

# SPEAK OUT!

PITTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



## From the Acting President: Kim Chesko

Last weekend, teacher delegates from all over the state of New York gathered in NYC for the NYSUT Representative Assembly. This yearly gathering is where your union leaders decide the union's path forward for the next year and elect the officers that will lead our statewide union. Delegate count is determined relative to a local's number of members, and as a local of almost 800 strong, Pittsford is able to send 6 delegates to RA.

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I can officially announce that Jolene DiBrango has been elected Executive Vice President of NYSUT. Also included on the elected slate are: Andy Palotta as President, J. Phillippe Abraham as Vice President, Paul Pecorale as Vice President, and Martin Messner as Secretary/Treasurer. I can personally say that I am so proud of Jolene for stepping so boldly into this new challenge. We in Pittsford know firsthand that she will fight tirelessly for her members, and that she will bring her intelligence, humor, and fierce loyalty to state leadership.

As Jolene steps into her new role, I will be filling her (metaphorically) large shoes for the remainder of the school year. I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to any members whom I have not yet had the pleasure to meet and work with.

My name is Kim Chesko, and I am currently in my 10th year with the district. For all 10 years I have been teaching general music and chorus at Jefferson Rd Elementary. I was fortunate enough to be hired in Pittsford almost directly out of undergrad at Nazareth College, with just a short stint as a long term sub in Rochester City Schools. In addition to spending my day with my little kids, I spend almost half of the year music directing the 6th and 7th/8th grade musicals at Calkins Rd. I absolutely love my job – I get to spend my days with my little kids and my evenings with my little kids all grown up, plus some new kids from other elementary schools.

I have also been lucky to work with so many colleagues from across the district throughout my 10 years- I am always amazed by the talent and care that our staff members bring to their jobs.

I became involved in the PDTA in 2012 when I became the PAC representative at Jefferson Rd. Being a part of the VOTE-COPE campaign opened my eyes to the importance of our union representation at the state level- and that advocacy starts right here in our local. I was the Chair of the Public Relations committee from 2013-2015, and ran for Vice President for Administration in 2015. I was on the Negotiations team in the 14-15 school year and also the 15-16 school year. I have had the opportunity in all

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of these positions to be surrounded by outstanding union leaders, and have tried to learn as much as possible in every job I have held.

It is my honor to be your Interim President between now and June. I promise that I will lead with the zeal and passion that you have come to expect from your union leadership. If you have any questions or just want to say hello, please don't hesitate to email me or call the PDTA office – I am there most afternoons after 12:15.

Have a relaxing break- make sure to recharge your batteries as we enter the home stretch to summer!

## PDTA Officers for school year 2017-18

<b>President</b>	<b>Dwayne Cerbone (SHS)</b>
<b>Vice President for Administration</b>	<b>Kim Chesko (JRE)</b>
<b>Vice President for Negotiations</b>	<b>Bret Burrows (JRE)</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Shari Ebert (MHS)</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>David Pellegrino (MHS)</b>

Congratulations to the officers! These individuals are all veteran union leaders. PDTA will be in excellent hands for the future!

## Congratulations JOLENE!



Newly elected NYSUT Officers J. Philippe Abraham, Jolene T. DiBrango, Andrew Pallotta, Paul Pecorale, Martin Messner.

Remember, if you'd like to learn more about unions, check out our PDTA professional development workshops on what to say about unions and how politics and education are related in the spring Teacher Center catalog.



# Representation

Dwayne Cerbone, Resolution Specialist

The roles of your union leaders are many and varied, yet few are as important as the personal and direct representation provided to our members. It is our sincere hope that you never need to solicit the assistance of one of our leaders for this purpose but the reality for many of us is, at some time in our career a situation arises which requires this to assure the most appropriate and fair outcome.

Involving your representative is not only an option, but as a union member this is known as your Weingarten Rights. It is important to point out that invoking this right does not in any way acknowledge wrong doing or indicate a confrontational interaction with the supervisor. In most employer-employee interactions there is a natural and necessary hierarchy yet, when serving in this role, the PDTA representative is not subject to this same dynamic.

