Remembering Retired Educators and Celebrating Georgia Retired Educators Day, *by Jan Calkins*

The first Sunday in November is designated as Georgia Retired Educators Day. It is a day that can be celebrated in many ways, but this year we are trying to celebrate with GCREA in as meaningful a way as possible. First, we have obtained a new city proclamation from the city of Suwanee to add to our “wall of accolades” honoring the retirees of Gwinnett County. This was awarded on 10/22 as a result of Sue French’s efforts at reaching out and getting this organized. Additionally, we are organizing visitors from our GCREA organization to go and personally visit our members who are unable to get out anymore. Hopefully this visit will let them know they have not been forgotten and remind them that we still honor the work that they did during their school careers as well as the work they did as active members of GCREA. Additionally, we will have an article in the Gwinnett Daily Post to make others in the community aware of this special day. Many churches will announce the day as part of their morning announcements so that all congregation members can be aware and say a special thank you to a former educator in their group.

However, I would challenge all of us to not only do these external things, which are very significant and important, but to also take a bit of time in a favorite spot with a drink of your personal choice and think back. Remember the early years of your career, the first time your room was filled with new faces. Recall the “challenging” kids, whether it was due to their learning needs, social needs or behavioral needs and think about the progress you made with them over the year. Think about the younger teachers who came along as you became more proficient and comfortable and the joy of being a mentor to these new teachers. Think about the end of your career, a time most of us faced with excitement and joy but also some regret and sadness, because we were defined by our role as educator for a very long time.

No matter how you spend that day, take some time to celebrate YOU, because there are humans out in the world who do something better and more effectively because you decided to be an educator!