



# The VOICE

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## Inside this issue:

Read to Win!	2
Focus on CU with S. Rohn, CU VP	2
Member Leaders Serve at State Level	2
By the Numbers/ Negotiations Corner	3
Treasure Coast Team Meets with Legislators	3
New Benefit: Free \$5000 Life Insurance	4
Cookies and Conversation & CU Conf.	Extra!
2017 FEA Delegate Assembly	Extra!

## Upcoming Events

November 10: Veteran's Day (holiday for all)

November 21: Early Release

November 22—24: Thanksgiving Break (12 month employees work on the 22nd)



*Give Thanks for All  
Your Blessings*

## Survey Says, "PRESSURE" for All

When asked to write this article about the stress that educators feel today, I immediately thought of the Billy Joel song, *Pressure*:

*You have to learn to pace yourself*

**PRESSURE**

*You're just like everybody else*

**Pressure**

A recent AFT survey of nearly 5,000 educators concerning their stress level indicated that "nearly two-thirds of educators usually feel stressed out, twice the level felt by workers in the general population."

Highlights of the survey include:

\*61% of educators are 'always or "often" stressed at their job;

\*27% indicated they have been threatened, bullied or harassed at work;

\*Lack of respect from Education Secretary DeVos, the media and elected officials ;

\*Lack of control and/or influence of decisions that affect their jobs

So we are not alone, it is a nation-wide issue that affects all educators! Does that make us feel better? Maybe a little, but what can we do to alleviate our stress right here?

Here are 5 tips I have gathered from various articles on the subject:

1. Exercise - no time you say - put everything aside and make the time, put on your favorite tunes and take a break!

2. Drink more water - keeping hydrated is important to not only your physical health but your mental health as well.

3. Keep a "Stress Diary" - This will you identify the triggers for your daily stress and help you to create strategies to deal with the

stressor or eliminate it completely.

4. Sleep - you know the drill, try to establish a regular bed time and wake time. One other thing all the experts say (and is very hard for us to do) is - UNPLUG yourself 20 to 30 minutes before bed to help you relax - screen lights tend to stimulate your brain and interfere with good sleep.

5. Talk to Someone - this may be the most important advice of all. Many of us want to keep the stress and anxiety to ourselves, thinking we can handle it alone; however, some times we can't and we need help. Talking to a friend or spouse can help us gain perspective about what is really going on.

Sometimes we may need more help and that is where the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can come in to give you support. This is a free and completely secure and confidential program for all St. Lucie County School Board employees. You can receive counseling on the phone and you can also be authorized for six face to face visits as well. Here is the contact information for the EAP, call: 1-800-272-3626.

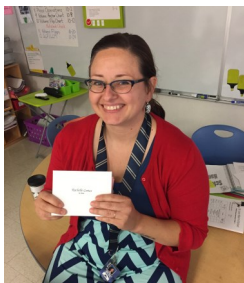
What is the Union doing to help with the issue? We continue to collaborate with the district to eliminate unnecessary paperwork, to monitor the use of planning time by administrators, and work on fair and equitable distribution of duties.

The Union is here to help you any way we can, but we can't do it unless we know what the problem is, so give us a call! We are here for YOU!

**Read the *Voice* to Win!!!**

Read, *answer the riddles* and SEND your answer to [Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org](mailto:Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org) by **November 21, 2017**

1. What did the discussion with Senator Negron focus on?
2. What brand new benefit is being offered by AFT this year?

**Winners of \$10 Gift Card**

**Rachelle Cortes**  
St. Lucie West K8



**Jacqueline Foster**  
Frances K. Sweet Elementary

**Answers to October Voice Riddles:**

1. What position on the Executive Board is currently open?  
**A:** CU Secretary
2. What was the purpose of the Benefits Rep training?  
**A:** To learn about the cost saving benefits and discounts available to our members.

**Focus On CU with CU VP Sandy Rohn**

Welcome to November, I'm so happy to finally have some cool weather. October 16<sup>th</sup> was an amazing day for 81 members of our support staff at the annual CU Conference who were welcomed by School Board Chair Troy Ingersoll and CTA/CU President Vicki Rodriguez. We learned about making assumptions about your coworkers and working together, diversity in the workplace, managing behavior, contract rights and so much more including a wonderful lunch served by the Executive Board. Thank you, CTA/CU, for this wonderful experience and all the hard work that went in to making it a reality.

November 15<sup>th</sup> is National ESP (Education Support Professionals) Day. At the November 7<sup>th</sup> School Board Meeting we will be

reading a declaration to support this and honor the day for all support staff across the district. The history behind this: In 1987, the NEA (National Education Association) Representative Assembly called for the creation of a special way to honor the contributions of public school support staff. In 2002, they officially changed the name from Educational Support Personnel to Education Support Professionals. This change reflects a growing pride in the essential role ESP's play in creating great public schools for every American student. Today's support professional provides invaluable services that enable students to learn in positive, supportive environments.

