

ECRTA

Elkhart County Retired Teachers Association

ECRTA Newsletter, August 2024 website: www.ecrta.com

From Your President: **Barbara Hrynewycz**

What a productive year we've had. Our luncheon guest speakers included Barry Conrad, past IRTA president and Regina Hauptli from CASA. Plus we enjoyed the performance of Goshen's Crimsonaires. We donated 25 totes to CASA which we made over the winter months, as well as donated about \$600 to local nonprofits. We had two of our own recognized as state community service award winners. Well done all.

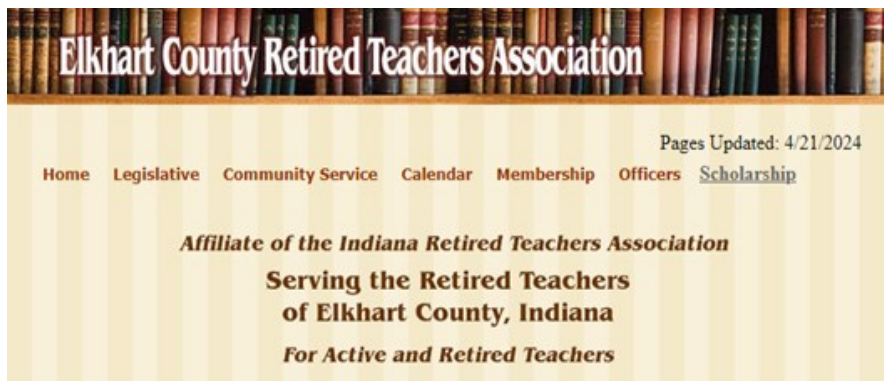


Looking ahead to the fall, my goal for ECRTA is to continue to support our members with informative programs and time to connect with former colleagues. Our quarterly luncheons generate lively conversation around the tables. And I don't even have to throw out conversation starter questions. Another way we are able to connect is by doing community service together. Bonnie Reagan will again be coordinating the sewing project. Are you volunteering somewhere that others may join you? Do you have an idea for a group community service project? If so, reach out to Bonnie so that information may be shared with the entire membership.

We're looking for new members. Our average age is over 75. If you know someone who's recently retired, invite them to come and join ECRTA. My goal for last year was to expand our influence in the community. Our sewing project for CASA has led to them asking for more bags for next year. They're getting to know us, they know we'll supply.

I want to thank Marilee Keim and Pat Huber for their MANY years of serving ECRTA, most recently as Recording and Corresponding Secretaries. They were so wonderful to work with and contributed much to the behind the scenes inner workings of our organization. I will miss having them at the executive meetings.

There are several positions still open if you would like to be part of the leadership team. If you are unsure whether you would want to do it on your own, find a friend that you could share the position. Divergent thinking is a hallmark of teaching. How can we . . . ? We meet 4 times a year to plan, the month before the luncheon. Our first planning meeting is August 8. Join us!!



www.ecrta.com

ECRTA Meetings:

September 12, 2024—
Harvest Community Church

November 14, 2024—First
Presbyterian Church

April 10, 2025—TBD

June 12, 2025—TBD

ECRTA COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT by Bonnie Reagan

The ECRTA's community service project for 2023-24 was to sew tote bags for children who are living in foster care in Elkhart County. Children in the foster care program move from one home to another. Their personal belongings are put into trash bags. Using a tote bag instead of a trash bag will make them feel that someone does care about them. It is our hope that the tote will bring a bit of encouragement for a child who is going through a difficult time. This project is also designed to build camaraderie as we work together.



We worked on five different days at the First Brethren Church of New Paris. All material was donated by our members. We also had cash donations to cover any expenses for materials that needed to be purchased. We made an assembly line of cutters, pressers, and sewers, and some members sewed from home. Besides being a service project, we have had opportunity to get to make new friends and get to know each other better. We even had non-teachers join our efforts.

Regina Hauptli and Da'Shonae Reeves of CASA of Elkhart County were presented with 25 totes at our May Luncheon, and we are excited to continue this service project during our 2024-25 year.



THERE IS A GROWING NEED FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS IN ELKHART COUNTY 240 Children in Foster Care

- Volunteer advocates are screened, trained, and supported by CASA program staff.
- CASA volunteers form a one-on-one relationship with a child and get a full picture of the case.
- Judges depend on CASA volunteers for critical information to help them make the most well-informed decisions.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE WHAT IS A CASA?

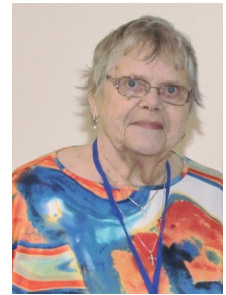
When a child is in the juvenile court system due to abuse or neglect, a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer represents the best interest of the child in court hearings and other areas of the child's life. The purpose of CASA is to be the child's voice in court, making sure children are safe, have a permanent home, and have the opportunity to thrive. Without a CASA, children may find themselves trapped in the court and child welfare system, spending their entire childhood moving from one temporary placement to another.

