



HONOR ROLL

Congratulations to our chapter's newest graduates!

MARGARITA GARCIA

PS 32X MS, Lehman College

MARIA GOMEZ

PS 32X MS, Lehman College

MARIELA GALEANY

PS 41X MS, Lehman College

BRIDGET LAWTON

City as High School BS, Boricua College

Annual Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon!

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2015

We hope you will join us for our annual awards ceremony and luncheon. The day will include workshops and other activities.

Don't forget to submit nominations for this year's Outstanding Paraprofessional Awards!

You can find the nominating form on our website on the Paraprofessional Forms page at www.uft.org/files/attachments/outstanding-paraprofessional-nomination-2015.pdf.

More details on the event will be forthcoming.



PARA BOROUGH COORDINATORS

There is a paraprofessional borough coordinator in each of the five boroughs to answer all your questions.

- BRONX SHARON ANDERSON 718-379-6200 2500 Halsey Street
BROOKLYN SHIRLEY LANEY 718-852-4900 335 Adams St., 25th Fl.
MANHATTAN IRMA RODRIGUEZ 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

PARAPROFESSIONALS CHAPTER UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS 52 Broadway, 10th Floor New York, NY 10004

United Federation of Teachers • October 2014



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON Shelvy Young-Abrams

Welcome back for the new school year, a more promising year than we've had in a long time.

Our new contract not only secures our benefits and improves our salaries, but also gives paraprofessionals a voice in determining the kind of professional development we need to develop our professional skills and to meet certification requirements.

For too long we have sat through hours of professional development designed for people in other job titles during required citywide training days and at our schools.

Now, we have a voice in developing training specifically designed to meet our needs and improve our skills — the appropriate training you have asked for.

I, as your chapter leader together with other chapter members, serve on the citywide Paraprofessional Staff Development Committee to review and develop that training. But it is very important that each of you make your voice heard!

I urge you to speak up, join the professional development committee at your school or at least attend the committee's meetings. Make sure that the professional development at your school meets the needs of the paraprofessionals.

Take full advantage of the voice and support available to us under our new contract. Be an active member of your school community to strengthen and build respect for paraprofessionals.

Please don't forget to save Saturday, March 21, for our annual Paraprofessional Festival or to nominate a colleague to be honored that day.

Have a great year!

In Solidarity,

Shelvy G. Abrams

Shelvy Young-Abrams Paraprofessionals Chapter Chairperson

DEAR COLLEAGUES,



This new school year begins on a brighter, more hopeful note for all of us.

Our new contract gives paraprofessionals a voice in developing the kind of professional training you want to further

your career and the invaluable work you do in our schools. But for our contract to fulfill its potential, it is up to us to implement it.

Make sure you let your school's professional development committee know what kind of professional development you need. Your union is here to help you.

Your work assisting our students and teachers in classrooms across the city is vital to the success of our schools. Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Michael Mulgrew

Michael Mulgrew, President

A team effort on certification By DOROTHY CALLACI

Do you remember the letters that thousands of paraprofessionals received during this past spring break warning them that they could lose their jobs over certification issues?

The problem was resolved thanks to the efforts of teams of UFT staffers and paraprofessionals who — by working days, nights and weekends throughout the summer — saved the jobs of all but

about 49 of the 4,000 paras who received the warning letters.

As soon as the letters were received during spring break, the UFT made thousands of calls reassuring all paras that anyone threatened with termination would be helped by the union in every way possible.

Next, scores of information meetings were held in each borough and in 940

schools to help paraprofessionals understand what they needed on certification and what they had to do.

Most paras who received the warning letters had completed the required course work, but had never filed their documents with the State Education Department. Computer workshops helped expedite the flood of paperwork that needed to reach the State Education

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All about certification

Paraprofessionals hired full-time by the DOE after Feb. 1, 2004 must hold a Level I, Level II or Level III Teaching Assistant Certificate from the New York State Education Department. Paraprofessionals hired prior to 2004 were grandfathered in and do not need to fulfil any of the new requirements. The requirements for each level are:

Level I

- ◆ **Education** – High school diploma or GED
- ◆ **New York State Certification Exam (ATAS)**
- ◆ **Workshop** – Child abuse identification
- ◆ **Workshop** – Dignity for All Students Act
- ◆ **Workshop** – School Violence Intervention and Prevention
- ◆ **Fingerprint clearance**

Certification expires after three years if you do not have the nine credits to move on to Level II or 18 credits to move on to Level III.

Level II

- ◆ **Education** – High school diploma or GED
- ◆ **College coursework** – 9 semester hours
- ◆ **New York State Certification Exam (ATAS)**
- ◆ **Experience as a New York State-licensed teaching assistant** – 1 year
- ◆ **Workshop** – Child abuse identification
- ◆ **Workshop** – Dignity for All Students Act
- ◆ **Workshop** – School Violence Intervention and Prevention
- ◆ **Fingerprint clearance**

Certification expires after three years if you do not have the nine additional credits (for a total of 18 credits) to move on to Level III.

