



—September Issue 2026—

HEARTBEATS

A newsletter made by The Association of Retired Howard County Personnel



INSIDE OUR BEAT...

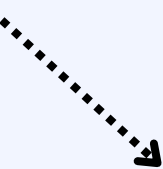
From HEART'S Co-Presidents

Dear HEART Members,

We hope you've enjoyed a wonderful summer, including quality time with family and/or friends, whether that was at home or away. It's hard to believe that the fall season is already upon us, bringing cooler weather, shorter days, and the start of a new year for HEART. 😊

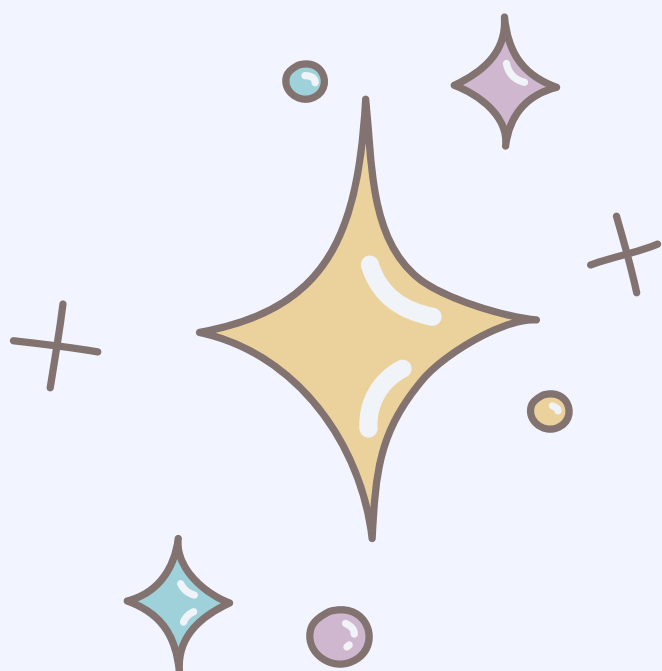
Speaking of the new year, we hope to see you at our first General Business Meeting/Luncheon of the year, on Tuesday, October 13th. Our featured guest speaker for the meeting is Fitness Coordinator Sherri Lively, a local expert in wellness and fitness for the 50+ (that's us!) group. Keeping with the wellness theme, we'll also have a representative from HCPSS's Hinge Health Program. Be sure to register for the meeting early; meeting details and registration guidelines are included in the newsletter.

Co-Presidents' Message	1,2
General Meeting Minutes	4-6
Get Social With HEART	3
Scholarships	6



Save the Date

- HEART's Annual Holiday luncheon is on December 8th at Turf Valley Resort
- Our spring luncheons are scheduled for March 9th and May 11th at The Meeting House in Columbia.



CO-PRESIDENTS' WELCOME CONT.

The October meeting is coming up quickly, but that doesn't mean your Executive Team isn't planning ahead for HEART's future luncheons. We want to share those meeting dates well in advance, since we know just how BUSY retired life can be. Please mark your calendars now: HEART's Annual Holiday luncheon is on December 8th at Turf Valley Resort, and our spring luncheons are scheduled for March 9th and May 11th at The Meeting House in Columbia. There are several other HEART events already scheduled; check this newsletter for more information.

In closing, we are so thankful for our HEART members. Whether you attend meetings and/or social events or simply stay in touch electronically, we appreciate you! Your involvement helps HEART as we work to support our community, future HCPSS educators, and of course, each other.

With gratitude,
Addie & Sue

PROGRAM NEWS

HEART's General Membership Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, October 13th

The General Membership Meeting and Luncheon, our first meeting of the new "school" year (yes, most of us still think in those terms) is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13th. The Meeting House in Columbia, beginning at 12:00 noon. Keep reading for the specifics; we think you'll be pleased. 😊

PROGRAM NEWS CONTINUES ON PAGE 7



Are you ready to celebrate one of the best perks of being a retired HCPSS employee, no back to school or the office in the fall? Join HEART Tuesday, September 15th for our “Not Back to School” 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 \$20, 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? Bring them along at no additional cost, and earn a drink compliments of HEART!

