Paraprofessional chapter members joined thousands of fellow unionists and labor supporters at the New York City Labor Day parade on September 12.

If you run into any issues or have any questions, you should call your borough office and speak to the paraprofessional borough coordinator there.

**BRONX**
SHARON ANDERSON
718-379-6200 • 2500 Halsey Street

**BROOKLYN**
SHIRLEY LANEY
718-852-4900 • 335 Adams St., 25th Fl.

**MANHATTAN**
MARGARET DALTON-DIAKITE
212-598-6800 • 52 Broadway, 10th Fl.

**QUEENS**
PENNY SETOUTE
718-275-4400 • 97-77 Queens Blvd., 5th Fl.
Rego Park, NY

**STATEN ISLAND**
SANDRA FLECHA
718-605-1400 • 4456 Amboy Road
LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON
Shelvy Young-Abrams

Welcome back to another school year!
I hope you enjoyed the well-deserved break and used it as a time to relax and rejuvenate.

Our ranks are growing in New York City schools because of the importance of your role in helping to make sure that all students have their needs met.

But here in New York and across the country, unions and public education remain under attack. The single biggest threat now is the possibility that the U.S. Supreme Court will within the next several months overturn the requirement that public-sector workers who are covered by a union’s collective bargaining agreement pay a certain amount of fees even if they don’t join the union.

If the court decides in the case of Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association that nonmembers don’t have to pay anything to the union, the financial viability of public unions will be at risk.

Make no mistake – the Friedrichs case is driven by anti-union forces in our country who want to destroy labor and take away our influence.

An enormous amount is at stake with this case.

Now more than ever we must remain united and vigilant. Each of us needs to do our part! I urge you to join us this year at our chapter meetings and participate in union events.

I look forward to seeing you soon. Thank you for all that you do.

In Solidarity,

Shelvy Young-Abrams, Paraprofessionals Chapter Chairperson
What does it mean for paras to be excessed?

Our contract outlines important rules regarding the placement of excessed paraprofessionals.

Excessing refers to the reduction of staff in a particular school when the number of available positions in a title or license area is lower than the number on staff.

Any paraprofessionals at risk of being excessed must be informed before the end of the prior school year — no later than June 15 or earlier if possible. However, if circumstances require it, a para may be excessed during the school year.

When excessing is to occur, paraprofessionals shall be excessed in reverse order of seniority, meaning those least senior are excessed before those with more seniority. Those paraprofessionals who have a specialty or provide unique services in their school may be exempt from this process.

If you are excessed, you will be placed into a vacancy within your district, or if such vacancy is not available, then in a vacancy within the same borough. If a vacancy within your borough is not available, you will be assigned to a vacancy citywide. You must report to your designated school until you receive notification that you have been appointed to your next assignment.

Any paraprofessionals who have been excessed to another school may request an opportunity to return to the school from which he or she was excessed if within a year a vacancy should occur in that school, as stated in Article 12D of our contract:

"A paraprofessional who has been excessed to another school may request an opportunity to return to the school from which he/she was excessed if within a year a vacancy should occur in that school. Such a request will have priority over any other transfer or appointment to that vacancy, and it shall be effectuated at the next reorganization of the school to which the paraprofessional is returning, except that should the vacancy occur within ten school days after the paraprofessional is excessed, he/she shall be informed of the vacancy and he/she may return to the school immediately."
Know the rules on release time

The Department of Education grants 2½ hours of release time with pay each week to eligible paraprofessionals who are attending or taking online courses at an accredited college or university.

Paraprofessionals must complete a total of at least five semester hours or credits during that same semester of undergraduate study to be eligible for release time.

All eligible paraprofessionals must adhere to the following guidelines:

• Release time taken during summer session one must be completed by June 30.
• Release time will not be granted during the months of July and August.
• Release time cannot be used to attend classes during the scheduled workday unless agreed upon by the school principal or the principal's designee.
• Release time does not apply to substitute paraprofessionals.
• Release time cannot be rescheduled.

Remember to submit all course documentation within one month following completion of the semester. It is the responsibility of each participating paraprofessional to submit to the principal or designee a copy of the transcript, grade report or other substantiating documentation indicating completion of the courses for which release time was granted.

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She believes her new role enables her to look for creative ways to make a positive impact throughout all the sites of her school. Collaboration is key both within the chapter and in the chapter’s relationship with administration, she said. “My goal is to work together with the principal so that we can have a safe environment and try to meet in the middle,” Cruz said.

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paras serving as chapter leaders, which is triple the number in 2012.

Dache said he already cherishes serving on the union’s front line representing members.

“You become a social worker, a mediator and a lot of things that members are looking for,” he said.

Another para who is a newly elected chapter leader, Magdalena Cruz, at P 226, a District 75 school in Manhattan, said she believes her new role enables her to look for creative ways to make a positive impact throughout all the sites of her school. Collaboration is key both within the chapter and in the chapter’s relationship with administration, she said. “My goal is to work together with the principal so that we can have a safe environment and try to meet in the middle,” Cruz said.

Save the date for our Paraprofessional Awards Luncheon!

Make sure to mark your calendar for our 35th annual Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon.

Date: Saturday, March 12
Time: 7:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Location: New York Hilton Hotel, 1335 Avenue of the Americas

BREAKFAST • FABULOUS WORKSHOPS • ELEGANT LUNCHEON • INTERESTING SPEAKERS

The day will include an awards luncheon, workshops and other activities. And don’t forget to submit nominations for this year’s Outstanding Paraprofessionals Awards! You can find the nominating form on our website on the Paraprofessionals Forms page at www.uft.org/para-fest-nomination-form. More details on the event will be forthcoming.