



The Retired Educator

Vol. XXVI Issue 2

Winter 2023-24: Dec., Jan., Feb.

**OCREA
General
Membership
Meetings**

10:00 a.m.
(11:30 Feb & May)
First Thursday
Sept.–May
(Jan. no meeting)

Location

Church on the Drive
1914 Edgewater Dr.
Orlando 32804

2023-2024

Theme

OCREA -
Our Legacy Lives On

OCREA Website

ocreafl.org

Facebook

OCREA

OCREA Officers

President
Christine Woods
Vice President
Janice Quint
Rec Secretary
Fran Burns
Cor Secretary
Cathy Thompson
Treasurer
**Jennifer
Cunningham**

FREA Website

frea.org

FREA Convention

May 14-16, 2024
Saddlebrook Resort,
5700 Saddlebrook Way
Wesley Chapel, FL

**President's
Message**

Our year is progressing quickly. Our program in September was about IDignity, and in October we heard about the Heart of Caregiving. All were touched by the stories of each which followed our theme *OCREA - Our Legacy Lives On*, as OCREA members volunteer for IDignity and many are caregivers.

Other programs coming up celebrate the OCLS100th Anniversary, Ronald McDonald House,

along with the regular celebrations.

We share refreshments and fellowship before the programs.

Join us on one of our field trips, as it is fun to meet others in a smaller group.

Check out our website and the OCREA FaceBook page for pictures from our organization.

Read more in the following articles about our scholarships, essay contest, membership, volunteer services, field trips, and other updates.

As always, we are grateful to Addition

Financial for their support.

Next year is approaching quickly. If you would like to volunteer to be on the OCREA board next year, please contact Janice Quint, Gayle Hodges, or Christie Woods.

OCREA - *Our Legacy Lives On!*



*Christie Woods,
M.Ed.*



September speaker, Anne Taylor, from IDignity shared startling statistics regarding those without Identification and the need for volunteers to meet this need.



Our October speaker, author Toni Gitle, spoke about the *Heart of Caregiving* and her book *21 Mistakes Caregivers Make & How to Avoid Them*.

Vice President, Programs, and Retired Educators Foundation of Orange County (REFOC) Scholarship Chair: Janice Quint



Our Legacy Lives On

REFOC: The scholarship committee is accepting applications for two scholarships. The first one is the Educators Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a teacher working towards a master's degree. Please direct teachers to our website to apply. The second scholarship is the FREF/Hawk Scholarship. This scholarship is for a high school senior who will be attending a university in Florida and obtaining a degree in education.

Programs: Our autumn programs have been fantastic. We look forward to our winter meetings. In November, our speaker will be Jane Tracy, from OCLS. Join us to learn all about the library's 100 years of serving our community. In December join us for our Holiday celebration with a wonderful OCPS musical performance.

There is no January 2024 meeting, but in February we honor our 90th birthdays and hear a presentation by Gail Sims. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings.

In order to be considered for these scholarships, applications must be submitted online by January. Both of these scholarships will be awarded in the Spring.

5th Grade Essay Contest Chair: Debbie Smith



The winners of the writing contest about an experience with a grandparent or grandparent figure will now have two more companies providing prizes. Pirate's Cove has given us 4 tickets for miniature golf, in addition to the 4 from Congo River Mini Golf. Dave & Buster's, an arcade and food venue, gave

a \$250 basket full of tickets and presents.

Members are encouraged to reach out to other elementary schools.

The contest is open to private schools, presently including Smith Preparatory Academy and Montessori World School.

The chair must receive all essays by Monday, January 22, which may be mailed,

emailed, or delivered before this date to her home. Find contact info in the bright green OCREA yearbook.

Committee members will arrive early at 10:00 a.m. for the Feb. 1 meeting to judge the finalist. The regular meeting begins at 11:30 a.m. that morning.

Contact Debbie Smith for more information at: kenanddebbiesmith@icloud.com

Volunteer Services Chair: Monica PKP Johnson, Ed.D.



Our Legacy Lives On – Your volunteer hours prove that our talents are strong and that our legacy lives on through the support that we give to education and to our community.

Make sure that you submit your hours each month. If you are not able to attend or to

submit your volunteer hours at the general meeting, send your volunteer total to my email address, cimabonniejean@outlook.com.

Don't forget to send pictures of you volunteering so that we may display them on our volunteer board. If you have any questions, please contact me, Monica Johnson. Take care and keep up your great work.

