



South Dakota Retired School Personnel

NEWSLETTER

Affiliated with National
Retired Teachers Association

"To Serve, Not to Be Served"

www.SDRSP.org

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News from President Anderson

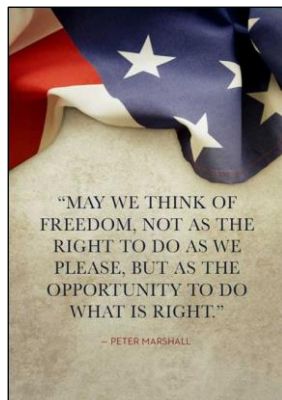
Hats Off to Fall: What a beautiful Fall that we have had this year. The beautiful array of colors with all the red, orange, and yellow leaves are breathtaking. The chore of raking all those leaves up has begun. Most of my leaves don't fall until mid-November, so I am always scrambling to get the fall cleanup done before the first snow.

Speaking of snow, as I am writing this article, it is a beautiful day on the eastern side of the state, but I hear that the Northern Hills are expecting 6+ inches of snow. I am sure that this is not unusual for that area, but I am happy to put SNOW off for a while longer. Though, I must say that the whole state needs any kind of moisture that we can get—even snow, and we have to be thankful for even that form. It IS kind of nice to come home and cozy up in a warm blanket with a hot chocolate by the fireplace.

I am anxious to read about all the activities that each unit has planned for the year. We can all get ideas from sharing those activities. Each community has unique situations that their unit can draw from and it is interesting to see those activities.

Hats Off to Unit Treasurers: This is usually the busiest time for all the unit treasurers to get all the membership forms compiled and sent in. Thank you for your hard work. It is also a good time for each unit to think about what they can do to get word out about all the fabulous things that your unit is doing. Maybe you even worked on this last summer and have added some new people. Invite someone and bring them to the meeting with you.

Hats Off to Convention 2025: We will begin to plan the nitty gritty details of the convention and we want you to SAVE THE DATE of May 6-7 at the Downtown Holiday Inn. We are looking forward to hosting all of you in the spring. Information about the convention will be in the February/March newsletter.





Membership Update from Anita

Growing Together in Our Retired School Personnel Community

As the new Membership Coordinator for our Retired School Personnel Association, I'm excited to share some insights into our current membership landscape and explore ways we can grow our community together.

Membership Overview

We're pleased to report that membership in our local units has remained steady, with many units seeing an increase in engagement and participation. However, there's always room for growth, and it's essential to keep our organization vibrant and welcoming, especially as we continue to face the challenges of an evolving world.

Current Trends

1. **Reconnecting with Retirees:** Many units have successfully reached out to recent retirees. Hosting coffee mornings or casual meet-and-greets has proven effective in encouraging new members to join.
2. **Leveraging Technology:** Virtual meetings have opened doors for those who may have difficulty attending in person. Consider hybrid events to cater to diverse preferences.
3. **Community Engagement:** Several units have initiated community service projects, drawing in not just retirees but also their families and friends. This not only enriches our impact but also showcases the value of being part of our association.

Ideas to Boost Membership

1. **Welcome Packages:** Create welcome kits for new members that include information about benefits, upcoming events, and ways to get involved. A personal touch, like a handwritten note from a current member, can make a difference.
2. **Mentorship Programs:** Pair new members with seasoned ones. This fosters connections and helps newcomers feel more integrated into the community.
3. **Social Media Campaigns:** Use platforms like Facebook or Instagram to share stories from current members about their experiences and the benefits of joining. Highlight community events and accomplishments to spark interest.
4. **Referral Incentives:** Encourage current members to bring in friends by offering incentives, such as discounts on event fees or entry into a prize draw.
5. **Local Partnerships:** Collaborate with local businesses or organizations to offer special discounts or benefits for members, enhancing the value of membership.
6. **Feedback Sessions:** Host informal gatherings to discuss what members value most about their membership. Understanding their needs can help tailor our offerings and attract more retirees.