But wait, there’s more... How about 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!

We hope you can join us for one, two, or ALL three events. 😊 The deadline for Happy Hour reservations is September 11th, with payment (\$20) via check or Zelle (hocoretired@gmail.com), due in advance.

Toby’s (\$79.35) can be paid in advance or at the door the night of the performance. Reservations for Donna Summers are due by September 30th; for White Christmas, November 15th. Contact Sue at scmascaro@gmail.com or 443-878-6883 to reserve tickets for all three events.

HEART’S STRINGS

Co - President: Sue Mascaro
443-878-6883
scmascaro@gmail.com

Co - President: Addie Kaufman
410-964-9040
ahk1206@aol.com

Vice President: Ronnie Bohn
ronniebohn@comcast.net

Secretary: Janet Zimmerman
jzimmerman79@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ellen Hill
e107hill@aol.com

HEART’S ATRIUM

AARP Liaison: Fran Dolandson
Auditing: Gail Zitnay
Budget & Finance: Sharon Kramer
Community Service: Sue Mascaro
Consumer Education: Fran Donaldson
Health Benefits: James Evans; E. Streagle
Legislative: Eugene Streagle
Luncheon Coordinator: Gail Zitnay
Membership: Donna Brackins
Media/Communications:
• Newsletter: Anne Swartz; Genée Varlack
• Facebook: Ellen Hill
• Webmaster: Karyn Littlejohn
Necrology: Maryln Oatts
Nominating: Corita Oduyoye
Professional Relations: Larry Cohen
Recruitment/Retention: Susan Sellner
Remembrance: Patti Neidig
Scholarship: Lisa Davis
Silent Auction: Elise Jordon

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Addie Kaufman, Co-President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. The meeting was held at The Meeting House in Oakland Mills.

General Business and Committee Updates
Addie Kaufman stated HEART continues to have a great relationship with HCPSS. This morning Addie met with Bill Barnes, HCPSS Superintendent. Bill is very supportive of HEART. Addie explained retirees have no bargaining rights (bargaining is for active teachers only); consequently, there is no limitation to how many organizations can "support" (not bargain for) retired teachers. HEART has been in existence since 1975, under MRSPA, and will continue to inform retirees. HEART is happy to partner with any other organization that supports retirees. Gene Streagle and Jim Evans continue to advocate for HEART through the BAC (Benefits Advisory Committee).

MRSPA works to protect our pension; HEART protects our benefits through HCPSS. The price of dues is \$20.00/year to join HEART and \$50.00/year to join MRSPA. Automatic deductions for both from the July pension deposit is easy to set up through MRSPA.

Approval of March 10, 2026 General Meeting Minutes

Janet Zimmerman, Secretary, stated that the minutes of the meeting were published in the April 2026 newsletter. There were no questions or corrections. Kaye Brooke made a motion to approve the minutes; Susan Sellner seconded the motion. Members voted and the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Ellen Hill, Treasurer, reported the current balances: Checking \$41,899.22; Savings (other interest-bearing checking account) \$1,684.26; Scholarship -\$3,514.26. HEART awarded five scholarships of \$1,500 each this year and all recipients have received their funds.



FY 27 Budget

Sharon Kramer presented and explained the FY 27 budget. It is a zero-based budget. Total Revenue is \$26,510; total expenses are \$26,510. Carol Hahn made a motion to accept the FY 27 budget as written; Alice Haskins seconded the motion. Members voted and the budget was passed.

