



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

### Shelvy Young-Abrams

Dear Paraprofessionals,

We've heard it many times, and it's true: it takes a village to raise a child.

Mayor Bloomberg's budget cuts would burn our villages to the ground.

That's what he's willing to do to our school communities as he cuts a path through the lives of children to reach his political goals. As we go to press, his bid to lay off thousands of teachers is still on the table — despite the fact that the city has a budget surplus — and would hurt everyone working in the

school system. Anyone can tell you that children and educators did not cause the economic crash. Then why make us pay?

Because what's more important than education to "the education mayor" is trying to break the union: reduce our active members, end seniority protections for educators and weaken collective-bargaining rights. But New Yorkers have been fighting back. To those of you who joined me in the thousands-strong May 12 rally, I thank you and thank you.

No matter the outcome this time around, we must brace ourselves for the next onslaught. Our union president, Michael Mulgrew, has vowed to fight as long as it takes to protect our children's right to a good public school education, no matter the economic or political climate. We have to be strong. There's a simple thing many of you can do: Join us. If you have not yet signed a union card, do it today. Stand up and be counted. Look at your pay stub: If it says "UFT-U," then you are a member; if it just says "UFT," then you are an agency-fee payer, not a member, and need to get a membership enrollment card from the school's chapter leader.

Membership is voluntary, but about 98 percent of DOE employees are UFT members, knowing their dues go to everything from educational support services to negotiating and enforcing our contracts to making changes that benefit us at the city, state and federal levels.

Standing together with our colleagues makes us strong. You can help change the lives of children and paras just by becoming a member of the UFT. That way, should anyone want to cut us down, our numbers will still be growing. So be sure to make next school year a UFT year. And in the meantime, have a great summer!

In Solidarity,



Shelvy Young-Abrams



## News you can use

### The best way to upgrade your workday

Paraprofessionals in schools that have a UFT para representative have a united voice and are in a stronger position to make sure their rights under the UFT contract are protected and respected. If you don't have a para rep, it's important to elect one. Speak with the school's UFT chapter leader to find out how to hold an election. Maybe you would like to run for para rep. Sure, the position

requires time and effort, like anything worth doing, but it comes with opportunities to learn leadership skills, poise and political know-how. Think about it!

### Fight back with COPE

Promoting our educational agenda and reinforcing a pro-labor and pro-public education atmosphere is more important than ever in today's political climate, in which those who don't like teacher unions and public education

have a lot of influence. Safeguarding our professional interests and children's rights takes money. Please contribute to COPE, the Committee on Political Education. Speak to your school's UFT chapter leader about getting a COPE card and to learn how your COPE dollars protect our future and that of our students.

### Open Market is the way to go for transfers and excessing

The annual Open Market Transfer Plan period, which runs until Aug. 7, offers online access to school job openings. You do not need a release from your principal to change schools during this period. You may even apply to schools without current openings, and your application will be kept on file until an opening occurs. You can look at vacancies citywide and submit applications online through the DOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov>. You must register on the site even if you registered last year. You must use your seven-digit Employee ID, which is listed as your "Reference Number" on your pay stub, OR your seven-digit EIS ID. For more information, see [www.uft.org/teaching/transfer-opportunities](http://www.uft.org/teaching/transfer-opportunities).

### Get answers to all questions about seniority

If you have any questions pertaining to seniority call your UFT borough office. You can find borough office phone numbers on the UFT website at [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org).

## Our biggest ParaFest yet!



Were you among the 800 people at the 2011 Paraprofessional Festival & Awards Luncheon? If so, you know about the great workshops, speakers, networking and fun. If not, be sure to join us for the *next* ParaFest in March 2012. Watch for announcements in *ParaScope* and the *New York Teacher*. Above, UFT President Michael Mulgrew (top row) joins the 2011 Outstanding Paraprofessional Award winners, Chapter Chairperson Shelvy Young-Abrams and other chapter officers.



