



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Shelvy Young Abrams

Dear Paraprofessionals,

Happy New Year!

Celebrating and relaxing with family and friends is about as good as it gets, and I hope you got a lot of it.

Now that the holidays are over, I'm rolling up my sleeves and getting to work on behalf of my other

family — our students, colleagues and school communities.

First, though, there are some things to be grateful for. We avoided midyear state budget cuts and avoided layoffs by ensuring that all excessed paraprofessionals be placed in other schools. (There was a 1 percent city budget cut). Neither of those wins was handed to us. So the top thing on my gratitude list is all my UFT brothers and sisters who fought to bring those successes home to our classrooms.

As we start 2010, I find myself wishing that expressions like “starting with a clean slate” were as easy as they sound. We're carrying over many crucial issues from last year. For one, contract negotiations are still underway. The UFT Delegate Assembly voted on Nov. 18 to authorize our leaders to seek the intervention of the Public Employment Relations Board if negotiations come to an impasse, and in January we did file for impasse.

For another, a fresh onslaught of budget cuts is just around the corner. The economy continues to struggle and the state budget gap is so huge that we will have to mobilize even more this year than last.

Yet the biggest issue we are facing is a failure of political will in this city to strengthen our public schools. Instead of giving schools the resources they need, Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein are closing them. True, some of the 20 schools — mostly large high schools — that are slated to close are struggling. But others have made progress, including ones that even got bonuses. The administration created the problem in the first place when it formed small academies from dismantled schools with no backup plan, flooding already burdened neighborhood schools with thousands of high-needs students.

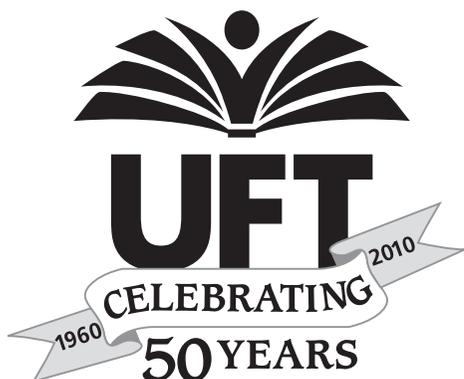
It seems the DOE assumes that somehow, no matter the sacrifice, the overcrowding, the lack of resources, educators are going to come through for these kids. After all, we educators are devoted, and the city banks on it.

But it's time to make sure that children and educators do not suffer at the whims of this administration. Educators, parents, students and communities are fighting back. The UFT is supporting a groundswell of protest. As the *Parascope* goes to press, we are gearing up for a massive Jan. 26 rally at Brooklyn Tech HS outside the PEP meeting that will vote on the closings. For comprehensive coverage on the fight back, check out the special school closing section on the UFT Web site at www.uft.org/parents/school_closings/.

Let's take up the fight, and by the time we join to celebrate our accomplishments at the Paraprofessional Festival in March (see page 2), we will have even more to be proud of.

In Solidarity,

Shelvy Young Abrams



Happy Birthday UFT!

The United Federation of Teachers is celebrating its 50th anniversary at a gala event on March 25. Our chapter has an important place in the union's history. The organizing of 10,000 paras in 1970 was a major milestone for the UFT, the labor movement and, of course, for all of us. If you would like to attend the event look for the coupon in the *New York Teacher*.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

ANNUAL PARA FESTIVAL AND AWARDS LUNCHEON

Saturday,
March 20, 2010



The New York Hilton and Towers

1335 Avenue of the Americas
(at 53rd Street)
Manhattan

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please enclose a \$25 check or money order payable to the UFT/Paraprofessional Chapter and send to UFT/Paraprofessional Chapter, 52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004. Please submit a separate registration form for each participant. **This is not an event for children.** Do not staple a check to the coupon. Registrations are by Social Security number or File/EIS number. Please provide us with that information. Sorry, no refunds.

Registration deadline: March 5

NAME _____

MEMBER NON-MEMBER (must register with UFT member)

SS# _____ FILE/EIS# _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SCHOOL _____ DISTRICT _____ REGION _____

HOME PHONE () _____ SCHOOL PHONE () _____

E-MAIL _____

PARAPROFESSIONAL ANNUAL FESTIVAL & AWARDS

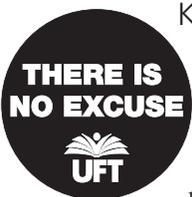
This year the Annual Paraprofessional Festival is on the first day of spring, the perfect day to shake off the winter blahs in an elegant atmosphere, exchange ideas and find ways to renew your commitment as an educator with a slew of fun, interesting workshops. It's a day for you. It's a day for all of us, to celebrate our accomplishments, hear a guest speaker, honor our award winners, and stimulate our minds.

Winners for March 20, 2010

School	Dist.	Name
PS 19M	1	Yolanda Loder-Taïtt
PS 198M	2	Annette Perez
PS 218X	9	Sylvia Hernandez-Bonilla
PS 214X	12	Linda DeGraffe
PS 202K	19	Luz Torres
PS 238K	21	Maria Hoffnung
PS 254Q	27	Phyllis Amoroso
IS 157Q	28	Magdi Fawzi Gorgi
PS 14R	31	Joan Rodolico
IS 24R	31	Craig Swanson
PS 77K	75	James Fleet
PS 811K	75	Anita Adams
FDR HS	79	Johanna Pontillo
Susan Wagner HS	79	Irene Harrison

Congratulations to all!

