




The Association of Retired Howard County Public School Personnel

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MESSAGE FROM HEART'S CO-PRESIDENTS

Hello, and happy Spring! We hope you are finding time to enjoy the beauty of the season, including warmer weather (mostly), chirping birds, and flowering trees. And speaking of springtime, we'd love to see you at HEART's upcoming **General Business Meeting & Luncheon**, scheduled for **Tuesday, May 12th**. We encourage you to register for the meeting early, as we had a record number of attendees in March. Registration guidelines are included in the newsletter.

We are delighted to share HEART's latest membership news ... in March we recorded the highest monthly membership increase in the state, with 33 new members joining our ranks! Hats off to the efforts of two all-star individuals, HEART Membership Chair *Donna Brackins* and Recruitment and Retention Chair *Susan Sellner*. Of course, recruitment is truly a team effort, and we thank all of our members for encouraging friends and former colleagues to join the organization. As we often say, there is strength (and support) in numbers, and ours continues to grow!

While protecting our pension and other retiree benefits is certainly a valid reason to join HEART, socialization is a close second. 😊 HEART members continue to enjoy each other's company at luncheons, Toby's Dinner Theater, and Happy Hours. In fact, our "Endless Summer" Happy Hour is just around the corner, on **Tuesday, June 16th** at Kelsey's Irish Pub in Ellicott City. Our September "Not Back to School Happy Hour" was a huge success, and we anticipate this one will be no different. Continue reading for RSVP information on all of our HEART social events.

Finally, at our March Executive Team Meeting, we took time to brainstorm ways to engage members who, for whatever the reason, are unable to join us for in-person events. Our new Facebook group represents one new option, but we'd also like your feedback on other ideas. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey included in this newsletter; it will be very much appreciated.

Until we (hopefully) see you on the 12th, enjoy the first month of spring and all the beauty it brings.

With smiles,
Addie & Sue, Co-Presidents

HEART's General Membership Meeting: Tuesday, May 12th

Our final meeting of the "school" year (many of us still think in those terms!) is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 12th**. The meeting and delicious luncheon (thanks Gail & Susan) will be held at *The Meeting House* in Columbia, beginning at **12:00** noon. Keep reading for the specifics; we think you'll be pleased. 😊

There are always important updates to share at our membership meetings, and the May meeting is certainly no exception. At this meeting, Webmaster *Karyn Littlejohn* will highlight our user-friendly website and HEART's new, and private, Facebook Group. Budget Chairperson *Sharon Kramer* will review the organization's proposed budget for FY27, providing members with an opportunity to ask questions and vote on the recommendations. We'll also discuss our regular agenda items, including the latest news regarding health insurance benefits.

Of course, we have more than business items planned for the spring meeting. In addition to enjoying a delicious lunch and taking time to celebrate both new and returning members, we'll welcome guest speaker *Dana Sohr*, a team member from Bridges to Housing Stability. For 35 years, Bridges has been providing numerous programs in the county that focus on providing a path to self-sufficiency and preventing and ending homelessness in the county. Dana will review the group's various initiatives including *HoCo Home Share*, a free program that matches homeowners who have a room to spare with local residents seeking housing.

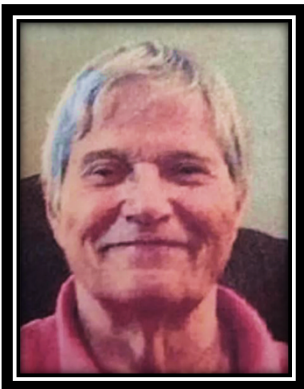
Members can register for the meeting online or by mail. The registration information, including a link (below) and a mail-in form, are included with this newsletter. Payment can be made in advance through the mail (check made out to HEART) or via Zelle (hocoretired@gmail.com). We also accept payment (cash or check) at the door.

The deadline for registration is Friday, May 8th. And don't forget your donations for HEART's supported charities: community Food Banks, Comfort Cases, and the Ronald McDonald House (bottle tops). We hope to see you on the 12th!

[**HEART May 12th Luncheon Online Reservation Link**](#)

In Remembrance

If you learn about the passing of a HEART member, please reach out to Marlyn Oatts, the Necrology Chair, at moatts2000@yahoo.com. Use the subject line "HEART Member." Any information you provide will assist in writing biographies for our newsletters and Facebook posts. Thank you.



Judy Eloise Snyder passed on March 21, 2025, at the age of 78 at Brookdale in Hagerstown, MD. Judy was a Physical Education teacher at Clarksville Middle School, Clarksville, MD, until her retirement after 34 years.

The link to her obituary is below.