Featured Presentation: Housing Stability & HoCo Home Share

Dana Sohr from Bridges to Housing Stability, presented information on homeless services (Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Family Home Start). The organization has its own stock of affordable housing (Bridges Alliance, Help End Homelessness). Dana described HoCo Home Share and their comprehensive process. He also provided literature on the program. 30% of those in the program are over age 55. There are home sharing programs throughout the U.S. Learn more and apply at:

<https://www.bridges2hs.org/hoco-home-share>

Contact the organization at 410-312-5760 X 121

HEART & MRSPA

Last week several members attended the MRSPA annual business meeting at Turf Valley. Our pension fund is in excellent shape. Some by-laws were amended. Neighboring retiree school systems shared ideas. One idea included mini grants to support HCPSS teachers. Another included awards to retirees. One system hosts an I Don't Have to Go to School Today Breakfast.

Betty Weller, current president of MRSPA, spoke to members. She appreciates our membership. MRSPA supports and advocates for our pension as well as relevant Maryland legislation. Betty said the best way to affect legislation is to have a personal conversation with legislators. Anyone who knows a delegate is encouraged to have a conversation with that delegate to provide information on MRSPA, teachers, pensions, benefits, etc. MRSPA gives scholarships to future teachers. Everyone is encouraged to join MRSPA - The more members we have, the louder our voices.

HEART's Website

Karyn Littlejohn, our webmaster, has revamped the HEART website. The website is open to everyone; it is no longer password protected. There is a new Meeting Recap Page with links to the approved meeting minutes and other relevant resources from the meeting. We are hoping more HCPSS retirees will join our private Facebook group. As Craig Powell posted, "Sometimes it takes all day to do nothing!"



MRSPA Website: www.mrspa.org

HEART Website: www.howardspa.org

HEART Facebook: [MRSPA Website: www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org)

Contact: (443) 535-2574

Congratulations to the following seniors who were selected as recipients of the HEART Scholarship. Kindly view their descriptions, inspirations, hopes and dreams by following this link to HEART's website:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cT9u2PvFYMcPGJRvBSUk0hNy0N8Ow3vU0xoZfnG7zPI/edit?usp=sharing>

Taylor Coles, a senior at Guilford Park High School

Beatrice Petrlik a senior at Centennial HS

Amelia Fenton, a senior at Marriotts Ridge HS

John Gfeller VII, a senior from Marriotts Ridge HS

Carissa Hyun of Atholton High School



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES, CONT.

Socializing with HEART

Sue Mascaro announced Performances at Toby's in Columbia. Join HEART members for The Donna Summer Musical (Oct. 29), and White Christmas (December 17). Contact Sue to reserve tickets for Toby's (by phone (443-878-6883) or by email, at scmascaro@gmail.com). In addition, HEART is sponsoring our annual Endless Summer Happy Hour on June 16th at Kelsy's Irish Pub in Ellicott City. The cost is \$15. RSVP to Sue by June 12.

Scholarship Committee

Lisa Davis reported HEART awarded five scholarships (out of 11 applicants this year) to future educators. Donations are accepted throughout the year (the form is online or can be mailed). Information is posted on the HEART website. Donations may be mailed via check or through Zelle. A gift card surprise will be awarded to Jacqueline Lashinsky.

A 50/50 drawing was held today to support the scholarship committee. \$230 was collected. Debbie Cartney graciously donated her \$115 share back to the Scholarship Committee.

Retiree Benefits Update

Gene Streagle provided an update from the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC). Maryland has a Defined Benefits Pension, the best type of pension to have. The Maryland legislators have no idea that our health insurance is paid for by the county. They think the State pays for it. The State legislators want to eventually pass the State funding for pensions to be paid by the counties.

All retirees still have HCPSS Life Insurance.

HCPSS has great health care benefits for retirees, maybe the best in the State.

