

HARTBEAT

An affiliate of the Texas Retired
Teachers Association

HART Visits Legislators in Austin April 11-12

The 2023 Day at the Capitol was an exciting time for everyone. Some of us traveled up on Tuesday, April 11, and attended the 70th Anniversary Party for TRTA. State President and HART member, Marcy Cann, introduced the festivities and urged everyone to have a good time. Dr. Ray Perryman, economist and author of the TRS value brochure *A Great Value for all Texans*, spoke about the economic impact of retired teachers on the economy in Texas.



Tim Lee, TRTA Executive Director, followed up with a rousing speech about proposed legislation for a COLA and an additional stipend. After all this talk, we were ready to have some food, some drinks, and some line dancing! Yes, TRTA members took to the dance floor and had a great time, with a little coaxing and guidance, doing the boot-scootin' boogie.

The next day District 4 members in the Houston area boarded three different buses and headed to Austin. We all converged on the Capitol and enjoyed meeting with our elected representatives and attending a special session in the House chambers. In the Senate, a sea of red shirts took almost every seat in the gallery. The Honorable Senator Joan Huffman introduced a resolution to make April 10-14

Retired Teacher Appreciation Week.

This gave every Senator an excuse to stand up and say how much they admired teachers and how they were determined to pass a COLA and a stipend check for teachers. The resolution passed. We applauded like crazy and everyone was extremely pleased with the outcome.

Afterward, TRTA treated everyone to an ice cream social on the East Lawn of the Capitol. Several elected Representatives came out to speak and enjoy some Amy's Ice Cream. At 3:00 p.m. D4 members boarded their buses back to Houston, knowing that a COLA and a stipend were promised. Senate Bill 10 was passed unanimously on March 29, and offers a 2% COLA for those who retired between September 1, 2013, and December 31, 2021; a 4% COLA for those who retired

before September 1, 2013; and a \$7500 stipend check to all retirees over 75 years of age. Texas House Bill 600 was passed out of committee but at the time this was written, has yet to be approved by the House. It offers a tiered COLA of 2% to 6% based on the number of years a TRS annuitant has been retired; an on-going COLA of 1% - 2% yearly based on certain criteria such as TRS fund returns; and a stipend for all retirees 70 years of age and older. Other provisions would increase the state and active member contribution. Some action items in this bill would have to be put to voters in November for approval.

When the House passes its bill, the House and Senate will have to meet in conference to resolve differences. If you have not already done so, call, email or write your elected representatives to let them know how much you appreciate their support for a COLA and stipend check. Read *The Inside Line* at TRTA.org and respond to any calls for a mass email or telephone call campaign, based on instructions from Tim Lee. Recruit any retired teachers to HART/TRTA to strengthen our numbers and increase the power of our voice. Together, with numbers and determination, we can accomplish our goal of gaining a COLA and a stipend check.



Austin Snaps



HARTbeat is the newsletter of HART, edited by Howard Lindsay, hhlindsay@comcast.net. Please consider contributing photos, articles or letters. Your presence at HART events implies approval for us to use your photographs for publicity purposes.



Help Distribute Books for McNamara Elementary

By Bonnie Herst, Chair, Books for Children

TRTA sponsors a state-wide project to purchase and donate books for children in every chapter. Each chapter does things a little differently, but the result is thousands of books are put in the hands of children.

Local HART chapters raise money to purchase new books which are distributed to every child in a selected elementary school each year. This year McNamara Elementary School was chosen and over 1000 books have been ordered. We now have two more days of work and the need for volunteers. Day one involves organizing the books by classroom and placing a name plate in the front of each book identifying HART/TRTA as the donor. Day two involves presenting the books to the children in the classrooms. Both days are fun and full of companionship and camaraderie. If you are interested in helping, please call or email Bonnie Herst:

herstkenbon@netropolis.net

[\(281\) 704-6115](tel:2817046115)

Volunteers will meet at McNamara Elementary School:

8714 McAvoy Dr, Houston, TX 77074

May 22 @ 10:00 a.m.

May 24 @ 9:00 a.m.



HART Retirement Education Chair Les Pronin suggests that members seeking publicity for their programs use the tabloid *Southwest News*. Email material to MyNews@Village-Southwest-News.com.

Message from Your President

I cannot believe that this is my last opportunity to address you as your president. It has been such a privilege to represent you and attempt to honor the traditions and expectations of HART. Our organization has a long and successful history with many leaders who have stood up for retired teachers and built a strong foundation.