Your representatives enters the conversation on an equal level with any administrator and thus are more able and equipped to speak frankly addressing your rights and assuring

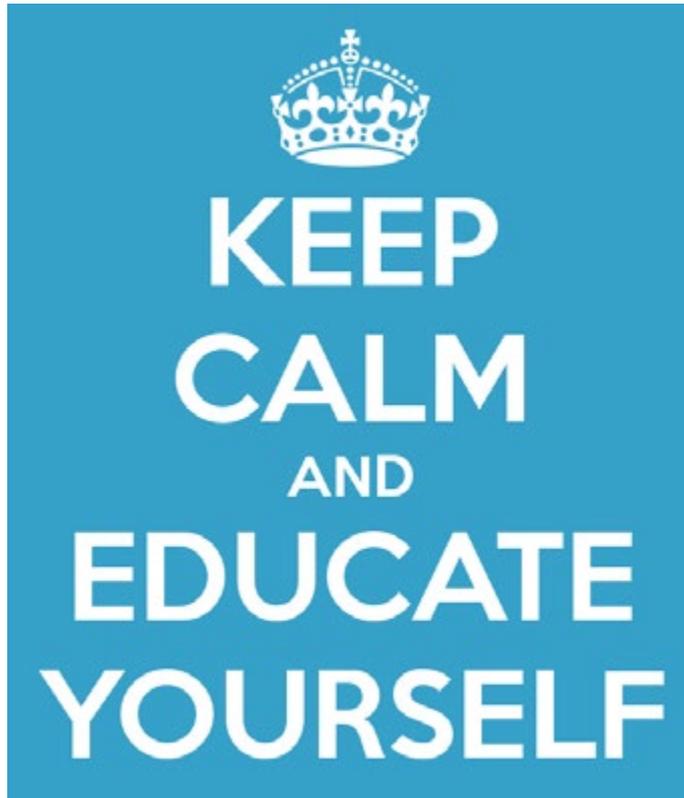
fair, equitable treatment.

In a District such as ours, with labor relations typically hallmarked by shared vision, professionalism and collaboration, it is easy to become complacent and forgo these standard union practices. This may result in a

Additional obstacles referenced by our members are a desire for privacy and a fear of making it worse by creating an adversarial position. Regarding privacy, please know that our representatives take their role quite seriously and complete confidence is at the core of their service. They will only share information when the situation requires input/ involvement of other local or NYSUT specialists and even then, only with your stated permission.

It should also be noted that our administrators often appreciate the involvement of PDTA in these discussions as it assures a balanced dialogue, provides a record of the details, protects the employee's rights and typically results in a more clear and thoughtful outcome. Although rare, when these scenarios arise they are accompanied by significant concern and anxiety for our members. In that moment they may not know which way to turn for help. If you are aware of a colleague who you believe would benefit from our representation, please recommend that they contact their PDTA Building Representative who will be ready and able to assist.

In summary, you have the right to representation at any meeting which could result in disciplinary measures. If uncertain, it is often best to state, "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal work conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative be present at this meeting." It is important to note that this can be done prior to or at any time during a conversation. Simply call for an adjournment of the meeting and contact your representative immediately.



member casually entering an inquiry or disciplinary meeting which truly requires the utmost attention of a skilled representative.

Doing your taxes and need your total dues paid last year?	
Salary Range	Annual Dues
\$43,576+	\$730.00
\$34,000 - \$43,575	\$615.82
\$25,500 - \$33,999	\$490.41
\$17,000 - \$25,499	\$363.18
\$8,500 - \$16,999	\$181.09
Under \$8,499	\$ 89.05



# NYSUT Rochester Regional 2017 Annual Negotiations Conference

Stephanie Warchol, CRMS Building Rep



In January I was given the opportunity to attend the Annual Negotiations Conference for the Rochester region of NYSUT. Since becoming a building representative at CRMS, I have wanted to increase my knowledge on union topics. I knew that attending a conference on negotiations would give me insight into the process that PDTA and the district engage in during contract negotiations. I also felt this training would be helpful if I am ever given the opportunity to serve on the negotiations team.

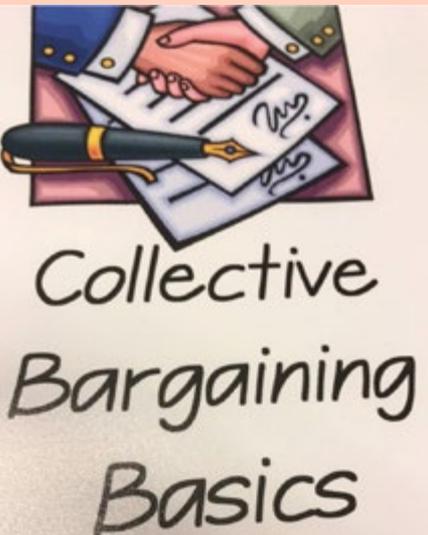
by our own Jolene Dibrango. In the end I signed up for the Collective Bargaining Basics, and Every Member Matters workshops.