# HONOR ROLL

ANTHONY BARNES  
Bronx PS157, MPA,  
Metropolitan College of NY

MASHANTUCK BELL  
Brooklyn IS 302, BA in Psychology,  
Medgar Evers College

TARA BIRKETT-BRAMBLE  
Manhattan Frederick Douglass Academy,  
BS in Organizational Management,  
Nyack College

PATRICIA BROWN  
Queens PS 134, BA,  
York College

LINDA J. COLLINS  
Bronx PS 189, MS in Early  
Childhood Education,  
Mercy College

SHARQUEEN CRUDUP  
Bronx CS 150, AA,  
Mercy College

DEBORAH CUSATO  
Brooklyn PS 154, AA,  
Touro College

JOAN HANSBERRY  
Manhattan PS 87, BS,  
Mercy College

STACY ANN KENNEDY  
Bronx PS 189, BS in Mathematics,  
Mercy College

BEATRICE MAXWELL  
Staten Island IS 34, AA and BA,  
College of Staten Island

LOVENA RAHEEM  
Manhattan PS 72, BS,  
Mercy College

## Para Spotlight

### Menepelle J. Nuhann



Growing up poor in Liberia, striving for the privilege of getting an education, Menepelle J. Nuhann graduated from high school with honors and dreamed of coming to the United States. When he was awarded that opportunity through the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery program, many Bronx kids at IS 217 were the winners. Nuhann, a 2011 UFT Outstanding Paraprofessional, is devoted to helping children succeed.

“I’m always asking myself how I can best help each student,” said Nuhann, who has served as para rep for three of his seven years at the school. His first-hand knowledge of overcoming adversity is an asset when working with special ed students and those with behavioral problems. Sometimes Nuhann will take out pictures that show children’s everyday lives in Liberia, getting the message across to even the toughest kids that they are lucky to be in school.

“I’m from a country where we know by looking through spiritual eyes when someone is frustrated and crying for help, even if they are silent,” said Nuhann. As a crisis-management para, he is intuitive about when children need to talk and when they need space to relax. He sees when kids have great potential “and just need someone to be close to and give words of encouragement.” Once, he saw a silent cry for help from a teacher who was at the end of her rope with students who had intense behavioral issues and he offered to help out in her chaotic class. “Three months later a school safety officer passed by the classroom and stopped in awe because the class was so quiet he didn’t recognize it!” Nuhann said.

### Also in the spotlight...

Congratulations to para Amal Ismaiel of Brooklyn’s MS 2, who was featured as an “Everyday Hero” in the April 14 issue of the *New York Teacher*. Read that article about her interesting work helping Arab children learn English and adapt to a new culture by going to <http://bit.ly/kegGnF>.

**Need help? Call us**

**Para Borough Coordinators**

**BRONX:**

Rosalyn Dorsey  
2500 Halsey Street,  
Bronx, NY 10461  
718-379-6200

**BROOKLYN:**

Reginald Colvin  
718-852-4900  
335 Adams St., 25th Fl.  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

**MANHATTAN:**

Irma Rodriguez  
212-598-6800  
52 Broadway, 10th Fl.  
New York, NY 10004

**QUEENS:**

Anne Curley  
718-275-4400 or 718-830-5600  
97-77 Queens Blvd., 5th Fl.  
Rego Park, NY 11374

**STATEN ISLAND:**

Sandra Flecha  
718-605-1400  
4456 Amboy Road  
Staten Island, NY 10312

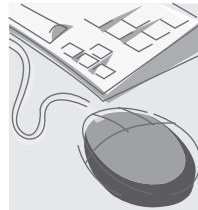
**UFT SUMMER HOURS**

If you need to contact the union,  
please note that summer hours are in effect  
from Tues., July 5 – Thurs., Sept. 1.

Borough offices and  
the central office will be open

**Mon. – Thurs.**

**from 9:00 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.**



**STAY IN TOUCH**

Make sure the union has your email address  
so you get all the latest news and informa-  
tion. Go to the website at [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) and  
click "Sign Up" at the top right.

Once you've signed up, you'll also have access to the mem-  
bers-only sections of the site, such as the fully searchable  
paraprofessionals contract.

Be sure to visit the Paraprofessionals Chapter page on the  
website, too, at [www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals](http://www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals). All  
the latest chapter news, events and more is right there.

