

VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Local 1633-In Solidarity

VSTA LEADERSHIP

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2022 Retirement Seminar

On Tuesday, January 11th, VSTA teacher and teaching assistant members participated in an online Zoom meeting to discuss retirement. The meeting started out with Mr. Kamijit Singh discussing 457 plans regarding the NYS Deferred Compensation Plan. After a brief segment with Mr. Singh, New York State Teacher Retirement System Trustee, Eric Iberger, made an informative presentation regarding our pension plans and the retirement process. Most notable was that Mr. Iberger suggested that all members sign up on the NYSTRS website www.nystrs.org and stay up to date regarding understanding their member benefit profile. All in all, the meeting was helpful to all who attended.

From Our Union Leaders

Dear VSTA Members,
What a winter it has been! The new year brought a Covid surge and stress to all of us. We are all looking forward to milder weather. The good news is that even though each day has felt like an eternity- the school year is now more than half over. We are still in our classrooms and doing the very best we can. We all need to reflect on how much we have accomplished.

The VSTA has been helping members who are getting ready to retire, planning for the election of Unit Leaders and Executive Council Representatives this spring, preparing for negotiations and forming new committees to encourage our members to become more involved.

This spring will certainly be challenging. We need to work together to support the school budgets in the districts where we work and where we live. Please stay informed, attend the monthly VSTA meetings run by your elected Unit Leaders and know that Officers of the VSTA are working each day to serve the membership.

In Solidarity,
Noele, John, Ellyn, Ginger and Ron

VSTA VOICES

Ilissa Epstein (Shaw Ave) welcomed her first child, Scotland Drew Taylor, on 9/29!

Naomi Narain (Buck) became engaged on 2/8. Her fiancé, Michael Rashid, surprised her at school and asked her students for their permission to marry her! Picture on page 4

Paige Franzini (South) is expecting her first child!

Have a shout out you want added to the newsletter? Email vstanews@gmail.com to be included in future issues.



TEACHER DISCOUNTS AND BENEFITS

Peloton: Eligible UnitedHealthcare health plans* now include a 1-year Peloton App Membership at no additional cost. The app offers thousands of live and on-demand fitness classes to help members get active and live healthier lifestyles. Plus eligible members can receive special pricing on Peloton equipment.<https://lp.uhc.com/peloton>

Michaels: Teachers can enjoy an additional 15% Off Entire Purchase Including Sale Items. (must show your teacher id or paystub)

Calm App: Get free access to the mindfulness and meditation app.

Joann's Fabrics: Get 15% off online and in stores.

Staples: Get 20% back and free shipping through the Teacher Rewards program on the Staples Connect app.

Sheerid.com: Once your teacher id is verified, you have access to hundreds of deals at <https://www.sheerid.com/shoppers/teacherdeals/>
<https://www.id.me/>: Sign up with your school email account to access deals from many different sources including Ray-Ban, Under Armor, New Balance, Wyndhom Resorts

Apple Education: Get discount pricing on products and 20% off AppleCare+.

Verizon: Save up to \$30 per month with unlimited phone plans.

AT&T: Get four phone lines for \$27 per month.

Canva for Education: Get an account for free access to templates, presentations, and more that was designed specifically for classrooms.

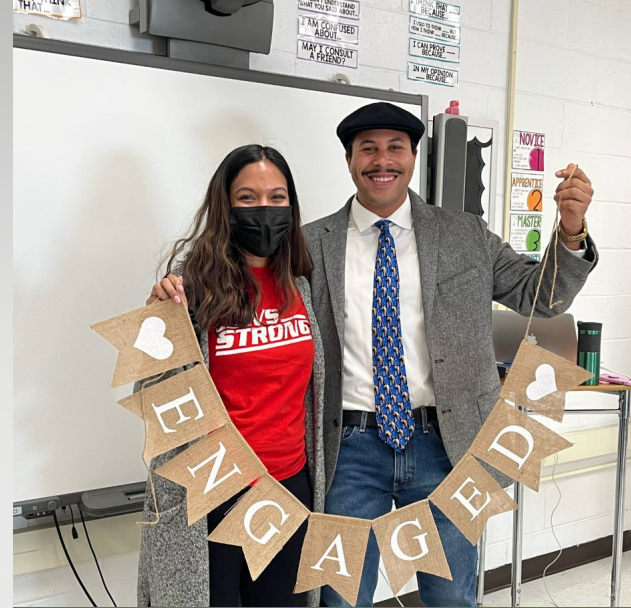
Headspace for Educators: Headspace offers free access (primary-secondary) teachers and supporting staff in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Whether you're feeling inspired to connect more with your students or you're looking for a new way to bring calm to your classroom, Headspace can help students build healthy habits that last a lifetime. Better focus, less stress, and happier thoughts are just a few minutes away.

Reminders

Teachers who plan to retire at the end of the school year must submit their letter by March 15th in order to receive payout for accrued sick days.

Full time teacher dues for 2021 was \$1032.44.

VSTA Clothing store has reopened!



Naomi Narain becomes engaged!

Annual TRS Meeting

NYSTRS' 2021 Annual Delegates Meeting was held virtually on Friday, Oct. 29. The delegates voted to elect Bayport-Blue Point teacher Eric J. Iberger and Schenectady teacher Juliet C. Benaquisto to the NYSTRS Board of Trustees. The meeting also featured educational presentations and the Delegate-Board/Staff discussion.

One notable piece of information that was discussed was to make sure that members receive credit for any prior service that they have earned. It is important to have all the credit for which you are eligible because your total service credit impacts your eligibility for NYSTRS benefits and the amount of those benefits. For more information on prior service credit, please visit this link: <https://nystrs.org/Delegates/Delegate-News/2021-Delegate-News/dele2021-11>

Build Service Credit | Types of Service | NYSTRS
Another informative topic that was discussed was knowing the difference between pensionable and non-pensionable leaves of absence. If the leaves are pensionable, the member is also entitled to earn service credit. More information can be found at <https://nystrs.org/Delegates/Delegate-News/2021-Delegate-News/dele2021-11>

Check out all your union membership has to offer!



NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

When it comes to protecting yourself, your loved ones, your income or your most valuable possessions, NYSUT Member Benefits has insurance programs that fit the bill. Whether you are looking for **auto & home, life, disability, long-term care, dental, vision, or pet insurance**, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org. There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics.

Member Benefits also endorses several discounted shopping programs that can help you save on both everyday and more expensive purchases. Finally, if you ever have an issue or problem when using a Member Benefits program, our staff take great pride in their ability to quickly assist members with any concerns that may arise.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101** to learn more about the endorsed programs and services available to you through your union membership.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or
calling **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.