The day began with a lovely breakfast and the opportunity to engage with other members of PDTA and members of other locals. My first workshop, Collective Bargaining Basics, was so rich with information that it covered two sessions. The presenter, Shelly Clements, is a NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist and works with PDTA when needed. Shelly began by covering assessment and preparation before going into a negotiation, how to determine member goals and objectives, and mandatory and non-mandatory subjects of bargaining. It was surprising to realize that PDTA's survey, asking for feedback from members prior to going into negotiations, is not standard practice by all districts. In fact, throughout the day it became clear that PDTA is ahead of the curve in many of our established practices.

At the Every Member Matters workshop we discussed the current political climate and the impact unions could potentially feel. The message was clear, unions cannot help to shape the future without support and buy-in from its members. Other locals shared the creative ways they increase solidarity and the benefits this provides when dealing with their district administration. Some of these include the selling of union clothing and weekly solidarity wear days, recommit campaigns, member surveys, and ways to educate new and existing members.

Imagine the power of seeing over 700 members sitting in an auditorium all wearing the same unifying clothing, there is power behind that! They also provided us with the welcome packets they give to new members, giving us lots of great ideas for welcoming our new PDTA members at induction each year.

I am so thankful that PDTA gave me the opportunity and the funds to attend such an informative conference that has already influenced the way I interact with members and conduct union business. I highly recommend this conference to anyone interested in union related topics, and understanding the practices that go into negotiating our contract.



I was surprised to see that the workshops included a variety of topics including local & school finances, SRP negotiation issues, students with special needs, bargaining to address workplace violence, and the Constitutional Convention presented

Shelly then proceeded to take us through the standard process of negotiating, covering everything from setting ground rules, to the presentation of proposals, bad habits that can ruin credibility, closing the deal, and communication with membership. Shelly was an animated presenter, making a possibly dry subject exciting, and the binder of resources I walked away with is invaluable.

## Building News

### PRES

- Retired teacher Karen Pullen's mother passed away in January.
- Joann Mezzoprete's mother in law passed away.
- Karen Socker's mother in law passed away.

### ACES

- Colette Frantz had a baby boy.

### SHS

- Katie Curtis and Christin Keller both had baby boys.

### CRMS

- Tara Fox had a baby boy, Nico Andrew Fox, on 2/2/17.
- Kevin Ebeling's wife Janis passed away on Monday, April, 3rd.



## Political Action

Karen Grace

### Congratulations To Jolene!

PDTA was extremely fortunate to have Jolene working on our behalf for so many years. I was in awe of her leadership, her passion for unionism and her unwavering efforts to help the educational profession be respected.

It was an honor and a privilege to work along side her and I know I speak for many when I say, we will continue to carry on her spirit of unionism... for the greater good of education, for the working class, and for civil and human rights.

I will miss her greatly, but know she will continue to do great things for us, just in a different capacity

JOLENE DIBRANGO  
EXECUTIVE  
VICE PRESIDENT  
EDUCATIONAL  
SERVICES

NYSUT  
UNITY

EXPERIENCE - DIVERSITY - ACTION

NYSUT, 2017  
VOTE FOR UNITY

#NYSUTRA2017

## The Constitutional Convention (Con-Con)

BE the UNION

ON NOVEMBER 7

VOTE NO ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

nysut  
A Union of Professionals

### What is a constitutional convention?

The New York State Constitutional Convention is a meeting of 3 delegates from each of our 63 Senate districts, plus 15 at-large delegates. They convene in Albany and have the ability to amend any part of the state's constitution. Any changes agreed to by a majority of the delegates will then go to the public for approval.

### The State Cannot Afford the Cost of a Convention!

Regardless of how long the convention lasts, each delegate receives compensation equivalent to the full annual salary that a member of the state Assembly receives, currently \$79,500.

*Current judges, legislators and other state and local government officials have the opportunity to run for constitutional convention delegate. This is a huge conflict of interest as they would in essence be getting paid twice!*

The legislators are the one group that has the power to pass amendments to the constitution in the first place so why should they have a convention to perform the duty they should be doing

all along! Tell NY State Government officials to do their jobs properly by utilizing the amendment process to make changes, not a convention!!!