As we move forward, let's remember that each one of us has a role in making our organization welcoming and engaging. By reaching out, sharing our experiences, and actively promoting the benefits of membership, we can ensure our community continues to thrive.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our association. Together, let's grow our membership and strengthen our bonds as retired educators!

Warmly, Anita

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Community Health & Service

– by Diane Odland

Happy Fall! These Beautiful Days of Autumn is a Wonderful Healthy Experience this year!!

Here are some Fun Facts about Autumn 2024--

**Only in America do we call this season FALL

**Pumpkin Pie Spice doesn't taste like Pumpkin Pie

**More people fall in Love in the Fall

**There are MORE than 7500 Varieties of Apples

**Bobbing for Apples was a Courting Ritual

** Fall Leaf Colors are caused by Sugar

I hope everyone is busy sharing and doing Community Service within your Community, Church and School and Helping and Showing Kindness to those around us! Have a Great Year!



Advice from a Pumpkin

Be well-rounded

Get plenty of sunshine

Give thanks for life's bounty

Have a thick skin

Keep growing

Be outstanding in your field

Roll with it

Be grateful for the harvest

Always patch things up

Carve out a good life

Add some spice to life

Remain on the vine until

the Gardener picks you

Great things come

from small seeds.

News from Our Executive Director

Greetings!

Lobby Day and the yearly AARP Volunteer Summit will be held together in Pierre on January 27 and 28. As of now, buses will be leaving from Spearfish, Aberdeen, and Sioux Falls, and will be stopping in towns and communities along the way to pick up those who have signed up and are interested in going.

For those of you who have attended the Volunteer Summit in previous years, you know it has been held in the Fall of the year. There will be no Summit in 2024 but will be combined with Lobby Day in 2025.

Please encourage your members to attend. It is a great time to visit with ones Representatives and ask questions or express concerns, etc. Along with this, the AARP Summit provides information on various topics for the 50+group

I will be sending out additional information as it becomes available and reminders every couple weeks. Please put these dates on your calendar and start making plans to attend. It would be GREAT to have a GREAT turn out. Hope everyone is enjoying these GREAT Fall days!



Gerri Larson

SDRSP Executive Director

SDRSP Travel by Mary Jane Chiles

Last July the Black Hills Unit took a trip to Fort Robinson in Nebraska. We discovered that many of us were travelers and enjoyed traveling with other educators. Many of us are world travelers while others prefer to travel within the U.S. We had an interest in creating a group of educators statewide who would like to travel together.

We created a list of potential destinations and would like your input as to your preference if you are seriously interested in creating a group of educators and their friends who would like to travel together, probably in 2026 or late 2025. The options are as follows:

1. New York at Christmas time
2. New England in the fall
3. Rocky Mountains by train
4. Ireland
5. Iceland

To cast your vote, please contact Cathy Anderson at cander451msn@gmail.com We look forward to hearing from you and traveling with you.

News from Units

Aberdeen Area Retired School Personnel Fall Fundraiser – by Gayle Bortnem

The Aberdeen Area Retired School Personnel group kicked off the fall with a successful fundraiser for a new Endowment within the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation. This initiative will provide scholarships to future high school seniors pursuing educational careers.

We hosted a “Back to School” NOT Luncheon on the first full day of school. The event featured door prizes, a presentation by the Dacotah Prairie Museum on the history of school lunches and raised over \$1,000.00 to start and endowment for students going into education. We meet monthly, featuring a speaker and engaging “get to know you” activities. Recent speakers have included representatives from The Aberdeen Insider and the Aberdeen Arts Council. Each month, we have a door prize, and the winner is responsible for bringing the next month’s prize. Our numbers are growing, and we are a fun and energetic group of professionals dedicated to supporting education!



Jason Hill spoke on the benefits of supporting the Arts Council. A visual aid of a lunch box from the past was passed around (including a potato and various prairie items). We had a wide variety of door prizes for our luncheon. Patricia Kendall, Director of the Museum gave an interesting background of the lunches of the past. We always have lots of laughter at each meeting. AARP donated the cupcakes for our dessert table.



