



BCREA Newsletter



October, 2026

Broward County Retired Educators' Association

Number 335

<https://browardrea.org>

BROWARD COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
Fall 2026 • Staying Connected • Staying Engaged • Continuing to Serve

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
DR. JOANN KITCHEN SIMMONS

As we move into the fall season, BCREA continues to provide opportunities for fellowship, learning, service, and meaningful connections among retired educators. Our years in education taught us the value of community and collaboration, and those values continue to guide us in retirement. We invite every member to stay engaged and join us for the exciting activities planned for the months ahead.

UPCOMING BCREA EVENTS

October 1, 2026 — Wellness Through Music
Jim Ward Community Center • Plantation, Florida
November 5, 2026 — Open House
Jim Ward Community Center • Plantation, Florida
December 3, 2026 — Holiday Cantata
Jim Ward Community Center • Plantation, Florida

Mark your calendars and plan to join us. These gatherings are opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, welcome others into our BCREA family, and celebrate the experiences and traditions that continue to bring us together.

We are also pleased to recognize Sue Colton, our newly appointed Florida Retired Educators Association Director, who was honored with the Shining Star Award presented by the Chamber of Commerce of Pompano Beach. This recognition celebrates her leadership and commitment to service.

Let's Continue the Journey Together!

Thank you for being a valued member of BCREA. Your continued participation strengthens our organization and helps us carry the spirit of education, service, and fellowship into the future.

With appreciation,
Joann Simmons
President, Broward County Retired Educators Association



The highlight of our May meeting was awarding many scholarships to some very deserving students!

The winner of the 5th grade Essay Contest is Brandon Basden from Dillard Elementary.

2nd Place went to Asdryan Bhandari from Westchester Elementary.

3rd Place went to Gaelle Pierre from Harbordale Elementary.

Certificates of Excellence were awarded to Emily Moyano from Fox Trail Elementary and Samara Pitts from Westchester Elementary.



BCREA Scholarships went to Anya Weglowskyj and Reandra Dwarika.



FREF Scholarships went to Aisling O'Brien and Talia Ciotti.

Magdalena Paredes received an ESOL Scholarship for the second year in a row!

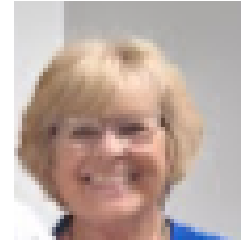
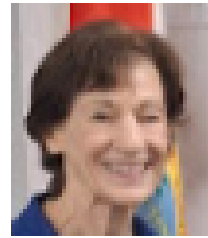


INFORMATION SERVICE
SALLIE SHERWOOD



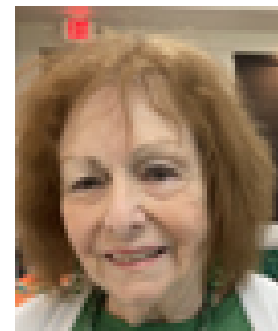
Welcome to the start of a new year with BCREA. The purpose of the Information Service Committee is to share information pertaining to our health, safety, community activities and retirement benefits which may be pertinent to you. If you have any ideas, events or suggestions to share, please contact one of the members of this committee. Our first meeting of the year will occur before World Mental Health Day (10/10/26) but we should remember that mental health is just as important as physical health. We need to keep both our mind and body engaged. Staying connected with one another, playing brain games, practicing mindfulness all help to keep our mind active, so try to incorporate into your daily schedule. There are Wordle, Mahjongg Solitaire, etc. groups that you can join online. Fall festivals are opening around town (even in our South Florida heat). Flamingo Road Nursery is a great place to take the grandkids for hayrides, pumpkin patches and Grandma's Garden. You can even bring your leashed pet! The annual Medicare Open Enrollment Period has arrived. October 15 to December 7, when all people who have Medicare are able to change their Medicare health plans and prescription drug coverage for the following year. However, please be careful, there is also a higher volume of spam calls during open enrollment. If you receive an unexpected call or text asking for personal or bank information this could be fraud! Do not give information but call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to receive assistance. (TTY 1-877-486-2048) The Senior vs. Crime Project is a state wide Florida program from the Attorney General's Office which was created to protect older adults from scams, fraud and unfair business practices. Their daily work is done by retired volunteers called "Senior Sleuths." If you experience an issue, you can call one of the two offices in Broward County: Coral Springs 954-340-4168 or Tamarac 954-597-3959. If you would like to volunteer to become a Sleuth, don't forget to give Darcy your volunteer hours. Wishing everyone a great year with BCREA. Stay fit, stay sharp and send positive thoughts to others. Sallie

LITERACY
SANDY LEFKOWITZ &
CINDY O'LINN



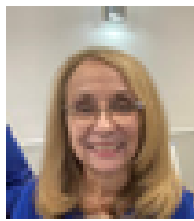
Happy 250th year of the United States of America. Ready to celebrate? BCREA is hoping to collect 250 NEW books this year. That's our goal! That would be amazing. The books will go to children at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. Let's add some cheer to their day. And if you want us to do the shopping for you, a dollar donation is the way to go. Don't forget the fifth-grade essay contest which is something we love doing every year. Encourage a fifth-grade teacher to submit essays. Encourage a grandchild (ask Lenora Smith) or a friend's child to write an essay. Last year we had the District 10 winner. Hopefully this year we will submit the winning state essay. Want to join a fantastic committee? Come on board! The Literacy Committee is waiting for you, just contact us. We'd love to have you join us.