Level III*

- ◆ **Education** - High School diploma or GED
- ◆ **College coursework** - 18 semester credits
- ◆ **New York State Certification Exam (ATAS)**
- ◆ **Experience as a New York State-licensed teaching assistant** – 1 year
- ◆ **Workshop** – Child abuse identification

- ◆ **Workshop** – Dignity for All Students Act
- ◆ **Workshop** – School Violence Intervention and Prevention
- ◆ **Citizenship status** – INS Permanent Residence or U.S. Citizenship
- ◆ **Fingerprint clearance**

*Important things to know about Level III certification:

- ◆ The Level III certificate remains valid continuously as long as 75 professional development hours are completed every five years. This five-year professional development cycle begins on July 1 following the issuance date of the certificate.
- ◆ The DOE usually reaches out to paraprofessionals with Level III certification in November or December of the last year of the five-year cycle to let them know their 75 required hours must be completed by the end of June. Every para collecting professional development hours should always check with their principals first.
- ◆ If you are a Level III certificate holder, you must keep a record of all your professional development activities during the five-year cycle. Required documentation includes:
 - ★ Provider name
 - ★ Date and location of activity
 - ★ Description of activity
 - ★ Hours completed
 - ★ Verification of attendance
- ◆ Records should be kept up to date. Do not submit your forms to the State Education Department. Hold on to your records until the DOE reaches out to you by mail.
- ◆ If you have any concerns or questions, please call the UFT licensing and certification office at 1-212-420-1830.

A team effort on certification, *Continued from page 1*

Department by Aug 31.

And, when 2,500 paraprofessionals discovered they needed the six-hour workshop on the new Dignity for All Students Act, UFT staffers put together 10 workshops with 300 participants each. While the college fee for the workshops was \$100 or more, the UFT price was a more affordable \$25.

UFT President Michael Mulgrew called

the team effort “extraordinary, an example of our union’s commitment to protect and support each of our members.”

Chapter Leader Shely Young-Abrams said, “The early weeks were so chaotic and scary, we all wondered if we could mobilize fast enough to meet the deadline.

““The union came through,” Young-Abrams said. “In times of crisis, the UFT

can be counted on to do all it can for its members.”

Rose Ann Cimino, a veteran paraprofessional at PS 132 in Williamsburg, wrote a thank-you note to the paraprofessional team that had worked one-on-one to help endangered colleagues. “You took me under your wing,” she wrote, and “helped me keep a job I love.”

Our chapter’s new vice chairman



Reggie Colvin (center) is flanked by Shely Young-Abrams, Paraprofessionals Chapter Chairperson and Hector Ruiz, 2nd vice chairperson.

Reggie Colvin has done it all. The 30-year paraprofessional veteran and now the new 1st vice chairman of the UFT paraprofessionals chapter has been actively involved over the years in helping to raise the status of paraprofessionals so that our invaluable work in classrooms across

the entire school system is recognized and respected.

He’s seen salaries and benefits increase and a tuition-free career ladder established.

Now, in his new role, Colvin is already at work to bring more improvements, “to strengthen paraprofessional

solidarity and make us a team.”

As a member of the citywide paraprofessionals committee on professional development, he is working to develop “appropriate, meaningful training related to the work paras do,” a requirement of the new contract that he said is “long overdue.”

Colvin certainly has the experience and expertise to achieve his goals.

He has served the UFT and the chapter as a chapter leader and as the Brooklyn paraprofessional coordinator and representative. He has also served on boards, panels and committees at local and state levels and has been involved in contract negotiations.

And, Colvin has been honored for his work. He has crossed the stage at Teacher Union Day to receive the Outstanding Paraprofessional Award, the Sidney Harris Award, the Smallheiser Citation, the Ely Trachtenberg Award, the Ten-Year Chapter Leader Award and the Frederick Douglass Award.

Important reminders:

- ◆ If you move, be sure to notify your school, the DOE and the UFT of your new address. Speak to the school secretary about changing your records both at school and at the DOE. To notify the UFT go to the UFT web site at www.uft.org and search for the “personal information change form.”
- ◆ Paraprofessionals do not have to pay to accompany classes on field trips.
- ◆ Paraprofessionals do not have to attend evening meetings at school.
- ◆ Check the DOE website every day to stay up-to-date on information affecting your career.

Be sure to sign up to receive important emails from me and the union about issues affecting your work!

Sign up

Just fill out this form to start receiving chapter news and UFT updates right in your e-mail inbox.

for e-mail alerts from your chapter and your union

NAME		
NON-DOE E-MAIL ADDRESS		
FILE # / EIS # or LAST 4 DIGITS OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY #		
MOBILE PHONE #		<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive occasional text messages from the UFT
MAILING ADDRESS		APT. #
CITY	STATE	ZIP

And don't forget to sign up online at www.uft.org for access to the members-only sections of the site.