Black Hills Retired School Personnel – by Vicki Sterling

This year Black Hills Retired School Personnel theme is Spice It Up! Each month's program has a pun like November is 'I know a latte about pumpkin spice' and the speaker is the director of kitchen operation for Meals on Wheels. Another is 'Women Workers at Mount Rushmore During the Carving Years' by Jeanie Kirkpatrick 'Ginger is an old spice. Its roots go way back.' Jeanie is supported by SD Humanities.

Two members, Wendy Conrad and Marcy Farrand took the theme and are planning an activity for each meeting like members smell a spice and make a guess. The person writes down their correct guess for a wonderful prize. After talking with a local store Staple & Spice Market, the store has provided a lucky member with a beautiful "spicey" gift.

BHRSP members are interested in traveling, which was evident in a survey we took in May. Some want to stay in the US and some beyond our borders. This summer was a US trip to Fort Robinson, Nebraska. LaRee Mayes made arrangements for housing and helped ten people plan what they wanted to experience. Four professional plays at the Post Play House were offered for travelers to select, and many activities were available at the fort for the group to explore.

Mary Jane Chiles, a well-traveled member, has talked to a local travel agent about possible arrangements for a group wanting to go overseas. Mary Jane also visited with SD President Cathy Anderson about offering this opportunity to all SD members. Stay tuned and see what could happen.



An old-fashioned trip around Fort Robinson with a driver and guide.

Madison Area Retired School Personnel – by Marilou Scheafer

The Madison Area Retired School Personnel has had a busy and fun year in 2024. After receiving a state grant, we held a membership recruitment in October 2023. We had the Zoo Mobile and each member was asked to bring a friend. We welcomed 6 new members going in to 2024.

After being cancelled due to weather in February we had a delightful visit from Carrie Blessinger from the Lake County Museum for our April meeting. Thanks to a grant, local donations and some serious recruitment of volunteers the Museum is becoming a place for people of all ages to come and explore the history of Lake County. The crown jewel in their artifacts is the 1860's Boyd family covered wagon. It has been restored and is one of very few like it in the U.S. The museum has started interactive activities for all ages and has received great response to their sponsored activities.

Madison continued...June found us at the Prairie Village Library for our annual sack lunch meeting as well as a visit from our Grandparents Essay contest winner, Isaac Fox, and his family who joined us for dessert and the presentation of the winning Lake County essay. Issac wrote a touching tribute to his uncle Aric Stien who died of cancer a few years ago. He went on to place 3rd in the SDRSP contest and a \$100 cash prize along with a full page write up in the local Madison Daily Leader newspaper.

Volunteers from our group returned to Prairie Village in August to clean and polish prior to the annual Steam Threshing Bee and also returned to host there during the jamboree.

Our September meeting brought guest speaker Monica Demary who spoke to us about the organization: Days for Girls. The local Madison group has a store front on Egan Avenue and meets there twice a week to sew and organize kits for distribution to girls in third world countries providing cost-effective, safe and sustainable products to help women manage their periods. Training in the use and maintaining the kits and instruction on period management. This allows the girls to engage in livelihood activities and to school. More information is available at madison@daysforgirls.org.

Redfield Area Retired School Personnel – by Marlene Eimers

The Redfield Area Retired School Personnel has been busy. We have gained several new members and look forward to gaining more. Last Spring we conducted the Grandparent Essay Contest and had three local schools participate. Blake and Carla Olson are the local chairs and have already started preparing to contact the schools for next year. RSRSP conducted a Spelling Bee in the spring and had 4 schools participate. There were students from grades one through 8 in attendance. All students earned a certificate. The first three place winners earned a certificate, medallion, and a monetary reward. The local VFW furnished lemonade for all in attendance. After the contest, we gathered at our local restaurant for homemade pie, coffee, and socializing.

We have had some very interesting programs at our meetings. Ivy Latham-Pazour from the Soil Conservation office told us about different plants they have for sail and which ones are native to our area. Blake Olson showed pictures of his trip to Europe with high school students. We also had a book review on *Water Babies*. We will be having Joan Marlette from the Lions organization talk to us October about their project of collecting old glasses.



Tucker Jandel proudly displaying his second place award in the third grade division.