FUND RAISING
BARBARA LEWIS



Our Fundraising committee has been very busy. BUNCO, November 9th is our first fundraiser. It will be at Duffy's Plantation at 11:30. This is an enjoyable fundraiser for scholarships. There will be prizes and lots of FUN. I will be collecting money at our October 1st meeting. Looking forward to seeing you at our BUNCO event. We also have our annual ZOOM BINGO on April 29. More details to follow. See you at the October Meeting

MEMBERSHIP
LUANN COMES



Reclaim! Retain! Recruit!

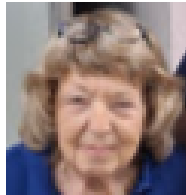
Membership Committee is looking forward to a very busy year! BCREA has a three part plan. First, we will be reaching out to members who may have just forgotten to pay their current dues so they can be reconnected to all the benefits of BCREA. I am, of course, talking about interesting social get-togethers, yummy food, fun activities, and the opportunity to help others through scholarships and community donations. Second, we will attempt to reclaim some of those members who dropped out over the years. I realize sometimes our schedules are overwhelmingly full, but a year or two later we want to reestablish connections. Let's see if another invitation will bring them back. Third, we want to recruit new members. Each of you can help by spreading the word. Invite someone to join us! Membership is open to Florida Retirement System retirees as well as school system retirees from other counties and states. Dues are \$60, which includes \$45 for FREA and \$15 for BCREA dues. Dues should be sent to

Membership at BCREA

You can reach me on my landline at 954-475-1510. Know that I screen my calls, so please leave a message. If I am home, I will pick up, but if not, I will return your call. I truly hope to see each of you at our October meeting!

LuAnn

LUNCHEON REPORT
CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE
DIANE TEXTER



My mother always told me my ancestors were all Irish. After some research, my brother and I discovered we were 100% German on my mom's and my dad's side. So we went to our grandparents and aunts and uncles for verification.???

I am asking for some of you to share an interesting {funny} Family story at our February luncheon. Think it over and let me know.

We will meet at Tropical Acres Restaurant on February 4, 2027 at 11:30. Tickets will be sold at the December and January meetings and by mail.

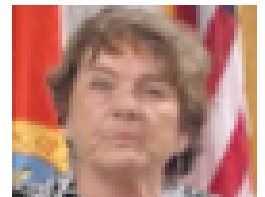
Have I told you about my "American" Indian great grandmother who sat on the porch and smoked her pipe? It is fun writing about my ancestors. Try it!

FREA STATE DIRECTOR &
BCREA LEGISLATIVE
CHAIR, SUE COLTON



As your FREA State Director & BCREA Legislative Chair, I'd like to share FREA President Carrie Frye's theme for this biennium, "The Power of Purpose, Positivity, and Passion," which reflects the very heart of BCREA. Our purpose keeps us serving our community, advocating for retired educators and public education, and supporting new educators and one another. Our positivity is the energy we bring to that work. Retirement did not retire our talents, experience, or ability to make a difference! And then there is passion - the spark that keeps us moving forward! This year, BCREA is leading the way with a new membership initiative and our "RETIRED, REWIRED & READY!" Open House on November 5, from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Jim Ward Community Center. Come enjoy food, fun, fellowship, committee, program, and partner displays - and most importantly, bring a new retired educator friend! When we welcome new members, share our stories, celebrate one another, and create opportunities to connect, we remind people that BCREA is a place where they can continue to learn, serve, lead, laugh, and belong.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS
ANNE FRENCH



BCREA will be sponsoring several fun field trips during this year. The committee is working on the details, so stay tuned for a schedule of activities, locations, and dates. The activities will be varied, educational, and most of all - FUN! If you have suggestions for an exciting outing, please let me know.

My email is annefrench10@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

DARCIA DRAGO



Welcome to all our returning & new members! At our Oct. meeting we will collect school supplies for the Broward Education Foundation. They make these items available at no charge to teachers in low income schools.

I hope you have accrued a lot of volunteer hours over the summer. Please turn them in at our Oct. meeting. You do not need to provide a breakdown of hours, just label them "Summer 2026."

We will continue to collect used cell phones & eyeglasses & aluminum pull tabs at all of our meetings.

Thanks for all that you do for our community!

BCREA VOLUNTEER REPORTING FORM	
Name _____	(Please Print)
Month _____, 20____	
Total volunteer hours including literacy	
Total # of hours _____	
Bring this to our next meeting or e-mail it to me at dardra@att.net	
Darcy	

Alyce Aspler had the most volunteer hours for April! Congratulations!





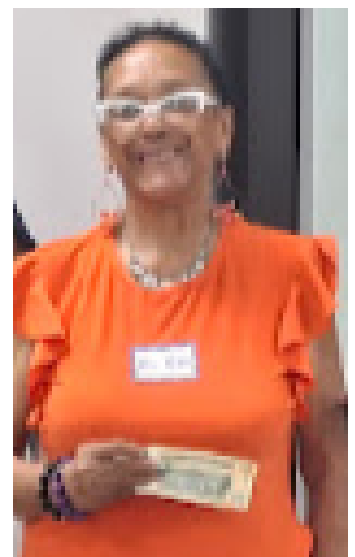
Thank you to Bev Hoppe for 21
years of providing us with our
newsletter! You are appreciated
beyond words!





Our Board of Directors remains committed to thoughtful planning and member engagement. The photograph above captures board members during a planning meeting hosted by Bright Star Credit Union—a wonderful example of the partnerships and relationships that help support our work.

In the May Scholarship Drawing, Edith won \$20, Darlene, Lori and Beverly each won \$10! Robin won chimes and a plant!



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