<https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/obituaries/phag1131150>

Lawrence "Larry" Cohen, of Columbia, Maryland, passed away peacefully on Saturday, December 27, 2025, at the age of 76—a gentle closing to a life defined by purpose, connection, and care.



Larry devoted 28 years to the Howard County Public School System, serving as a teacher, administrator, and elected member of the Board of Education. His commitment to education was not simply professional; it was deeply personal. He believed in schools as communities of belonging and possibility, and he worked tirelessly to build systems that honored and supported every child, educator, staff member, and family. His legacy in education lives on in the countless lives he shaped and the enduring structures he helped strengthen.

Beyond his formal roles, Larry was a cornerstone of the Howard County community. Known affectionately as the "unofficial Mayor," he had a rare gift for bringing people together. Whether through conversation, mentorship, or simple presence, he created spaces where others felt welcomed, heard, and valued. His friendships were deep and lasting, his guidance generous, and his spirit unmistakably warm.

Larry was known for his wit, his integrity, and his ability to make others feel at ease. He carried humor lightly and wisdom thoughtfully, always ready to listen, to support, or to share a moment of laughter. To be in Larry's presence was to feel seen and safe, a reflection of his genuine care for others.

A true mensch, Larry's life was marked by kindness, humility, and a steadfast dedication to community. His absence will be deeply felt, but his legacy endures in the relationships he nurtured, the lives he touched, and the example he set. May his memory continue to be a source of comfort, inspiration, and blessing.

SCHOLARSHIP

Happy Spring from the HEART Scholarship Committee!

We are excited about the opportunity to award several \$1500 scholarships to future teachers each year. Current HCPSS high school seniors and/or current college students who graduated from HCPSS who are entering the field of education are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

The 2026 application deadline was April 1. Our committee will be reviewing all application materials and making decisions this month and then notifying winners in May. We will be sure to share the announcement with HEART members after that.

We remain appreciative of all donations that have been made! Donations are accepted throughout the year to support the next year's scholarship recipients. Information can be found at the bottom of our website page: <https://www.howardrspa.org/scholarship>.

A big thank you to the latest round of donors who have generously contributed funds to support the scholarships, as well as all who participated in the 50/50 raffle at the HEART meeting(s).

- Jacqueline Lashinsky (in memory of her mother and also her two brothers who recently passed away)
- F. Louise Smith
- Sue Ann Tabler
- Barb Bleiler
- Suzy Bunce
- Anna Spring (donated back all earnings won from 50/50 raffle)
- Kim Sullivan (in memory of Shirley Meighan & Wilhelmina Oldfield)
- Ellen & Jim Hill (in memory of Larry Cohen)

2026 Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

Come experience the national parks! All National Park Service sites that charge an entrance fee will offer free admission to US citizens and residents (other fees, including timed entry or reservation fees, may apply). Mark your calendar for these entrance fee-free dates:

- **February 16:** Presidents Day (Washington's Birthday)
- **May 25:** Memorial Day
- **June 14:** Flag Day/President Trump's birthday
- **July 3–5:** [Independence Day](#) weekend
- **August 25:** [110th Birthday of the National Park Service](#)
- **September 17:** Constitution Day
- **October 27:** Theodore Roosevelt's birthday
- **November 11:** [Veterans Day](#)

Enjoy your National Parks this Season

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/go-virtual.htm>

HEART WEBSITE HAS A NEW FEATURE!

We have added a General Meeting Recap & Resources page to the website. On this page you will find a short meeting recap, links shared by guest speakers, photos, and general meeting minutes. It is the Executive Teams' hope that this addition will give all members access to General Meeting resources and for those who are unable to attend to have a stronger connection to HEART. Check it out using this link: [Meeting Recap | HEART](#)

PLEASE LIKE, FOLLOW, and JOIN HEART on Social Media!

HEART is on social media with two Facebook sites. We have a Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/HowardRSPA/>) where we post about HEART and MRSPA. This page is public and anybody can find, like, and follow.

We have recently added a Facebook Group that is private and for any and all HCPSS retirees! (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/heart.howardrspa/>) Anybody can find the Group, but only HCPSS retirees are able to join after answering a few simple questions. This FB Group is designed to be a place where retirees can connect and interact with other retirees. Members of the group are encouraged to post, comment, and share whenever possible. The QRC posted below may be helpful in locating the private



For assistance, questions, or concerns about the HEART website or Facebook Page/Group, contact Karyn Littlejohn via email at heart.klittlejohn@gmail.com

HEART

HEART'S GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES

Please follow the link below to access Heart's General Meeting Minutes

[LINK to MINUTES](#)

Respectfully submitted by

Janet Zimmerman, Secretary

A REQUEST....

Help us stay up to date on changes in our membership. When you become aware of the passing of a HEART member, please get in touch with Marlyn Oatts Any information you're able to provide can be very helpful with the preparation of the written bios that are included in our newsletters.

