



# GCREA Newsline

September 2019  
Volume 7 Issue 1

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION [GCREA.org](http://GCREA.org)

**2019  
NEXT  
GCREA  
MEETING  
FRIDAY  
SEPT. 20  
11:00 a.m.**

**Northwoods  
Country Club  
3157 Club Drive  
Lawrenceville, GA**

**President:  
Jan Calkins  
President-elect:  
Penny Clavijo  
Secretary:  
Teresa Nichols  
Treasurer:  
Sara Lee**

**Fellowship  
Support  
Service**

## From the President

*Jan Calkins*

Even though this is our first Newsline and we are heading up to our first meeting, as someone who IS still returning to work in the schools on a .49 basis, I feel ready for fall break! But for those of you who have been enjoying retired life in a more appropriate manner, let me share with you some of the things we have been working on this summer.

As many of you are aware, as a result of Terrie Adkins' dedicated hard work, we managed to achieve Unit of Distinction for the first time this past May. Historically the stumbling block for a unit the size of ours has always been recruiting the needed 10% increase in GREA members between April 2 of the previous year and April 1 of this year. But last year we did it!!! So, I figure if we can do it once, we can do it again. Many of you may have received a letter from me sharing about the benefits of membership in GREA, especially the increased "clout" it gives us at the legislature. We are doing well in our recruitment so far, we have 36 of the needed 63 members, almost 60%.

But GREA membership is only half of the goal, we would love to see all who joined GREA also become members of GCREA. This is especially where YOU come in. It is 100% easier and more attractive to walk into a new group of people with a friend. I can readily tell you when I came for the first time, I was alone and knew no one - it was daunting. We have a lot of great things going on this year. Think about your previous colleagues who have retired and reach out to them and invite them to a meeting.

We have also been making a special effort to locate and reach out to our members who are more limited in their mobility and ability to attend our meetings, but who continue to be interested in the organization. I got to spend time with 3 of these folks this summer and enjoyed every minute of visiting with them. Hopefully, you will think about GCREA members you are aware of who are in this situation and reach out to them.

**From the President continued on p. 2**

Our website has had a facelift. There have been some significant changes to the website and we hope the changes will make it more user-friendly! Please let us know what you think. There is always room for improvement and your ideas may be ones we had not thought of.

We have a new community project to support. Many of you heard and enjoyed the presentation Mary Barbee gave us about the GCPS Bookmobile last year. As a result, we decided we wanted to adopt this as one of our ongoing charity initiatives. Amazingly we have made arrangements for the Bookmobile to kick off our year by visiting us at Northwood Country Club on Sept 20th. It will arrive by 10:30, so come extra early and take a look inside and see what an amazing resource this is. More will be upcoming as to specifically how we will be supporting them.

Another “initiative” for fund-raising for our scholarship fund will be attempted this year. We will still have our Auction in November and hopefully cash in like never before to support our scholarships. You will be hearing later about some changes in the structure of the auction. These changes are a result of an analysis of the areas of the auction which are making the most money and the change in personnel who are interested in working on the auction. The “new” fund-raising initiative is soliciting “Spotlight Ads” (where we share the money donated by the individual or business with GREA) and GREA “Sponsorship Ads” (where we are able to keep 100% of what is donated.) You will hear about the specifics of these opportunities at our September meeting, but this is something that many of our sister units have been doing for years and it has proven to be very fruitful to them.

Another big change is that we will be trying a new mass e-mail system. Our previous system while financially a “deal,” was not nearly reliable enough to support our needs. Expect a new look to the mass e-mails and we hope a far greater level of effectiveness. Barbara Wilson did a tremendous amount of work on researching these and she is excited that this tool will be much better.

Finally, I want to extend a personal welcome to the group of members who are new to us at GREA this year. Some of you I know from previous work in the county, but most I do not. Please come to the meeting and say “Hi” and let me and the other established members welcome you personally. Also, remember (as your mother always told you) you get out of something what you put into it. We would love to have you jump right in and assist us on many of our activities and committees. It really helps you quickly feel a part of the group.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the September meeting where we will hear from Dr. Buster Evans from TRS and visit the GCPS Bookmobile!

## Upcoming Events

### Gwinnett County Health Fair

**September 7, 2019**  
**10:00-1:00**  
**Best Friend Park**  
**Norcross, GA**

### Senior Wellness Fair

**October 25, 2019**  
**9:00-1:00**  
**Bethesda Park Senior Center**  
**Lawrenceville**

### GCPS Retirees Reunion Luncheon

**November 1, 2019**  
**Look for your invitation in the mail.**

### Retired Educators Day

**November 3, 2019**

## State Health Benefit Plan 2020 Insurance News

Paula Parris

Detailed information on the 2020 health insurance plans will be in the Decision Guide, which will be sent to you before Open Enrollment begins on October 21, 2019 and ends on November 28, 2019.