If you know anyone in the county council, please speak with that person about not allowing the

Serving the Community
HEART continues to sponsor Comfort Cases and the Howard County Food Bank with donations. Both organizations accept donations throughout the year (in person, by mail, or through their website). Members donated generously to both organizations today. Today's economic world is difficult for many of our Howard County residents. Comfort Cases provides a backpack with books, journals, pajamas, a stuffed animal friend, and other essentials for youth required to move to a foster home. Comfort Cases was founded to provide a more humane touch for the children as they transition to new foster placements.

Susan Sellner provided lovely plant door prizes. May, June, and July birthdays were celebrated. Members thanked Gail Zitney, Susan Sellner, Jo Schelle, Anne Polilove, Gisella C, and Debra Dear, and Donna Brackins for the success of today's luncheon.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Zimmerman, Secretary
.....➔

PROGRAM NEWS= continued from page 2

HEART's General Membership Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, October 13th

Based on member feedback, we'll continue to alternate sandwiches and salads (cold) with catered (hot) meal selections at the luncheons. So what's in store for October? A delicious selection of offerings from BJ's Brewhouse in Columbia. Started in 1978 with a delicious California twist on deep dish pizza, BJ's has grown to offer a variety of signature dishes, with something for everyone! Our menu will include a sampling of BJ's favorites, including vegetarian dishes. And if that's not enough, plenty of desserts will be on hand to satisfy your sweet tooth.

There is always important news to share at membership meetings. October is no exception, with updates on HEART leadership, student scholarships, and the latest regarding health benefits. Meeting attendees will also help us welcome new retirees to HEART. Of course, we have more than business items planned for our first meeting. Our featured guest speaker is Fitness Coordinator Sherri Lively, a local expert in wellness and fitness for the 50+ (that's us!) group. Be ready for an energetic, engaging presentation! And in keeping with the wellness theme, we'll also be joined by a representative from HCPSS's Hinge Health Program. I know many of us are already enjoying the benefits of this personalized health program; come prepared with questions.

Members can register online or by mail; the registration information, including a link (below) and a mail-in form, are included in the newsletter. Payment can be made in advance through the mail (check made out to HEART) or via Zelle (use hocoretired@gmail.com). We also accept payment (cash or check) at the door. The deadline for registration is Friday, October 9th. And don't forget your donations for HEART's supported charities: local Food Banks, Comfort Cases, and the Ronald McDonald House (bottle tops).

We hope to see you on the 13th! Registration Link: [October 13th Luncheon link](#)

MRSPA NEWS

Why should I join the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association?

- is the only organization in the state that works exclusively for retired school personnel
- is an advocate for its members' interests locally in Annapolis and nationally in Washington
- is represented on the Maryland Retirement/Pension System Board of Trustees
- keeps members informed with a newsletter published five times a year
- collaborates with other organizations that advocate for retirees and/or seniors, including AARP Maryland and United Seniors of Maryland
- offers group travel to destinations around the world as well as in the United States
- provides other benefits to members, including the following: dental, vision, and long-term care insurance, free hearing screenings and hearing aid discounts, car rental discounts, access to a wide range of goods and services, including Costco and Dell computer discounts

Join/Renew MRSPA/Local | mrspa

RETIREMENT NEWS

The following links connect you with the Howard County Public School System. From time to time we will publish such links to keep you in the know.

- [HCPSS Retiree Benefits](#)
- [Workday Access for Retired and Former HCPSS Staff](#)
- [HCPSS News](#)

On Retirement...

“Jump in! The water is fine!” – Anonymous



Key takeaways

- Fraud is rampant, but simple habits with phones, email and social media can block many scam attempts outright.
- Other safeguards include checking mail delivery, shredding sensitive documents, changing social media account settings to private, and avoiding card skimmers.
- Freezing credit, reviewing transactions often and using two-factor authentication methods can limit damage if data is exposed.

For more information, check out the AARP article written by Amy Nofziger is senior director of victim support at AARP Fraud Watch Network and Mark Fetterhoff is a senior adviser at AARP Fraud Watch Network.

<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/protecting-yourself-from-criminals/>