### What's at stake?

Many of the rights we enjoy as New York state citizens would be fair game should a State Constitutional Convention take place. The entire document would be exposed, and these rights with it:

The 1967 New York State Constitutional Convention cost taxpayers roughly \$6.5 million. In 2015 numbers, that's over \$46 million!

- Guaranteeing the right to a free public education (Article 11, §1);
- Prohibiting reductions in public pension benefits (Article 5, §7);
- Rights to workers' compensation (Article 1, §18);
- Rights to be a member of a union and bargain collectively (Article 1, §17); and
- Requiring the state to provide for social welfare needs (Article 27, §1).





## How can we change the constitution without a convention?

It's easy. Bills can be passed through the state legislature to propose as questions on the ballot during general elections. Our constitution has been amended over 200 times in this way since 1894, and a number of ballot questions were voted on in 2013. Tell NY State Government officials to do their jobs properly by utilizing the amendment process to make changes, not a convention!!!

## How can I get involved?

- Make sure you are registered to vote and Vote NO to a constitutional convention.
- Talk to your friends and family about how a Constitutional Convention could affect them.
- Call your state legislators and tell them that there are better ways to make changes in New York.  
(Information obtained from <https://cseany.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/con-con-flier.pdf>)



## Vote-Cope Campaign Coming Soon

Last year PDTA contributions were up, however the number of people contributing went down.

**Please consider contributing as we will need all the resources we can get to ensure our profession is protected from all those who wish to dismantle us.**

Contributing to VOTE-COPE has never been more essential!!

The unions have been outspent by groups seeking expansion of charter schools and a private school voucher disguised as a tax credit. While labor groups spent \$8.3 million in 2015, the charter folks spent \$9 million and tax credit advocates spent \$5.7 million.

VOTE-COPE Funds — which rely on donations and DO NOT come from dues — are put to work to lobby for PRO-NYSUT member legislation, to elect candidates who understand the importance of education and health care, who support the values of the organized labor movement, and to help pass school budgets.

VOTE-COPE funds are also at work defeating dangerous voucher and parent-trigger proposals that would undermine public schools.



# Simplifying your life insurance options

As an educated consumer, you realize the earlier in life that you purchase life insurance, the cheaper the premiums will likely be. You're also aware that life insurance offers financial protection for your dependents upon your death, helping to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses; assistance to help with your children's education; and offering financial assistance with paying debts and other expenses.

It can be overwhelming, though, trying to determine the best type of life insurance policy. Let's take a look at some of the different types of life insurance options available.

**#1: Whole Life Insurance** – This type of insurance is usually the most costly since policies are guaranteed to remain in force as long as premiums are paid. Whole life insurance offers permanent protection with premiums that never increase and builds cash value you can borrow against while you are living (like a loan). **Important:** Understand that you will reduce your death benefit if you don't repay loans with interest and will no longer have coverage if you surrender the policy.

**#2: Term Life Insurance** – This type of insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specified term, offering a fixed rate of payments during that time period. Once that period ends, coverage at the previous premium rate is not guaranteed and the insured would need to get

further coverage. Term life insurance (and its level term life cousin) is designed only to protect your dependents if you were to die prematurely -- offering NO cash value.

**#3: Level Term Life Insurance** – Like term life insurance, level term life insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific time period. Premiums may not be

increased during the time period due to change in your age or health status.

**#4: Universal Life Insurance** – This type of insurance offers a way to protect your dependents while building tax-deferred cash value. While the cost of a universal life plan needs to be covered so the policy remains in force, the policyholder has the option to adjust how much he or she will pay in premiums each year. Policyholders can also access a portion of the balance without affecting the

guaranteed death benefit as the cash value accumulates over time.

Keep in mind that NYSUT members & their spouses/certified domestic partners can help protect their dependents from life's uncertainties with a variety of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance plans. Many of these plans offer group rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities.

“Term life and level term life policies are often popular options for those individuals with young families since there is a greater need for life insurance protection. They also tend to be much less expensive than their whole life counterparts. If you are considering a term or level term life policy, make sure to consider how long you would need the coverage.”

For more information about these plans, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Mar./Apr. '17

# SRP Newslink

Lorinda Spring



## Para Academy

All paraprofessionals are encouraged to attend the Para Academy, a professional development series offered by the Teacher Center. These are paid staff development workshops on a variety of topics held after school, usually at Barker Road Middle School in Meeting Room #1. Sign up is available through your WinCapWeb account.