Membership Chair: Kim Stutsman, Ed.D.

It is gratifying to see that so many of our members are making it an important part of their monthly activities to attend our OCREA meetings. Speakers at our programs have been fascinating and have given us valuable information and things to ponder to make our lives and the lives of those we hold dear better and more



enriching. I hope you are sharing with fellow retired educators the benefits you receive from membership in OCREA: an opportunity to visit with friends—old and new; support of our Foundation and State scholarships; benefits from being a member of FREA; and support of community organizations. Bring along a friend to an upcoming meeting or to one of our cultural events. They will be glad that you asked them. Our current membership is 154. Can you help us reach a goal of 160?

Hospitality Chair: Suzanne Lincoln

Thank you to all who have attended our meetings. September refreshments came from your board members and October's from those whose last names began A - D.

Refreshments for the General Meetings are according to last names. **November:** E-J,



December: K-M, **January:** No meeting, **February:** Pot Luck luncheon and 90th birthday celebration.

Bring refreshments with serving utensils and take them when you leave.

November Volunteers:

Greeters: Claire Stephens and Pat Franklin

Thought for the Day: Anne Gardepe

Table Decorations: Cathy Tapley

December Volunteers:

Greeters: Frank Mattucci and Nancy P-B

Thought for the Day: Gwyn Mercer

Table Decorations: Kim Stutsman

January: No meeting

February: Greeters: Patricia Johnson and Richard Gomer

Thought for the Day: Pat Franklin

Table Decorations: Jennifer Cunningham

Cultural Affairs Chair: Anne Gardepe

We began our cultural outings this year with a tour of House of Hope in October. What a wonderful service they provide! See photo with our group.



Next, a home and garden tour at Nehrling Gardens is planned, 10-11:30 a.m., November 15, 2267 Hempel Ave., Gotha. There is a \$10 minimum donation.

Afterwards, lunch is planned at Yellow Dog Eats, 1236 Hempel.

In February, in honor of Black History Month, a walking tour of Hannibal Square in Winter Park and a visit to the Heritage Center is scheduled. Meet at 2:30 p.m. Lunch TBA with more details forthcoming.

In the spring, we hope to enjoy a play or concert supporting one of our OCPS high schools' performing arts program. If you have a connection to a local high school, please let me know.

Join us for one or more of our 2023-2024 trips!
Annegard64@gmail.com

**2023-24 VOLUNTEER HOURS
REPORT FORM**

Return to Monica Johnson
cimabonniejean@outlook.com

NAME: _____
 Month(s): J F M A M J J A S O N D
 (circle the above months)
 Religious _____
 Literacy _____
 Environment _____
 Ecology _____
 Library _____
 Personal Help _____
 Hospital _____
 Nursing Home _____
 OCREA/FREA _____
 Shopping _____
 Schools _____
 Other Projects _____
Total Hours: _____

**Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF)/
OCREA Scholarship Chairman:
Kim Stutsman, Ed.D.**

Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF) will be awarding scholarships for high school graduates who wish to teach in the State of Florida. The amount is \$4000 over a four-year period, \$1000 per year. The application deadline is January 20, 2024.



Apply online: www.frea.org/scholarships. High school seniors who apply from Orange County may also be eligible for an additional one-time \$1000 *Ruth & Ernest Hawk Scholarship* from Retired Educators Foundation of Orange County (REFOC). If you know of any high school seniors who aspire to be teachers, please encourage them to apply. Local high school Career and College Counselors have received this information.

OCREA Membership Application
Give the application to a friend!



**Orange County Retired Educators Association
2023-2024 Membership Application
Dues: \$55.00 Annually (FREA/OCREA)
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**



Date: _____		_____ New _____ Renew
_____ General Member: Retired School Teacher, School Administrator, School Transportation, School Maintenance, School Cafeteria, School Para, etc.		_____ Associate Member: Any person not affiliated with a school system but wants to support the mission of the Association may apply for membership.
FREA Benefits are fully available to ALL General or Associate members.		
Name and Title		Phone — Cell preferred
Mailing Address		Birth Month and Year
City	State	Zip
E-mail address: _____		

- \$55.00 FREA/OCREA Unified Dues**
- \$ 4.00 Legislative Donation**
- \$ _____ FREF donation**
- \$ _____ OCREA Ernest & Ruth Hawk Scholarship donation**
- \$ _____ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to: OCREA)**

Mail check to:
OCREA
P.O. Box 678236
Orlando, FL
32867

PayPal
Send payment to:
ocrea.treasurer@gmail.com
Please remember to add \$2
to the total to cover PayPal
fee.

