundred twenty days to one hundred fifty days. In addition, WAES/UPSEU members may use up to three days for accrued sick leave per year for the illness of an employee's spouse, child or other family member who resides in the employee's home. The negotiating team successfully reclassified the Benefits Coordinator and the Payroll/Absence Management Coordinator from Category IV to Category V retroactive to July 1, 2020. During the term of the agreement, the medical insurance premium cost share for members was limited to a 1% increase.

The WAES recently ratified their contract and Vice President Mello declared, "The bargaining process this time around was a totally different experience. UPSEU was able to skillfully guide and advise us, while at the same time respect our position and what was important to our members." President Garcia added, "By joining UPSEU and paying dues, we acquired the guidance, support and level of expertise necessary to navigate the negotiation process and advocate for our members." UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Dan Bonfiglio thanked the unit leadership and negotiating team for an outstanding job. The team included President Maryann Garcia, Vice President Jan Mallo and Treasurer Sal Taccone.

### Uncertain Times Prompt Municipal & Supervisors to Quickly Approve Agreements with Above Market Increases

Above market annual wage increases, expanded funeral leave, and improved bargaining unit layoff/recall language were just some of the improvements to their contracts that both the Prospect Municipal and the Supervisors bargaining units were able to negotiate over the summer. The agreement also included a modest increase to employee's health insurance premium. Considering the obvious challenges to negotiating an agreement while practicing social distancing in the midst of the current COVID-19 public health crisis, both groups safely reached separate, yet similar deals with the Town in record time. Following just two negotiating sessions for each bargaining unit, nearly 100% of the membership of both the Prospect Municipal and Supervisors Units attended an outdoor and indoor ratification vote respectively, each of which allowed for ample space between bargaining unit members, all of whom were wearing face masks.

Chris Moffo, Prospect Supervisors Unit President was very pleased to have had UPSEU assist the group in reaching an agreement with the town stating, "UPSEU was extremely helpful in working with the Supervisors and the Town to come to an agreement."



Lisa Munko  
Prospect Municipal  
Unit President

Prospect Municipal Unit President Lisa Munko concurred by adding, "UPSEU was a great help with the negotiations held between the Town of Prospect and the Prospect Municipal Employees bargaining unit. With their help, we were able to quickly reach a favorable new contract, which was in the best interest of our bargaining unit members, as well as the Town of Prospect. I would personally like to thank our UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Cory Garfman for his hard work and diligence in bringing this contract to fruition."

### Connecticut Paraeducator of the Year



Maria Sau  
Windsor BOE  
Paraeducator Unit

UPSEU congratulates Maria Sau for being named Connecticut’s Paraeducator of the Year. Each year the school Paraprofessional Advisory Council presents the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award to one exceptional paraeducator, narrowed down from about 14,000 Connecticut Public School paraeducators.

Maria has been a member of the Windsor BOE Parareducators Unit since 1999 and in her over twenty years of service to the Windsor Board of Education she has benefitted each student she works with. Maria’s principal, Jay Mihalko said, “Maria respects, cares for, supports, and empowers every student that she works with...She sees the best in every child and with encouragement and compassion she motivates her students to achieve. Maria’s driving objective in working with students is, “to model and teach equality throughout the year in school and at home so our children can develop positive attitudes of each and every student’s racial identity.” “Well deserved, Maria,” concluded Kristen Sweet, the unit’s UPSEU representative.

### Retirement Congratulations

UPSEU thanks Paula Verrier for her long standing support of both UPSEU and the members she has served. Paula retired in October, having served as an E-Board member for the Windsor BOE Paraeducators for eighteen years; the last thirteen as the Unit President. Paula’s tenacity and perseverance in assisting members address issues at work has earned her the respect of the membership. Paula has also earned the respect of the district administration due to her willingness to hear and discuss concerns followed by supporting management’s actions when they are contractually accurate and challenging their actions when they are not. Paula says, “The best move we (the unit) ever made was to join UPSEU. Since we switched unions, we have been heard and have been well supported in our jobs.”

Three tips Paula has for Unit Presidents:

1. Encourage reliable members to serve as stewards at each unit work location; appreciate their work and maintain good communication about any issues that come up.
2. Surround yourself (on the E-board) with members that you trust will engage in supporting the membership and will carry through on representing their concerns.
3. Develop and maintain a cordial working relationship with management but don’t lose perspective; your job is to speak up on behalf of the members.



UPSEU thanks Annette O’Keefe of West Hempstead School District for her many years of service to the District and the Unit Membership. Annette served time and time again on the negotiating teams over the years and as a Co-President for the Clerical Unit. *L to R: Angela Homapour, Annette O’Keefe, Denise Lavin, and Karine Yenque.*



Dear Rosa,

*Thank you for helping me miraculously get COVID leave and always being so caring, compassionate, efficient, confidential and frank, supportive, and super professional, as well as friendly. You have helped me avoid the COVID test and you have kept me abreast of all the important issues that have come up during the past five years or more and it is greatly appreciated. You have helped me maneuver and resolve tricky issues with my employers, and you have always fought for me and advocated for me, and you have always been readily available and there for me. You are the best rep I've ever had. You are almost a superwoman. Thank you for everything you've done for me. You are the best! And thanks for always being there, despite your very busy schedule. We are very lucky to have you as our union rep. Stay safe and healthy.*