A recent two-part series titled "Self-Awareness" featured Brian Conheady, Monroe County System of Care Community Coach and Trainer. He guided the group to examine and realize how our personal beliefs, experiences and prejudices affect our reactions to our students. By identifying our needs, thoughts and feelings and exploring where these might be coming from, we are able to recognize situations that trigger us and develop strategies to change our behavior.

Stress affects our body and ultimately narrows our thought process which is not a desirable situation when working with students. Knowing what triggers stress reactions within us can help us deal with the challenges presented by students, colleagues and our home lives. Self-awareness is a process of realizing not only what causes our personal stress reactions, but also understanding what concrete steps we can take to avoid or relieve the stress we all encounter in our work.

The next Para Academy will be held May 22 at Barker Road Middle School Meeting Room #1 from 3:30-5:00 pm. The topic will be "Zones of Regulation:

## Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation."

This informative workshop will teach us how to help our students be "ready to learn." Participants can sign up through WinCapWeb and will be paid \$17 per hour for attending.

Thank you to Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle for sharing this article with us!

## Reminders:

- Tuesday, May 16 – School Budget Vote!
- Postings will be delayed this year until after the budget vote.
- Please review your paychecks for accuracy.
- The District and PDTA disseminate important information through email so please check your mail regularly.
- The new contract is available to view at [www.pdta.org](http://www.pdta.org) under Contracts or through the District website at [www.pittsfordschools.org](http://www.pittsfordschools.org). Go to Employees and click on Contract Agreements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jolene DiBrango for representing us so well as our PDTA president. She continuously advocates for SRPs and always values the work we do with kids. I know that she will continue to represent us as Executive Vice President of NYSUT! Good Luck and Congratulations, Jolene!



## Building

### Representatives:

Allen Creek: Dennise Zobel  
Jefferson Road: Julie Shaw  
Mendon Center: Jill Drake  
Park Road: Karen Socker  
Thornell Road: Lisa Mauger  
Barker Road: Kristen Dolan  
Calkins Road: Stephanie Warchol  
Mendon High School: Dave Larson  
Sutherland High School: Lynne Drake  
SRP Representative: Lorinda Spring

## Assistant Building

### Representatives:

Rhonda Matthews, AC  
Elizabeth Kramer, JR  
Patty Mayer and  
Hendrina Schindeler, MCE  
Marcia Brown, PR  
Greg Bischooping, TR  
Karen Grace, Grace Kemp,  
Tammy Cole, BRMS  
Chrissy Doggett, Claudia Foti, CRMS  
Scott Bielec, Tom Kennell,  
Paula Fink, MHS  
Marc Hellem, Brian Schafer,  
Amanda Marshall, SHS

## SRP Representatives:

Tracy Anderson, PR  
Radhika Ramesh, TR  
Constance Bader, BRMS  
Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle, MC  
Maryanne Maland, JR  
Sherry Tontarski, MC  
Vicki McCutcheon, SHS

## Thinking Globally at SHS - Emily Natoli Burns:

At Sutherland High School, six students are working on Passion Projects which focus on community needs. Their aim is to have a positive impact on the world around them, and they are engaged in a variety of activities that involve some civic action. If you would be interested in donating or participating in these activities, or would like to know more, please contact Emily Natoli-Burns Or Matthew Davidson at Sutherland High school.

- Infinity Hall-Caswell: Donation Drive for the YWCA
- Hart Brennan and Willie Hernes: Food drive for the Pittsford Food Cupboard
- DJ Hawkes: Participating in the City of Rochester Clean Sweep (Genesee Valley Park)
- Frank Imburgia: Donation drive for Lollipop Farm
- Kelly Shane: Organizing a team for the Rochester Walk for MS



# Public Relations

Kelly Jordan

Each year, PDTA holds a couple of fundraisers to benefit two student scholarships. Our PDTA Barb Shapiro Scholarship is a \$1500 award given to one senior at Mendon HS and one senior at Sutherland HS. The criteria for the scholarship is:

An overall average of "B" or higher; a personal essay demonstrating thoughtful, clear, and concise writing skills; and a demonstrated commitment to teaching. Preference will be given to candidates with prior teaching experiences such as coaching, internship, scout leader, camp counselor, tutor, or other similar activities.

The scholarship application can be found on the PDTA website ([pdta.org](http://pdta.org)) under the tab for "Student Services. The deadline for the application is April 25th. Please encourage any seniors you know who might qualify.

