



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR Shelvy Young-Abrams

*Happy New Year!*

Although I always get excited about the possibilities that a new year brings, dealing with SESIS reminds me that “new” doesn’t always mean “happy.”

Many paraprofessionals who provide individual support services to special edu-

cation students are required to keep attendance records for their students. For years, attendance was kept in attendance booklets. You filled in some information about the student and the service at the beginning of the year and you entered an attendance code on the calendar for each day of the week. For school holidays that weren’t grayed out, you entered an “H.” The booklets weren’t popular... at least not before the DOE implemented the new SESIS encounter attendance program.

SE SIS is the new Special Education Student Information System. Now, instead of entering one code for each day, paraprofessionals who are required to report student attendance must go online to record attendance online. That means, the paraprofessional must get access to the system, learn how to use it, find an available computer, log on, pull up the student’s information, complete 12 different items, and then “certify” the record as accurate.

Aren’t computers supposed to make things easier? What happened to “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it?” And, by the way, where are paraprofessionals supposed to get time

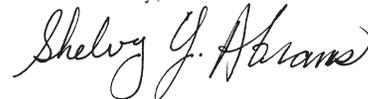
during their work day to complete this task?

We hear you. The UFT has taken several actions to make the DOE fix the problems associated with SESIS. One of these is a union-initiated grievance for money for the time you spend during lunch and outside of your work day to record attendance in SESIS. If we prevail, we will need to present evidence to support our monetary claim. Please keep records of the time you spend before and after school and during your lunch period doing SESIS data entry.

SE SIS also affects the ability of all paraprofessionals who work with students with disabilities to access students’ IEPs. To ensure students get the services and supports they are entitled to, paraprofessionals with IEP implementation responsibilities must review and have ongoing access to their students’ IEPs. Paraprofessionals who do not have access to paper copies of their students’ IEPs or ready access to a computer to review the IEPs online should ask for access to a paper copy. If they don’t receive it, they should file a special education complaint at [www.uft.org/special-ed-complaint-form](http://www.uft.org/special-ed-complaint-form).

Despite this new “time-saving” process we’re dealing with, have a fabulous year! And don’t forget to join us this year’s Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon on March 10 (read on for details.)

In Solidarity,



Shelvy Young-Abrams

## CELEBRATE our big win on time clocks!



Paraprofessionals in schools and school-based programs such as LYFE and hospital schools no longer have to punch time clocks, thanks to a major win by the UFT’s Grievance Department. The union argued that in 1988, the DOE eliminated the use of time clocks for all UFT professional staff, including paras. The arbitrator ruled in the UFT’s favor,

finding that all paras, except those assigned to district and central offices, are exempt from routinely using time clocks. In cases of documented individual abuse, such as evidence of excessive lateness, a para may be required to use the time clock for a predetermined period of time. If paras in your school are being told to routinely punch time clocks, please call your UFT borough office immediately.



# COME JOIN US! ANNUAL PARA FESTIVAL AND AWARDS LUNCHEON

Saturday,  
March 10, 2012



**The New York Hilton and Towers**  
1335 Avenue of the Americas  
(at 53rd Street)  
Manhattan  
**8:00 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 2**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Update your skills

### • Professional development

Paras hired after Feb. 1, 2004 who have completed 75 hours of acceptable professional development during each subsequent five-year PD period (after obtaining 18 college credits and a Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate) will be required to show proof of meeting this requirement. The DOE is to announce the process for submitting PD staff development hours toward meeting the state-required hours of PD. Look for updates on the Para Chapter webpage, [www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals](http://www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals). In the meantime, hold on to all paperwork!

### • Introduction to SubCentral new release 2.0

The DOE is upgrading its automated absence management and placement tool, SubCentral System. The new version is similar to the previous one, with a new look and some changes designed to expand and substitute management capabilities. For more information, including a training video, go to <http://subcentral.eschoolsolutions.com>. You can also get information and vital links at the UFT website at [www.uft.org/chapter-news/introduction-new-release-subcentral-paraprofessionals](http://www.uft.org/chapter-news/introduction-new-release-subcentral-paraprofessionals).

## Upgrade your title and salary

The DOE has launched a new online title upgrade application process for paras. It includes an email notification system and a new Certificate of Salary Upgrade to ensure timely, accurate payments. In-service paras must file within six months of completing coursework and new hires must file within six months of their hire date to receive retroactive payments. Supporting transcripts must be sent by certified mail to the Office of Salary Services, 65 Court St., Room 815, Brooklyn, NY 11201, or hand delivered to the HR Connect walk-in center, room 102, where a receipt will be issued. Paper applications will be accepted only until March 2, 2012.