Highlights of the plan include these points:

- The plan vendors, options, and general provisions of the plans will remain the same for those of you under 65 and those of you with Medicare.
- The under-65 plans carry the same rates as the 2019 plans, so you will have no increases unless you decide to change vendor or level of coverage.
- The Medicare Advantage plans, however, do have changes in rates. United HealthCare standard coverage will decrease to \$20.00 a month, and premium coverage will remain at \$128.22 a month. Anthem (BC/BS) standard will rise dramatically to \$147.15 a month, and premium coverage will be \$182.18 a month.

If you currently have Medicare Advantage standard coverage with Anthem, check with your doctors to verify that they will also accept the UHC coverage before you make a final decision. I don't foresee your having any problems, but it always pays to be sure.

If you currently have premium coverage, list your medical payments for the last 2 to 3 years to get a realistic idea of your expenditures. There is a big difference in the monthly rates between standard and premium coverage, and there is not a significant difference in the benefits between the two levels.

If you want more information on rates, you can visit these SHBP links:

- Under 65: <https://shbp.georgia.gov/2020-annuitant-basic-subsidy-under-age-65>
- Medicare Advantage: <https://shbp.georgia.gov/annuitant-basic-subsidy-age-65-or-older-medicare-advantage-part-b-submitted-shbp>

If you have questions or need help, please call me at 770-394-6373 (leave a message as I may not recognize your number) or email me at this address: PJPPaula@comcast.net

### Who Says there's No Free Lunch?

This year we are going to offer a new option for paying for lunches at Northwood Country Club. We had hoped to have a credit card option, but so far that has not worked out. **However**, we have come up with a new possibility. We decided that our members will have the option of paying for 6 lunches and enjoying the 7<sup>th</sup> lunch at no charge. So 7 lunches for the price of 6! Full disclosure, there will be no refunds if you end up not coming to at least 6 lunches (the "break-even" point) and you must make the decision and payment must be made at the September meeting. Once this payment has been made you are good for the year! Hopefully, this will make handing the payments easier for everyone, will provide some motivation for consistent attendance and in the process will save you some \$\$\$. Is there anything teachers like more than a deal! Of course, it is still perfectly fine to pay at each luncheon with either check or cash at the regular rate. But if you know you will be at all the meetings, this is a great deal!!

## Friends by Jan Calkins

There are over 600 members of GCREA. A fact which may surprise some of you. When I accepted the opportunity to become president of this organization, I thought a great deal about ALL 600+ members and considered who they are and what their needs might be. Our members range in age from the mid-50's to over 100. Most live locally, but some live as far away as Washington State. Many are still living in their own homes or apartments with spouses or other family members. Some, however, have come to the stage in life where they require more support and have transitioned to senior living communities, where they may be living independently or in an assisted living capacity. Most of these members are no longer able to get themselves to our meetings. Some might be able to come if they had transportation, but for many being up that long is a bit much for them. However, I have gotten to meet and spend time with

several of these members and they remain interested in our organization and eager to interact with other members. I tried to get to visit as many as I could locate or connect with this summer. I surprised them with bouquets of flowers from our flower garden at home. It was obvious that even a short visit did a great deal to brighten their day. I am sure many of you routinely visit some of these members. But, for those of you who do not, I would encourage you to do so. As is generally the case, you will come away uplifted and benefitted as much or more than they will. We will try to identify the facilities these members are living in and make that information available for those who would like to brighten someone's day. The smiles on the faces below tell the whole story.



### SUNSHINE COMMITTEE.....September 2019

#### *Fellowship-Support-Service*



Our membership sent out endless number of cards to individuals during the 2018-2019 GCREA year. WE will kick off the year at September meeting with cards, pens, etc. on each table. LET'S AIM HIGH to prepare about 50 cards before & during our September meeting!

Members to whom you may want to send a card:

Barbara Wilson...recovery from rotator cuff surgery. H.B. p. 35  
Sara Lee...recovery from lung surgery. H.B. p. 23  
Betty William...lifestyle change. H. B. p.33  
Gailya Raines...Parkinsons H.B.p.28

Please note: We are listing handbook and page number for address, etc. from our new red handbook. I understand our membership is up past 500 members. Help us not miss people who need us to "reach out".