When to... ...speak up



Keep reporting special ed violations

Thanks to your vigilance and that of your fellow UFTers, the union has received over 1,300 complaints about students with IEPs who are not getting the supports and services to which they are legally entitled. "There is No Excuse," the campaign launched by the union to hold the DOE accountable for these violations, is in full swing. The posters say, "Accept no Excuse. Defend the IEP. It's the law." That's a vow that the UFT takes very seriously and there are staff members ready to investigate your complaint and help you resolve the issue. Those of you who work with special ed kids are an excellent source to bring these violations to light. Few know more than you what these violations really mean on a day-to-day basis, and how it cheats our children of success. Budget cuts are not an excuse!

Please report any special ed violation in your school to the union by calling the hotline or by using the online special education complaint form. Simply go to www.uft.org and click on "There is No Excuse" on the left menu bar. If you're concerned about blowing the whistle, you can find out how to get protection under the whistleblower law on that same page. The hotline number is 212-701-9499. Do the right thing!

...be silent

Your rights when investigators come to the school

Recently we spoke with UFT Director of School Safety Linda Vila-Passione to get you the latest update on your rights when an investigator from the DOE's Office of

Special Investigation (OSI) comes to your school. Whenever there is an accusation of corporal punishment or verbal abuse in a school, the principal is required by law to report it to OSI. Then OSI decides whether it will conduct the investigation or if the principal will. If the principal does, members should go with their union rep to any and all meetings with the principal. If an OSI investigator comes to the school, do not speak with the investigator. Politely and firmly decline, but do request that person's business card. Then speak with your chapter leader and/or district representative as soon as possible, pass on the contact information on the card, and that person will handle the situation from then on.

...get legal representation

If you or a colleague should ever get arrested in school for any work-related reason, here's what you need to know to get legal help. First, the person arrested or the chapter leader should contact the UFT district representative, who will contact the UFT's central office. Then the person arrested should give the UFT representative the name, phone number and the precinct of the arresting officer along with any other details regarding the arrest. If the member is arrested at the school or for something work-related and the UFT is notified, the union will provide a criminal attorney to represent the member up to and through an arraignment.

If an individual employed by the DOE is arrested (regardless of whether it is work related), he or she must immediately notify the principal and the Office of Personnel Investigations (OPI) in writing (Chancellor's Regulation C-105). The address is OPI, Department of Education, 65 Court Street, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

You can travel with kids on a class trip...

Have fun. But NO WAY should you pay your fare. You are not required to under the UFT paraprofessional contract. If the school wants you to accompany a teacher on a class trip, then the school foots the bill for your transportation, admission fees and other expenses that the trip incurs. What's more, Article 4-B of the contract protects your duty-free lunch even when you're on a school trip. If you don't take time away from students to eat, then you're entitled to take the time when you arrive back at school. If you get back too late, see your chapter leader, who should meet with your supervisor or principal to arrange for compensatory time.

But don't travel with kids to suspension sites!

If you're a special ed para and your student is suspended, you stay behind at your school and get another assignment. You don't travel with the child to the suspension site. That's your right. The sites are required to be staffed with the appropriate personnel to meet the needs of the student. If you are asked to travel with the student to the site, alert your chapter leader or district representative.

Keep it honest...

With the layoffs of many school aides, paraprofessionals are being asked to do the work of these aides. That includes lunchroom duty, hall patrol and office work. Don't do it. Do not work out of title. You are violating your own hard-won contract. You're taking away the work of school aides who should not have been laid off in the first place and you're making it easy on the administration that laid them off. You're also doing a disservice to school secretaries. It's all around bad news.

Keep your eyes on the prize...

Maybe you've done some secretarial work and enjoyed it. If you find yourself wanting to become a school secretary, do it the right way through the Career Training Program for Paraprofessionals. Or become a teacher or guidance counselor! To find out which of our flexible, low-cost college degree programs suits your experience and goals, call Cecile Nugent at the DOE at 718-935-2296. We are proud of our paras who have advanced themselves professionally. Check out the honor roll in the next issue!

NEED HELP? CALL US

Para Borough Coordinators

BRONX:

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

BROOKLYN:

Reginald Colvin
718-852-4900
212-598-9501
335 Adams St., 25th Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11201

MANHATTAN:

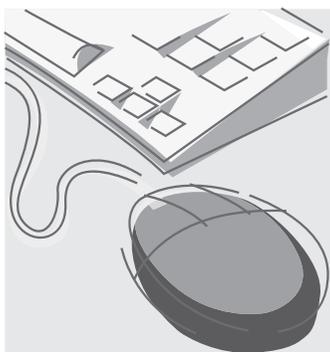
Irma Rodriguez
212-598-6800
52 Broadway, 10th Fl.
New York, NY 10004

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



And keep in touch!

Please sign up on the union's Web site at www.uft.org to make sure you get the latest news and information from the Paraprofessional Chapter and the UFT.

Visit our chapter's Web page by finding it under "My Chapter" in the left menu bar, and then click the "sign up" button on our chapter's page (www.uft.org/chapter/paraprofessional).

Most of the union's communication is by e-mail only, so it's crucial that you sign up. Check the chapter's Web page regularly for updates as well.