You can access the application at <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net>. For phone inquiries, call HR Connect at (718) 935-4000. For further assistance, contact the salary representative at your UFT borough office.

## Upgrade your child care

You may be eligible for new child care subsidies, including afterschool child care. To find out if you meet income and residency requirements, call (212) 558-2244.

## Get free income tax preparation

You can get free income tax preparation at your UFT borough office if you are a New York City resident and earn under \$50,000 if you have dependents or under \$18,000 without dependents. In order to schedule an appointment you must register online: <https://uft.wufoo.com/forms/free-income-tax-preparation>.

## STAY CONNECTED

### On the web:

Check out the “What’s New” section for paras at [www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals](http://www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals).

### At your

### UFT borough office:

Daisy DeJesus, the social service coordinator for paras, can assist you with leaves of absence and personal issues. She is based at the UFT’s Manhattan headquarters and makes monthly visits to the union’s borough offices: Brooklyn on the first Monday, Queens on the second Tuesday, Bronx on the third Wednesday and Staten Island on the fourth Thursday. For more information, call her at (212) 598-9291 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

### In times of trouble:

If the police should arrest you in school for any reason, work-related or not, the UFT will be at your side to help and provide you with a criminal attorney. To find out what you should do, go to [www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals/you-should-know](http://www.uft.org/chapters/paraprofessionals/you-should-know).

## Stay aware about leaves of absence

If you have direct deposit, you must ask your payroll secretary to take you off payroll for an unpaid leave of absence. Otherwise, you will continue to get paid and subsequently owe money to the DOE, which will recoup payment once you return to work.

# Para Spotlight

## Deborah DiGirolamo



For her selflessness and resourcefulness in helping a community in need, Deborah DiGirolamo is the winner of the first Humanitarian of the Year Award. Since Hurricane Irene hit the Schoharie Valley in upstate New York, where she and her family have a vacation home, this Brooklyn paraprofessional from PS 185 has driven vanloads of supplies to the devastated area.

"I love the community, which was very welcoming to me when we moved there six years ago," said Deborah, who collected donations largely by hanging up a flier in her school faculty lounge.

"I load up my vehicle on Thursday afternoons and on Fridays after school I drive up to the valley," she said.

When the community that had opened its arms to her lost all but its soul in the floods, Deborah opened her heart and gave back.

## Parafest award winners

### Congratulations to:

Deborah DiGirolamo, PS 185, Brooklyn District 20, Humanitarian of the Year Award

### And to all the Outstanding Paraprofessionals:

#### Brooklyn

Giovanni Espinoza, PS 156, D23  
Jean Trentacosta, PS 247, D20

#### Bronx

Christopher Astacio, PS 86, D10  
Lorraine Cruz, PS 68, D11

#### Manhattan

Beulah (Beah) Canty, PS 76, D3  
Sharon Curtis, PS 146, D4

#### Queens

Maria M. Gonzalez, PS 90, D27  
Sim Grosshandler, PS 254, D27

#### Staten Island

Michelle Hansen, PS 42, D31  
Stanley King, IS 24, D31

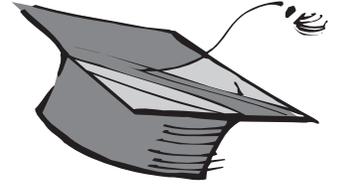
#### High schools

Milagros (Millie) Maisonet,  
Susan E. Wagner HS, Staten  
Island, D76/31  
Benedicta Romer, Automotive  
HS, Brooklyn, D76/14

#### District 75

Haidy Roshdy, PS 721  
@ McKee HS, Staten Island  
Eileen Winslow, PS 993  
@ 130, Queens

## HONOR ROLL



### Kudos to our newest graduates!

#### Brooklyn

ELLIE FELDMAN  
PS 238, BS, Touro College  
LYNN GRASSO  
PS 238, BS, Touro College

#### Bronx

ORFELINA CISNEROS  
PS 188, MS, Lehman College  
DIANA ORTIZ  
PS 188, BA, Lehman College  
ENCARNACION RAMOS  
PS 46, MS, Mercy College

#### Queens

ALIYAH LADSON  
PS 76, MS, New York Institute of Technology  
ANNA MACIEIASZEK  
PS113, AA, LaGuardia Community College  
CHARLEEN WALKES  
PS 60, BS, York College

#### Staten Island

ELLEN DICARO AZZATO  
PS 52, BS, Empire State College  
GINA COSTANZA  
PS 52, BA, Empire State College  
TONI FRANK  
PS 52, BS, Empire State College  
DONNA ROMANI  
PS 52, BA, Empire State College

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#### MANHATTAN

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#### STATEN ISLAND

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