That brings me to our second big announcement from the Public Relations committee. PDTA is hosting our second fundraiser of the year to raise money for these student scholarships. We are hosting a Chicken BBQ dinner pickup service on the night of the school budget vote. You can purchase tickets ahead of time from your building Public Relations committee member. PR committee members will be reaching out to let you know how and when to get the tickets. The flier on the next page gives all the details. In a nutshell, all you have to do is pay \$10 for a ticket and then pick up your meal in the Barker Road Middle School parking lot between 3:00-7:00 PM. It's **THAT EASY!** \$2 from every meal sold will go to our student scholarship fund! We hope you will join us in the this effort to fund our student scholarships.

Please email me if you have any questions.  
[kelly\\_jordan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:kelly_jordan@pittsford.monroe.edu)

## Thank you from your PR committee:

- AC Joe Juzwiak
- JR Jen Terenzi
- MC Trisha Sullivan
- PR Barb Lynch
- TR Jackie Magioncalda, Radhika Ramesh
- BRMS Peggy Carr
- CRMS Chrissy Doggett, Laura Coughlin
- MHS Jim Hedler, Leslie McNulty
- SHS Wendy Walker, Vicki McCutcheon



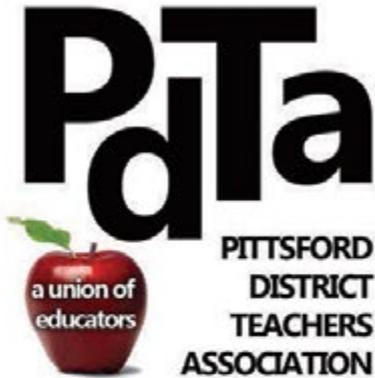
## Cut and Keep Reminders

- Full-time staff members who are not on the payroll as of October 1, but who are on the payroll before February 1 of the school year, shall be eligible for a pro-rated portion of the health fund, according to the following schedule:
  - On the payroll before November 1: 80% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before December 1: 70% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before January 1: 60% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before February 1: 50% of the benefit
  - Part-time staff members of .5 or more shall receive a prorated contribution of the above schedule.
  - In order to receive this prorated contribution, staff members must fill out and submit the "Request for Prorated Health Fund Benefit" form found on [www.pdta.org](http://www.pdta.org) by March 1 of the school year.
- If you are a teacher, don't forget your contractual 12 hour obligation for professional development! All PD must be completed by May 31.
- Our Extracurricular Process Sheet has been updated! Please review this sheet if you are a new or continuing Club Advisor. <http://www.pittsfordschools.org/documents.cfm?id=34.133>

Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan.

Your feedback is welcome at [brian\\_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu)

# Join Us!



for a  
**CHICKEN BBQ  
Fundraiser**

**May 16th  
3-7pm at BRMS.  
VOTE, then EAT!**

**All Proceeds  
Benefit PDTA  
Student Scholarships.**

## **\$10 Meal**

**(from King's Catering, Canandaigua)  
Includes: 1/2 chicken, salt potatoes, mac  
salad, dinner roll, utensils.**

**Order ahead through building PDTA rep and pick up meal in  
the BRMS parking lot. Make checks payable to PDTA.  
Questions? Contact [Kelly\\_Jordan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:Kelly_Jordan@pittsford.monroe.edu)**





Tickets just \$20.99 plus tax  
A savings of \$29.00!



**DAYS**

**July 8-23, 2017**



Did you know that 2017 marks the landmark 35<sup>th</sup> year for our signature corkscrew coaster - THE VIPER? Built in 1982, it was the first coaster in the world to feature five inversions.

Now you can print and order your tickets online with print and go.

**YES!** Send me \_\_\_\_\_ Darien Lake NYSUT tickets at \$20.99 plus tax ( \$21.39 each ) valid any one day July 8-23, 2017. All mail orders must be received by July 1, 2017. A stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope must be included to receive your tickets, along with a check made payable to Darien Lake or credit card information

**OR**

**Easiest Deal:** Use Print-N-Go! For \$20.99 plus tax you can print your own Darien Lake NYSUT Day tickets from home: Here's how: Log on to [www.DarienLake.com](http://www.DarienLake.com) • Enter promo code: NYSUT • Pay by credit card...then • Print-N-Go!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION:**

Credit Card Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ security code \_\_\_\_\_

Exp date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your order with a self addressed envelope to:  
Darien Lake, ATTN: NYSUT Days, PO Box 91, Darien Center, NY 14040  
Or email [groups@darienlake.com](mailto:groups@darienlake.com) (Credit Card Orders Only)  
Tickets are available the day of for \$24.99 plus tax at any ticket window.