



Letter from the chair:

Shelvy Young-Abrams

As the New Year rolls in, I find myself thinking about numbers and their significance in our lives. That big new number, 2011: What will it bring? This year we have a new governor and a new chancellor. We also have a new shot at turning things around for special ed students with the UFT's new Raise The Bar campaign.

Then there's a number I'm proud of. One out of 10 reports filed under the No Excuse campaign was filed by a para. Every one of you who reported when schools were not complying with mandated services for our most vulnerable

students made a stand and did right by those children. I thank you. This year I want to see an even greater number of reports under the Raise The Bar campaign, which goes beyond compliance to effectiveness.

The number 14 has a special meaning for me this year. That's the number of paras being honored at the 30th annual Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon!

There's another number I'm looking at, which is a big minus for public education: 26 schools are slated to close this year. When schools are struggling, parents want them fixed, not closed. The DOE should stop giving lip service to this idea and make a real effort to help schools in trouble, not just sit back and watch them get worse.

So join me this year to do whatever we are asked to do for the paras, teachers, students and families in these school communities. Together we can do it. Because, although no one knows what a new year will bring, of one thing I am certain: There's strength in numbers

In Solidarity,
Shelvy Young-Abrams

Raise the Rafters

Come to the 30th annual Paraprofessional Festival & Awards Luncheon

Date: **March 12, 2011** Time: **8:30 am - 3:00 pm**

Location: The New York Hilton Hotel, 1335 Avenue of the Americas, NYC

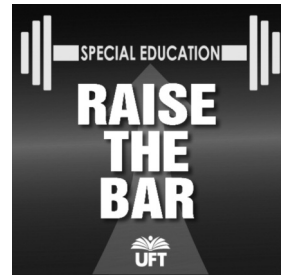
BREAKFAST • FABULOUS WORKSHOPS • ELEGANT LUNCHEON
INTERESTING SPEAKERS • DOOR PRIZES

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER NYC COMPTROLLER JOHN LIU
AND SPECIAL GUEST DR. BOB LEE FROM WBLS RADIO**

Register now using the form on page 2; it will also be in the *New York Teacher* and in the Paraprofessionals Chapter section on www.uft.org.
Cost is \$25 per person. Sorry, no accommodations for children.

Continued on page 2

Raise The Bar



Paras first responders in new special ed campaign

The new Raise The Bar campaign makes sure schools are in compliance with IEPs plus makes sure those supports

are working! Are students getting mandated services? Are services appropriate and adequate? Are students on track? Is your Children First Network helping you raise the bar for students with disabilities? Report, report, report. Few know what's happening on the ground as paras do. This campaign needs you. It's strictly confidential. Get active, get details, get flyers and get simple forms that can change lives. Speak to your rep or go to <http://www.uft.org/campaigns/raise-bar>.

Hats off to paras

Chapter has more visibility in UFT newspaper and website

You spoke; we listened. Collaboration and technology helped. Paras are getting more of a presence in the union newspaper and on the website. Check out the Know Your Rights column just for paras in the *New York Teacher* online if you missed it in the Dec. 16 edition. Have a question about the contract? Want the latest in news and views? Check out the beautiful, updated, upbeat UFT website and especially the paraprofessionals section, at www.uft.org. Click on Paraprofessionals under Our Chapters.

Hats off to providers

Congrats to child care providers for 45K back pay win

Women devoted to educating kids, determined to get paid what they're worth and what they're owed... sound familiar? That determination was what founded the para chapter just over 40 years ago. So we know just how sweet the providers' back pay win tastes. The providers' chapter and the UFT worked with the Administration for Children's Services, and in November, they recovered close to \$45,000 in back wages for 16 home child care providers! Spread the word about our sisters' victory.

Knowing your rights

It's important to know what to do if arrested, investigated or fired

If you are arrested, you must notify your principal and the DOE immediately to protect your job. Call your principal from the precinct. Notify your UFT district representative as soon as possible, who will in turn notify the designated borough staffer to come to your assistance. If you are involved in a school investigation, do not speak to anyone about the incident. Ask the investigator for his or her card and say you will gladly make an appointment to meet at another date with your union rep. If you are fired, go to your UFT borough office to file a grievance and to speak with your district rep about finding out why you were fired.

Raise the rafters, continued from page 1

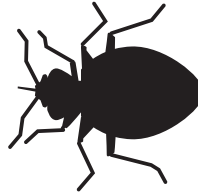
Meet the keynote speaker: City Comptroller John Liu

A smart fiscal steward devoted to enhancing and protecting the livelihoods of working families, John Liu is loyal to his New York City public school roots, has a solid record on education and has never

Help make bed bugs dead bugs

What to do if you school has 'em

If you suspect that your school is infested with bed bugs, there is a protocol to follow that ensures proper identification and a site visit from a DOE pest control technician. A state law requiring school health officials to notify parents if bed bugs are found on school premises goes into effect July 1, 2011. Principals should have a specimen collection kit that can be used to send a dead bug to the DOE's Pest Management Unit for confirmation. You




should also notify the UFT Safety and Health Department at 212-598-9287. For a copy of the protocols go to www.uft.org and look in the Safety and Health section on the Our Rights page, or simply type "bed bug protocols" in the search box.

Keep release time a hassle-free time

Misusing it will cost you

Release time is for attending undergraduate courses only. Using it to pursue a master's degree is considered "theft of service" and requires having to pay back the wages earned while pursuing the degree on release time.



paras bettering themselves through higher education

Honor Roll

Nancy Bernard • PS 6, Brooklyn, BS, Mercy College, Organizational Management

Jocelyn Sinanan • PS 6, Brooklyn, BA, Medgar Evers College, Psychology

PARAFEST 2011 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. Sorry, no refunds. **Registration deadline: March 4**

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 _____

I PREFER TO BE SEATED WITH (NAME, SCHOOL, DISTRICT) (10 PEOPLE TO A TABLE):