Things are different now and maybe we need to be different. COVID was just one harbinger of change. People don't join "clubs" and don't look to social gatherings for their entertainment. We used to say that it was hard to compete, as a teacher, with TV. Now we must compete with TV, YouTube, TikTok, Minecraft, Fortress, etc. But on the other hand, our members are awesome and work hard for our organization. Almost everyone I know in HART is also active in several other organizations, their church or synagogue, their neighborhood, and with family and friends.

I hope we can all soon celebrate the accomplishment of a COLA and a supplemental check for all retired teachers. We have worked so hard for this goal, and building membership has been important to this journey. Each and every one of you has contributed to this moment in some way.



Margaret Preston

Your donations, volunteerism, letter writing, calling legislators, working on committees, calling members, recruiting, and storming the halls of the Capitol, have all led to the success we are expecting. To some, this is only what we deserve. For others, this will be a lifeline to a better quality of life. Please give yourselves a big pat on the back and prepare for the final push.

Lastly, thank you for putting up with my struggles with the technology of today. Zoom has allowed us to continue in difficult times. But it is hard to teach this old dog new tricks. We've all done our best and you have been very forgiving of my shortcomings. I look forward to being an ex-president and continuing my involvement in our organization. Getting to know you has been my greatest pleasure.

Margaret Preston



Football Defensive Safety Justin Reid joined the HART crew at Kids Meals to make sandwiches and snacks for hungry preschool children. Mr. Reid, a former player for the Texans, is now a Safety with the Kansas City Chiefs. A native of Prairieville, Louisiana, he played for Stanford University before turning NFL pro.

L. to r. are Ruth Cummings, Donna Patch, Justin Reid, Bonnie Herst, Alford Bleeker, Jane Sakely, Tom Sanders, Jan Cooper and Howard Lindsay.

The last meeting of HART for this year will be:

Friday, May 12, 2023

Bellaire Civic Club, 7008 S. Rice Avenue

9:30 a.m. Social Time

10:30 a.m. Meeting

Program - Dearborn & Creegs, Installation of Officers and Awards

Help us finish the year strong!

Save the date - We're Not Going back to School Party!

Monday, August 28

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

HART Scholarship Winners

*By Jane Eixmann, Director,
HART Continuing Education Fund #1*

The HART Scholarship Committee has awarded to each of the following students from Houston Christian University (formerly Houston Baptist University) a \$1,000 scholarship:

Jessica Hall—a senior majoring in Elementary Education EC-6 with ESL;

Marissa Melendez—a junior majoring in Elementary Education EC-6 with special Education/ESL;

Jennifer Ortiz—a senior majoring in Elementary Education EC-6/Bilingual Education;

Briana Wofford—a senior majoring in Elementary Education EC-6 with ESL.

Each student submitted an application, an essay on their philosophy of education, and a transcript.



(l. to r) Jessica Hall, Marissa Melendez, Jennifer Ortiz, Briana Wofford, and Dr. Mary White, HCU School of Education

Photo by Richard Smith

Community Hours Reported

*By Howard Bruce
Community Volunteer Services*

Seventy-three HART members reported 25,484 community volunteer hours in 2022. The top ten volunteer hours reported are as follows:

1. Patricia Bonner - 3,022 hours
2. Jeanette Simpson - 2,880 hours
3. Evelyn Stewart - 2,016 hours
4. Rosa Espinosa - 1,982 hours
5. Alford Bleeker - 1,500 hours
6. Juliana Bruce - 1,443 hours
7. Howard Bruce - 1,375 hours
8. Rosalind Haynes - 1,232 hours
9. Judy Harwell - 1,012 hours
10. Dottie Gardner - 850 hours

We are proud to have contributed to TRTA District IV's total of 505,874 community volunteer hours in 2022. The top three chapters reporting volunteer hours in 2022 were:

1. Mainland Chapter - 95,492 hours
2. Northeast Harris County Chapter - 45,787 hours
3. Katy Chapter - 44,878 hours

Thanks to all educators who volunteer in our community. You can report your hours monthly at the HART meetings or send them to howard.bruce@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks for continuing to make a difference in our community.

**Houston Association of Retired Teachers
P.O. Box 6727
Houston, TX 77265-6727**



Membership Form - HART and TRTA for 2023-2024

Membership year runs from July 1, 2023 -June 31, 2024

New or Renewing Members

Print legal name: _____

Preferred name (if different): _____

Address: _____
Street City Zip

Preferred phone number: _____ Email: _____

Attach your check for \$45 (\$35 goes to TRTA and \$10 to your local unit, HART). If you have your TRTA dues automatically drafted, send \$10 only. Mail to HART, P.O. Box 6727, Houston, TX, 77265-6727.

I receive an annuity from a teacher retirement system.

☐

I would prefer to receive all HART communication by e-mail.

☐

Please accept my added donation to HART for general operations and mailings _____

I was referred by HART member _____