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE: Janene Sullivan, Kathy Gentry, Joyce Parker, Polly Sanders, Deloris Mullins, Stephanie Hodgins, Annette Hildreth,

## Kiwanis is Not Your Father's Business Networking Club!!

Kiwanis International is a global community of clubs, members and partners dedicated to improving the lives of children one community at a time.



<https://www.kiwanis.org/home>

The Duluth-Norcross Kiwanis Club needs help! We are a small group of individuals with a focus of supporting children. We volunteer at Duluth and Norcross cluster schools by reading to classes, judging STEM projects, advising Key Clubs, Builders Clubs, and K-Kids, and any other ways we can! We also donate time and resources to the Duluth Co-op. We would love to expand our reach but we need more members!

If you have any interest or questions, please contact Anne Gregory, 678-227-1535 or [abcryv@gmail.com](mailto:abcryv@gmail.com)

### The SHIELD against Alzheimer's by Jan Calkins

As is always the case when you have a new focus in your life, you seem to notice information about it everywhere. As we begin this year with a special focus on raising funds and awareness to fight this tragic and debilitating disease, I felt sharing some research about what we can do NOW while we are still healthy and not impacted by this disease, to safeguard us from its ravages. On the news tonight, Dr. Rudolph Tanzi, professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, shared some of the results of his work on what causes Alzheimer's and how to best position oneself to avoid being afflicted by it. Amazingly, The Alzheimer's Association International Conference reported that approximately 1 in 3 cases of dementia is preventable. As a result, the suggestions provided below may be powerful. The acronym he came up with was SHEILD.

S-Sleeping

H-Handling Stress

I-Interacting with others

E-Exercising

L-Learning new things

D-following a healthy Diet



*If you would like to understand in more depth how these 6 areas can positively impact your health, you can go to [www.doctoroz.com](http://www.doctoroz.com) and look for "The SHIELD Plan to Prevent Alzheimer's". Ironically, I can't help noticing that being a member of and attending our monthly meetings will help in most of the identified areas, cool huh?*

# JOIN THE FIGHT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FIRST SURVIVOR.



## Join your Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association Team to Help End Alzheimer's

Come enjoy a cool, fall morning walk with your friends, all are welcome.

**DULUTH, GA**  
**November 2, 2019**

Duluth Town Green  
3578 W Lawrenceville St. • Duluth, GA 30096

Registration at 8 a.m.  
Ceremony at 9 a.m.  
Walk at 9:30 a.m.

### Next Steps:

**Log In to:** 2019 Walk to End Alzheimer's – Gwinnett, GA

**Click On:** Register

**Click On:** "Yes" or "No" to answer the question regarding if you have walked before

**Click On:** Join A Team and type in **Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association**, or scroll to find our Team, **Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association**

**Click On:** Join

Complete the information requested about yourself and your donation.

You are now a part of our GCREA Team. Thank you for joining us!

Team Captain: Penny Clavijo, GCREA President Elect • 770-339-6408 • pennyclavijo@gmail.com

2019 NATIONAL PRESENTING SPONSOR

**Edward Jones**

[alz.org/walk](http://alz.org/walk)



## A VISIT WITH TWO GCREA LIFE MEMBERS WHO ARE LIFELONG FRIENDS

By Carolyn Fetner

Jimmie Mae Sosebee and Elizabeth Lovin have been friends for decades, both at Lawrenceville Baptist Church and at Lawrenceville Elementary School where Jimmie Mae taught first grade and Elizabeth was the office secretary. I first met them in summer of 1970 when I had been hired as the librarian at Lawrenceville Elementary. They made me feel very welcome with their sweet demeanor, and they are even sweeter with the passing years. Now, they both find themselves residing at Benton House, a retirement home located in Grayson, where they can enjoy meals together as they share memories.

Jimmie Mae McConnell graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in early education, and she met her future husband, Ray Sosebee, there. She first taught fifth grade at the old Grayson Elementary School, but when they had two sons, Dan and Jim, she ran a private kindergarten in the basement of her home. As the children became older, she began a twenty five year career as a first-grade teacher at Lawrenceville Elementary.

Although her degree was in education, Jimmie Mae was an accomplished musician who played the piano and directed choirs at Lawrenceville Baptist Church for many years. Both of her sons are also talented musicians although they work at the family business, Sosebee Auto Parts in Lawrenceville, established in 1958. She has four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Her daughters-in-law, Jan Sosebee and Sheila Sosebee, are connected to Gwinnett Schools, Jan as a para-professional and Sheila as a recently retired principal. Sheila is the daughter of former GCREA President, Jean Biggers, and Sheila's daughter, Mallory, is also a teacher.