I want to add my personal thank you for all you do every day. Remember, we are stronger together, Sandy

**Member Leaders to Serve on State Committees for FEA**

On October 31, 2017 St. Lucie CTA/CU was notified that several members were appointed to statewide standing committees of the Florida Education Association (FEA), taking their union leadership and participation to another level.

- ♦ **Aurea Justo** (Fairlawn) was appointed to serve on FEA's Human and Civil Rights Committee;
- ♦ **Rebecca Petri** (Savanna Ridge) will continue to serve on the state Membership Development and Internal Organization Committee;
- ♦ **Dana Hochberg** (Southport) will serve on the Constitution, Rules, and By-Laws Committee;
- ♦ **Jesse Steckler** (Westwood) will serve on the Elections and Credentials Committee;
- ♦ **E. David Freeland** (Ft. Pierce Central HS) will serve on the Government Relations Committee;
- ♦ **Sandy Rohn** (Sam Gaines Academy) will continue to chair of the Education Support Personnel Program and Policy Council and the FEA Governance Board along with **Vicki Rodriguez** who serves on the FEA Governance Board.

All of the FEA Committees meet throughout the year and work on issues of importance to FEA and SLCTA/CU members. Appointments are for three-year terms. Congratulations and thank you in advance for your service!

**By the Numbers:**

New union members in October:

**37**

Dollar amount distributed to SLCTA/CU members in Hurricane Irma relief from FEA:

**\$58,900.00**

Total cookies served during October's Cookies and Conversation visits:

**296**

Total membership awards received by CTA/CU at FEA State Meeting:

**2**

# Negotiations Corner

St Lucie County has a problem: our starting teacher salaries aren't competitive with our neighbors. That makes recruiting new teachers difficult and leaves the county with unfilled positions.

We are in discussions with the district about ways to address starting teacher salary. The discussion should be part of a broader discussion about recruitment and retention. While raising starting teacher salaries is important, ignoring retention will not keep quality teachers in our classrooms. Logically, if we retain more teachers we will have to recruit less.

Certainly, working conditions play a role in retention. But, if working conditions are going to be considered, then the district has to commit

to improving working conditions in classrooms and schools. The micromanagement of teachers, unbalanced reliance on testing, large class sizes, lack of stability for effective and highly effective teachers and flawed planning, to name a few, do not create a satisfying work environment.

Adding to the complexity of the situation, this discussion must be part of a larger discussion that includes insurance, full compensation for next year, equity between new teachers and veteran teachers, compensation and equity for the Classified Unit and more.

We look forward to continuing the conversation to find a solution that is equitable and addresses recruitment without sacrificing retention.

## Treasure Coast Union Team Meets with Legislative Leaders

CTA/CU and E-Board member David Freeland and CTA/CU member Eric Graff along with union members from Martin and Indian River counties had the opportunity to meet with Senate President Joe Negron and Representative Erin Grall to discuss concerns and issues coming up for the current legislative session.

The purpose of these initial meetings was to have a broad discussion and to lay the groundwork for further discussion, as we get closer to the 2018 legislative session.

It is important for our legislators to hear from constituents at home, and this is the foundation for the work FEA does in Tallahassee. It is also a good way to hold legislators accountable

for their votes. If they tell us one thing at home and then vote another way in Tallahassee, we need to call them on it.

Both meetings were successful. While we touched on a number of topics with each, our discussion with President Negron focused on teacher retention and recruitment, especially Best and Brightest and the difference between a bonus and actual salary increases. We also discussed the cost of teacher certification testing and alternative paths to teacher certification.

Representative Grall also included a discussion about teacher retention and recruitment, again looking at Best and Brightest, and the differences between classroom and non-classroom

teachers and the important work both do to help students succeed.

Representative Grall is interested in early childhood issues and we enjoyed a discussion about early childhood, her committee work and how early childhood impacts future success and graduation.

We discussed testing with both, including the number of tests and how data is used, or misused, in our schools.

We will be scheduling meetings with additional Treasure Coast legislators and look forward to additional meetings with Senate President Negron and Representative Grall.

**St. Lucie Classroom Teachers' Association  
and Classified Unit**

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**CTA/CU Executive Board**

**Vicki Rodriguez**, President CTA/CU: CTA Office  
**Christine Hill**, Vice President CTA: CTA Office  
**Sandy Rohn**, Vice-President CU: SGA  
**Laura Lovett**, CTA/CU Treasurer: Records Dept.  
**Rebecca Petrie**, Secretary CTA: SRE  
**David Freeland**, CTA Executive Board: FPCH  
**Tammy Davis**, CTA Executive Board: FKS  
**Alan Mathison**, CTA, Executive Board: LPA  
**Aurea Justo**, CTA Executive Board: FLN  
**Pamela Jenkins**, Executive Board CU: SLWCH

**Union Staff**

**Maureen Sinnott**/ Member Support Specialist  
  
**Lucy Bravo**/ Organizing and Communications Specialist  
  
**Barbara Ziegler**/ Office Manager

**\$5,000 Free Member Life Insurance from AFT**

Starting this year, AFT is offering a brand new benefit of a \$5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy *just for being a union member*. This policy is free to all members and there is no cost to you EVER for as long as you remain a member.