Legislative Donations - OCREA and FREA are advocates for your pension and the future of education in the State of Florida. Donations support advocacy for all present/future Retired Educators and other beneficiaries of the Florida Retirement System like First Responders. All donation money will be used in a non-partisan way.



Two Great Ways to BOOST Your Savings!

Get a great return on your savings, at any amount. Think you need to lock up a lot of money to get a great savings rate? Think again!

4.00% APY* Savings Plus Account*

When you take advantage of any of our great checking accounts, you get access to our high yield Savings Plus account that's a great option if you don't plan to keep more than \$5,000 in your savings. This account earns a higher dividend rate and APY than our regular Savings account while providing access to your funds.

Growth Plus Money Market Account**

With our Benefits or Classic Checking account, you get access to our Growth Plus Money Market that's great for growing savings

balances of \$10,000 or more. With a Growth Plus account, you get a great savings rate, but access to your money when you need it. See current Growth Plus savings rates. Visit AdditionFi.com/HighYield to learn more!

Annual Percentage Yield (APY). Rates effective October 1, 2023 to December 29, 2023. *Active Addition Financial checking account required for access. **Active Benefits Checking or Classic Checking account required for access.

Convenient Appointments Available

We have reopened our branches for service at the teller line with limited capacity. For your convenience, we encourage you to schedule an appointment. Visit AdditionFi.com/Appointment to book your appointment today!

2023 Renovate 2 Educate Addition Financial Credit Union Completes

Classroom Makeovers for Four Central Florida Teachers. Four lucky Central Florida teachers started their new school year off in dramatic fashion, moving into some beautifully upgraded classrooms they saw for the first time, just one week before classes resumed.

Our local teachers transform lives through education. To thank them for their hard work and dedication, we selected four lucky Central Florida teachers to have a newly renovated classroom to start off the 23-24 school year! Visit AdditionFi.com/Renovate to learn more!

Addition Financial Holiday Closures

- Monday, December 25 in observance of Christmas Day
- Monday, January 1 in observance of New Year's Day
- Monday, January 16 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Monday, February 20 in observance of Washington's Birthday

Legislative Chair: Claire Stephens



The FREA legislative committee will advocate for these issues this year.

1. Re-instating Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). The legislature stopped the COLA of all retirees in 2011. FREA believes a COLA would help retain teachers.

2. Increase salaries for veteran teachers. The salaries of beginning teachers have increased faster than those of veteran teachers. FREA advocates across-the-board salary increases to encourage teacher retention.

3. Reduce the time a teacher needs to sit out after they have left DROP. Currently someone retiring from FRS cannot work for a year. Reverting to the previous 1 month waiting period will ease

the teacher and substitute shortage.

4. Return the default retirement option to the pension plan. New teachers are automatically placed in the investment plan. Studies show that retirees are better off with a pension. Third-party investors benefit when people are enrolled in investment plans. FREA wants the default moved back to the pension plan; in addition, if new people do not enter the pension plan, it will eventually affect our pensions.

Information Services Chair: Pat Franklin

It is so great to have this cool Fall weather! Get out and take a walk. Walking has over 30 benefits for your body such as gaining strength in your legs, helping your digestion and giving you time to meditate and problem solve.

AARP recently talked referencing that old joke about older people having bulging wallets. Take a look at your wallet. You would be surprised at what people carry that they do not need.

No one needs to see your Social Security card, Passport or Passport card. Don't carry

around your checkbook, library card or all those credit cards you do not use.

You do not need your birth certificate or an extra house key.

Think how much lighter your purse or pocket will be!



ORANGE COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 678236
Orlando, FL 32867

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THANK YOU ADDITION FINANCIAL for sponsoring our Newsletter.

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Jennifer Cunningham

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2022-2024

Judith Hays (2nd term)
Suzanne Lincoln (1st term)

Frank Mattucci
(completing another's
1st term)

2023-2025

Richard Gomer
(completing another's
2nd term)
Prince Kelley (1st term)

Ex Officio

Dr. Gayle Hodges

THE RETIRED EDUCATOR

Published

September, December & March

**Orange County Retired
Educators Association**

PO Box 678236
Orlando, FL 32867

Editors

Yearbook – Jennifer
Cunningham, Christine Woods,
& Dr. Kim Stutsman
Newsletter - Christie Woods

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