HONOR ROLL

Congratulations to our chapter's newest graduates!

MARGARITA GARCIA
PS 32X
MS, Lehman College

MARIELA GALEANY
PS 32X
MS, Lehman College

BRIDGET LAWTON
City Is High School
BS, Boricua College

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARA BOROUGH COORDINATORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>BRONX</td>
<td>SHARON ANDERSON</td>
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<td></td>
<td>718-379-6200</td>
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<td>2500 Halsey Street</td>
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<td>BROOKLYN</td>
<td>SHIRLEY LANEY</td>
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<td>718-452-4900</td>
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<td>335 Adams St., 25th Fl.</td>
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<td>MANHATTAN</td>
<td>IRMA RODRIGUEZ</td>
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<td>212-598-6000</td>
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<td>52 Broadway, 10th Fl.</td>
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<td>QUEENS</td>
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<td>718-275-4400</td>
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<td>97-77 Queens Blvd., 5th Fl.</td>
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<td>STATEN ISLAND</td>
<td>SANDRA FLECHA</td>
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<td>718-665-4400</td>
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<td>4436 Amboy Road</td>
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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 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 improve our skills — the appropriate training you have asked for.

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!

Shelvy Young-Abrams
Paraprofessionals Chapter Chairperson

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 Department.

Continued on page 2
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 fulfill 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

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 paraprofessional 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 must 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.

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 the DOE. To notify the DOE, go to the UFT web site at www.uft.org and search for the “personal information change form.”
- Paraprofessionals do not have 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!

Our chapter’s new vice chairman

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 para-professionals 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 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.

From your chapter and your union

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E-MAIL ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER
MOBILE PHONE
ADDRESS
APPT.
STATE
ZIP

I would like to receive occasional text messages from the UFT

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