Princia Wu-Benson

Oneida County White Collar Unit

*Thank you, Kim. It has been a pleasure working with you. You've been a conscientious and hard working union representative. I've appreciated all the time and dedication you've extended to South over the years.*

Karen Ryder

Lynbrook Schools

*I just want to thank Nephty Cruz for attending the budget meeting. Nephty's concern and speaking for the Paraeducators of Stamford is a reflection of his dedication to our problems.*

Rose Shay

Stamford Paraeducators

Dear Kim,

*Thanks for the great email this morning. It is so pleasant to focus on the positive. I have been doing some of what you listed and it feels good to tackle projects we never seemed to have the time to do. Stay safe and hope to see you soon.*

Laura Stiles

Bay Shore Schools

Dear Rosa,

*I just want to thank you again for helping me to resolve my conflict with Oneida County over my pay. I knew from the first day I talked to you, and you offered to meet with me the very next day, that I was in good hands. You have a determination like no other, and I hope the union and your co-workers and superiors appreciate what an asset you are! And thanks for putting up with me as well! You're the best!*

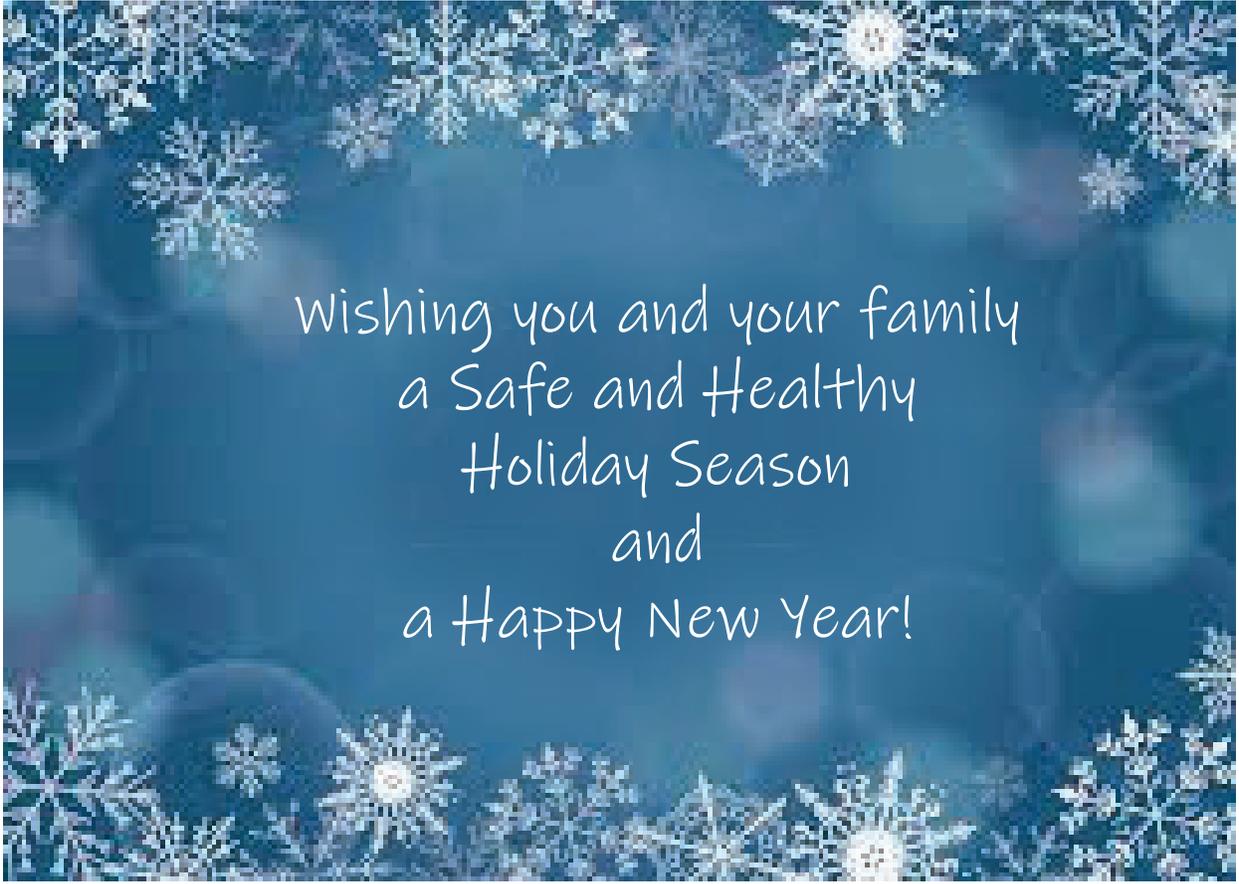
Michele Lockwood

Oneida County

*Thank you Kim for the acknowledgment (in your COVID e-news). I also appreciate the signs the Union posted on the High School property I noticed while leaving work yesterday. It was a nice reminder someone is thinking of the sacrifices to our health and families the few of us that are working are making each day. Today I'm wearing my UPSEU pullover fleece which is nice and warm since the office is so chilly. It's the little things that make your day a little more bearable.*

Heidi Ramirez

Bay Shore Schools



*Making a Difference in the Workplace*



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