To complete your beneficiary card, please go to:

<https://leadernet.aft.org/webform/st-lucie-ctacu-local-3616-beneficiary-form>

Cards can also be obtained from your Worksite Leader or the CTA/CU office.

Once again the SLC CTA/CU is participating in  
WPSL 1590  
Christmas Kids of SLC Toy Drive



Join us by bringing  
a new unwrapped toy  
to the **SLC CTA/CU Union Office**  
November 13<sup>th</sup> – December 8<sup>th</sup>

**Programs Designed With  
AFT Members In Mind**

**AT&T WIRELESS**

- 15% off the monthly service charge of qualified plans<sup>1</sup>
- 20% discount on select accessories<sup>2</sup>
- Only unionized carrier

**CREDIT CARD<sup>3</sup>**

- Several card choices
- Competitive rates
- U.S.-based customer service

**MORTGAGE**

- For union members, their parents and children
- Hardship assistance
- Competitive rates

**OTHER PROGRAMS**

- Savings on more than 25 programs available to union members including flowers, theme parks, movie tickets and more!



A Union of Professionals

AFT +  
Member Benefits

**UnionPlus.org/AFT**

1 Available only to current members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions, other authorized individuals associated with eligible unions and other sponsoring organizations with a qualifying agreement. Must provide acceptable proof of union membership such as a membership card from your local union, a pay stub showing dues deduction or the Union Plus Member Discount Card and subscribe to service under an individual account for which the member is personally liable. Offer contingent upon in-store verification of union member status. Discount subject to agreement between Union Privilege and AT&T and may be interrupted, changed or discontinued without notice. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice and data plans, not overage. Not available with unlimited voice plans. For Family Talk, applies only to primary line. For all Mobile Share plans, applies only to monthly plan charge of plans with 1GB or more, not to additional monthly device access charges. Additional restrictions apply. May take up to 2 bill cycles after eligibility confirmed and will not apply to prior charges. Applied after application of any available credit. May not be combined with other service discounts. Visit UnionPlus.org/ATT or contact AT&T at 866-499-8008 for details.

2 AT&T will apply the Accessory Discount to the prices of select Accessories available through AT&T, which may be modified by AT&T from time to time. The term "Accessory" or "Accessories" means supplementary parts for Equipment (e.g. batteries, cases, earbuds). The Accessory Discount will not apply to Accessories purchased for use with datacentric Equipment such as modems, replacement SIM cards and car kits or to Apple-branded Accessories, and the Accessory Discount may not be combined with any other promotional pricing or offer.

3 The Union Plus Credit Cards are issued by Capital One, N.A., pursuant to a license from MasterCard International Incorporated. The MasterCard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated. The credit card in this image is for promotional illustration; it does not contain actual cardholder information combined with any other promotional pricing or offer.

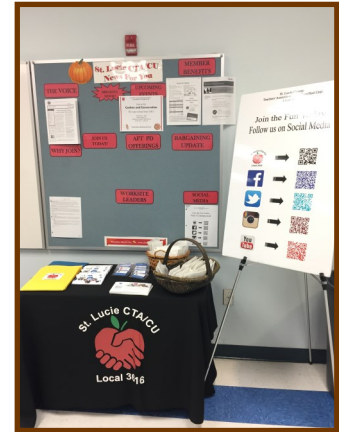


The VOICE St. Lucie Classroom Teachers' Association and Classified Unit  
Extra!

Nov. 7, 2017  
Extra!



October Cookies and Conversations visits were productive for meeting and talking with members and potential members about issues and union benefits.



## Education Support Personnel Conference "Come Together"







President **Vicki Rodriguez** accepts the FEA Platinum Membership Award for St Lucie CTA/CU from FEA Secretary/Treasurer **Luke Flynt** at the 2017 FEA Delegate Assembly in Orlando. The Platinum Award is given to those locals statewide with 70% of more union density (% of eligible bargaining unit members who are members. Our local's membership is at the highest its ever been at 71% density.



SLCTA/CU delegates began work early and worked into the evening all weekend for their union.

(left) Delegates at a morning caucus meeting with FEA Vice President **Fed Ingram**.

(right) SLCTA/CU Retiree Delegate **Felicia Bruce** speaks against a proposed New Business Item on the floor of the assembly.