Grayson has been the life-long home of Jimmie Mae as it was founded by her great grandfather, James P. McConnell, for whom McConnell Middle School is named. The town was founded in 1879 and was first called Trip. It became Grayson in 1902. He also founded Chestnut Grove Baptist Church which Jimmie Mae attends today and where her son, Dan, is the music director. There is also a Sosebee Farms Road near the family compound of homes.

Elizabeth Lovin is a native of Gwinnett County, but she and her late husband, Edwin, resided on New Hope Rd. where Lovin Elementary School, named for him, is located. Edwin was the Superintendent of Personnel for Gwinnett Schools for many years. Elizabeth was the secretary at Lawrenceville Elementary for more than 13 years.

She and Edwin had two sons and one daughter. Son, Jeff a retired dentist, and daughter Leandra both live in Gwinnett and are able to visit her often. Elizabeth also has four grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

I truly enjoyed "catching up" with these two friends who are unable to come to our meetings any longer and hope many of us can visit our long- time members who are shut ins.

## Free Money!!!



Once again, we are offering a \$5.00 incentive to anyone at our September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting who;

- 1.) Joins GREA as a new member or has joined as a new member between 4/2/19-9/19/19,
- 2.) Changes an annual membership in GREA to an ADD (Automatic Dues Deduction), **or**
- 3.) Changes an annual membership in GCREA to an ADD (Automatic Dues Deduction.)

Why are we doing this? Above and beyond being really nice people, there is a great deal of labor that goes into sending out and processing all of the annual payments. Additionally, it is very easy to forget to pay annual dues, whereas ADD withdrawals are automatically continued year to year unless you instruct GREA or GCREA to stop these payments. Plus, GREA will send GCREA \$5.00 for each GREA member that switches from annual membership to ADD.

Finally, if all these reasons aren't motivating enough for you, you save a bit if you do ADD (not a ton, but every bit helps, eh?) This opportunity is offered at the September meeting only. Limit of one \$5.00 incentive per person (even if you do all 3 things). We'll have the necessary forms at the meeting. We really want to give away a lot of \$5.00 bills that day.

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## **Wanted: Guest Columnists!**

The GCREA Newslines would like to invite any and ALL of our members to submit articles to the Newslines. We hope to include your articles in each edition. Perhaps you belong to a community group, organization, club or church that has something special going on or could be an option for a volunteer opportunity. Perhaps you know of a community event that would be of particular interest to our members.

Also, every member in our group has had a rich and full life in the school system. We all have special students, peers, mentors and others who provide amazing stories that could make us laugh, cry or just reflect on some of those amazing memories. This is yet another way we can get to know each other better as well. I bet even your closest friends might be surprised by some of these tales!

Articles may be sent to the editor at [sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com](mailto:sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com). They will be previewed by the GCREA Executive Board before being published. The Newslines will be published on the following dates:

November 1, 2019 Article Deadline: October 23, 2019

February 1, 2020 Article Deadline: January 23, 2020

April 1, 2020 Article Deadline: March 23, 2020

June 1, 2020 Article Deadline: May 23, 2020

## THE NEW AND UPDATED WEBSITE IS AVAILABLE!

Take a few minutes and check out the new and improved GCREA website at [gcrea.org](http://gcrea.org). Our webmaster has updated the look of the site as well as added current information for 2019-2020. The website is always a work in progress since updates happen throughout the year.

We hope that you will begin to think of the website as the place to go for your most current information about GCREA and GREA. There are also links to other pages like TRS that you may want to find easily.

Please look at the page and give any feedback you have or relate any problems you see to Beth Thompson. Check out the member's only page while you are there. The password is gcrea2020. We plan to have copies of the Newline posted here as well as other forms that members may need during the year, such as the Volunteer Hours form.

Your input is always appreciated. Let Beth know what you think!

**Beth Thompson**



**GCREA President Jan Calkins and President Elect Penny Clavijo at the Area 13/14 meeting this summer.**

THANK YOU TO OUR GCREA 2019/2020 SPONSERS AND SUPPORTERS

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**Hometown Grill**

[hometowngrillflowerybranch.com](http://hometowngrillflowerybranch.com)

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Oliver McClellan

**Lance Layson-Financial Advisor**

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[www.gcps-foundation.org](http://www.gcps-foundation.org)

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*Support to improve the Educational Future of all Students*

**Editor's Note:**

The next edition of the Newsline will be published November 1, 2019  
Deadline for articles is October 23, 2019  
sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com

Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association  
1826 Prospect View Drive  
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Please invite your friends  
to join us at our next  
meeting as we “Cheer for  
GREA (and GCREA!)”



#GREAistheBEST #FellowshipServiceSupport #CheeringForGREA  
#JoAnnTomlinson, GREAPresident