Officers & Committee Chairpersons

President: Barb Hrynewycz
President Elect/Programs: **need a volunteer**
Recording Secretary: Sherry Huang
Corresponding Secretary: Maryann Shultz
Treasurer: Karen Tobias
Past President: Carol Grieser
Public Relations: Dawn Wysong
Legislative: Gary Stoltz

IRTA Foundation: Gary Stoltz
Retirement: **need a volunteer**
Community Services: Bonnie Reagan
Volunteer Hours: Lenette Burckhart
Membership: Marie Palacios
Scholarship: Carol Larson
Necrology: **need a volunteer**
Web Site: Ron Geyer

Once again we had no applicants for our \$1,000 scholarship. Check with your family, friends, neighbors, church family/friends. We are looking for an Education Major. To be eligible you must have graduated from a public Elkhart County School and be starting your junior or senior year in college. More specific details can be found at www.ecrta.com/scholarship. If you need more information, please contact the Scholarship Chairman, Carol Larson at 574-536-5154



Legislative News by Gary Stoltz

Early in January, 2024 the Indiana General Assembly opened its "short session". This was a "non budget" session. To our surprise, IRTA announced in March that retired educators would receive a "13th check" along with their September pension payment. Plus, a bill was passed that could make pension enhancements (13th checks and/or COLA payments) easier in the future. Our sincere thanks to members who reached out to their state representatives or Senators regarding this topic.



Indiana Retired Teachers Association Foundation (IRTAF) News by Gary Stoltz

Let us focus this year on finding an Elkhart County public high school graduate that is majoring in education and has completed their first two years at a college in Indiana. We can assist this student in applying for the Foundation's Area 2 Scholarship valued at \$2,000. This student can be a relative of yours, member of your church, your neighbor, etc. Application info is available from IRTA at their website retiredteachers.org, and click on the Foundation tab and scroll down to Scholarships. You can also call me if assistance is needed.

2023 Elkhart County Retirees

<p><u>East Noble</u> Thomas Wogoman</p> <p><u>Elkhart</u> Tessa Sutton Mary Teeter</p> <p><u>Logansport</u> Deana Ward</p> <p><u>Westview</u> Frank Ludwig Beth Yoder</p>	<p><u>Fairfield</u> Dawn Thomas Cynthia Chupp Judy Kalich Karen Miller Andrea Ganger</p> <p><u>Middlebury</u> Kimberly Cammenga Dawn Helm</p>	<p><u>Goshen</u> Jan Desmarais-Morse Amy Fisher Mary Liechty Caskey Mary Mast Mitchel Rhodes Christine Rozow Chris Weaver Donna Wiktorowski Rachel Weaver Lisa Yoder</p>
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Membership by Marie Palacios

ECRTA currently has 187 members. Your current membership will expire August 31, 2024. When you receive your new membership card with the newsletter, please complete it and return it with \$15 dues payment for the school year 2024-2025. It is important to renew your membership each year because each member is an important part of our association. Ten dollars of your dues are used for organization expenses and five dollars goes to the ECRTA scholarship fund. (We also welcome extra money for the scholarship fund.) Every year we offer a \$1,000 scholarship to a junior or senior in an Indiana college with an education major. We appreciate your support each year.



Receiving notices by email reduces the cost of postage for the ECRTA. If you request delivery by US Mail, you will continue to receive postcard notices. We look forward to having all of you as ECRTA members. Please encourage all your teacher friends and new retirees to join as well. Looking forward to seeing you at the September luncheon.

You are also encouraged to join IRTA (Indiana Retired Teacher's Association). They are instrumental in lobby-



**WE ARE YOUR VOICE IN
STATE GOVERNMENT**

ing for retired teachers to receive a 13th check and/or COLA. Learn about discounts, how to protect your pension, and how to pay it forward to Indiana's current and future educators from

www.retiredteachers.org.

2023 Volunteer Hours by Lenette Burckhart

A huge thank you for the 11,105 volunteer hours recorded by 42 members in 2023 and an appreciation for generously giving your time for others. Honorable mention to seven members that recorded over 500 hours: Amanda F., Elaine F., Myrtis J., Marie P., Pennie P., John P., and Karen T. It's really important to keep track of your volunteer hours, and to report them to the volunteer coordinator at the end of the year. The IRTA lobbying team uses these hours when it approaches the legislature representing retired teachers to show how retired teachers give back to the community and state.



11,105 X \$33.49 = \$371,906.45 *"Volunteers in the United States hold up the foundation of civil society. They help their neighbors, serve their communities, and provide their expertise. No matter what kind of volunteer work they do, they are contributing in invaluable ways."* Rate & quote from Independent Sector

Necrology Report June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024 by Marie Palacios



Trudy Elaine Battjes
Joan Wagoner Beall
Mary Jane Blanken
James Broadbent
Joyce Eileen Carver*
Dennis Chiddister
Janice E. Dean
Steve Frisk*
Larry Haney

Nicole Lynn Harris
Darrell M. Hostetler
Dixie Inken
Judith Koepke*
Olivia Jo Lambright
Michael Lattimer
Nancy Liechty
MariLynn Lynn
Donald Lee Mann
Virginia Mock
Gary Modlin
David Oplinger
Phyllis Paler
Vernon Paler

Barb Parker*
Debby Poorbaugh
John Preheim*
Peggy Presser
Steve Proctor
Art Reinhart
Joseph L. Roush
Steve Swihart
Merle Tooker
Ora S. Troyer
Floyd Trosper
Mary Evelyn Weaver
Don Weirich
Donald Willis*

*ECRTA members

Congratulations to two of our ECRTA Members and their awards from the Indiana Retired Teachers Association!



Margaret Weybright received the Clock Award for her 478 hours of volunteer service in 2023!



Bonnie Reagan received an Honorable Mention Award for the Tote Bag Project!