Also, our "[Personal Data Forms](#)" are tremendous resources for the bios. Please make sure we have your completed "Personal Data Form" in our HEART files. If you haven't already done so, perhaps it's time to update your form. The "Personal Data Form" can be found at this [LINK](#) as well as it is attached to this newsletter.

GET SOCIAL with HEART



Get SOCIAL with HEART... Musicals AND a HAPPY HOUR!

Are you ready to join your HEART friends for some musical theatre at Toby's Dinner Theatre? We have two shows scheduled to round out 2026; details are below.

On Thursday, **October 29th**, join us for ***Donna Summers, The Musical***. A girl from Boston with a voice from heaven, Summers shot to stardom from a gospel choir to a dance floor diva. Her story broke every barrier and her music broke countless records. Summers became the icon of an era and the inspiration for each music diva who followed. Enjoy a fabulous score featuring more than twenty of Summer's classic hits including: "Love to Love You Baby," "Hot Stuff," and "Last Dance." You'll be ready to groove along to this electric experience honoring the voice of a generation!

Toby's holiday show is always a favorite of HEART members, and I'm sure this year will be no different. Join us on **Thursday, December 17th** for an anticipated sell out, ***"White Christmas."*** Based on the beloved film, two WWII veterans with a successful song-and-dance act follow a pair of singings sisters to their Christmas show at a Vermont lodge, which just happens to be owned by their old commander. They plan a yuletide fun-filled extravaganza to help fill the inn. Seventeen Irving Berlin tunes, including "Blue Skies," "How Deep is the Ocean" and "White Christmas" make this a family musical extraordinaire!

Tickets for Toby's are \$79.35 (inclusive of tip) and are open to HEART members, their family and friends. Tickets can be purchased by check, cash or Zelle (via hocoretired@gmail.com). Contact Sue at scmascaro@gmail.com or 443-878-6883 to reserve seats today. 😊

Are you ready to celebrate one of the best perks of being a retired HCPSS employee, an endless summer break? Join HEART on **Tuesday, June 16th** for our **"Endless Summer" Happy Hour**. We've reserved a room at Kelsey's Irish Pub in Ellicott City for this annual event, which runs from 4 to 7:30 pm. The cost? Only \$15, which includes an unlimited assortment of hor'dourves and nonalcoholic drinks. A cash bar will also be available for those who wish to enjoy something a little bit more spirited. And perhaps you have a retired friend who's not currently a HEART member? Feel free to bring them along at no additional cost.

Please contact Sue at scmascaro@gmail.com or 443-878-6883 (text) to reserve a spot, as space is limited. The deadline for rsvp's is June 10th.



MRSPA Membership Special

From March 1 - May 31, during a Special Promotion, join or rejoin for free when you enroll via dues deduction. * Visit this [page](#) to join or rejoin." See application for de-tails.

Join or Rejoin MRSPA - \$10 Special on MRSPA Dues.* Local dues are FREE during this special.

for March 1 to May 31, 2026

*Join or Rejoin MRSPA during this special for FREE with [dues deduction](#)

[Printable Membership Special Form](#) - Print & Complete by hand.

[Fillable Membership Special Form](#) - Complete on computer.

HEART SURVEY 2026



HEART is exploring ways to better support and engage our community following general meetings, including the possibility of offering a brief follow-up virtual session. Please respond by April 30th using the link below or email us with your response at howardrspa@gmail.com

Survey Questions:

1. How beneficial would it be for you if HEART offered a short, follow-up virtual meeting after general meetings?
2. What ideas or suggestions do you have for HEART that would help better meet your needs and enhance your experience?

Google Forms: [SURVEY LINK](#)

SCAM ALERT!

Forwarded from MRSPA by Fran Donaldson

Do These 9 Things to Feel Safer Now!

Update your passwords—including home Wi-Fi, and don't use pets' or grandkids' names. Instead, try a passphrase you'll remember, but substitute a symbol for a letter.

Change your settings on your smartphone to send all unknown numbers to voicemail.

On social media, do a privacy checkup. Under Settings, choose Privacy, and check to make sure only people you choose see your social media posts.

Freeze your credit. This will prevent crooks from stealing your identity and opening new credit cards and other accounts in your name. Unfreeze it when necessary to allow a credit search.

Take your Social Security card out of your wallet and put it in a safe place.

Review your bank and other financial accounts right now for suspicious activity. Do this daily, weekly or monthly, especially for bank and credit card statements.

Delete apps not in use, including those with saved passwords.

Go into your device and log out of all your apps to avoid unauthorized access.

Add the AARP Fraud Watch Network (877-908-3360) to your contacts for quick access if needed.