RARSP members Deann Zens and Mary Ellen Rische are distributing awards at the Spring Spelling Contest.



Grandparent Essay winner

Lyric Harrelson

Sioux Falls Area Retired School Personnel – by Sharon Dierks, co 1st Vice-President

The Sioux Falls Area Retired School Personnel began our 2024/2025 year on August 26th at the Pizza Ranch on 41st Street. Our theme for the year is, “Hats Off To You”! With this theme, we will highlight those individuals who do so much for our unit and this will be our theme for next year’s convention. We meet the fourth Monday of the month (except for Nov. and Dec.) at 11:00 AM. We collect assorted items each month for many organizations – toiletries, calendars, cards for Meals on Wheels, and many more. In September, we made 18 trays of baked goods for our 9/11 project. We delivered the trays to the fire stations, police headquarters, the highway department, the National Guard fire station, and the 911 Sioux Falls Public Training Center. We do this project with the AARP, who donate fruit. Our volunteers have worked with various organizations like Lunch is Served, preparing lunches for the working poor and serving lunch for the St. Francis House, which provides a home and hope for the homeless. With members of the AARP’s Community Service Team, we plan various service projects throughout the year.

Our first meeting in August was Educators Rising with Travis Lape. Educators Rising nurtures high school students to be the next generation of educators. Elaine Roberts spoke in September on the 2024 Ballot issues. On October 28th, Jeff Gould presented “The Wisdom Project.” Pastor Chris Matson will give us information on the Eat Well Mobile Market, which is part of the Church on the Street, in November. This mobile market brings healthy, affordable food directly to food-insecure neighborhoods where transportation can be a barrier. We will end the year with entertainment and a Sing-a-Long.

We encourage our members to not only join the local unit, but, also the state membership. As, I said, our theme for next year’s convention is “Hats Off To You”. We are looking forward to hosting the state convention here in Sioux Falls on May 6-7, 2025.

Sisseton Area Retired School Personnel Association – by Linda Loberg

Sisseton Area Retired School Personnel Association, SARSPA, has been busy this fall. They put together treats for the area school personnel in September. In October, SARSPA gals put together pumpkins with treats for the local nursing home and assisted living residents. SARSPA will be honoring the teachers during American Education Week in November. As an organization, we have had many discussions on how to promote teaching careers with college age students. So SARSPA is really excited about putting together a scholarship for education majors. The details are in the works, but this is another way to be active in our community. We have a great time at our monthly meetings and we have lots of ideas and activities planned for this year.

(The pictures are of our October meeting putting together pumpkins with treats to our local nursing home and assisted living residents.)



WARSP Happenings – by Denise Ottenbacher

The Watertown Area Retired School Personnel (WARSP) have had a fun and educational fall. Six new members have joined WARSP since our membership kickoff picnic at the Foley Shelter at Lions Park in August. Members reconnect at this annual potluck.

Mayor Reid Holien educated and entertained our group in September. Highlights include an update as to the economic happenings in Watertown and a lengthy question and answer session. Mount Marty University director Kim Bellum spoke at our October meeting. Her presentation, “Five Generations in the Workplace,” described the mindsets of the different generations and offered advice on how to work together and understand each other. Her humorous delivery entertained our group.

Future meetings include a history of the Hutterites by a retired history teacher in November and our annual Christmas party in December.

Take care and stay safe!

Kim Bellum shares information about the characteristics of the different generations at our October meeting.



WARSP members socialize at the annual picnic



GRANDPARENT ESSAY CONTEST

GUIDELINES

Subject: “Why my grandparent should be the AARP SD Grandparent of the Year”

A grandparent is defined as any older adult who fulfills a grand parenting or “senior citizen mentor” role for a child. A familial relationship is not necessary in order to meet this requirement.

Eligibility: Contest is for 5th graders in public and private schools.

Technical Requirements: Essay must be an original work of the author, up to 500 words in length, be written in English, and include the components of a formal essay, e.g., introduction, supporting points and conclusion. Essay must be submitted on white, 8” x 11” paper (standard size paper), and be legibly hand-written or typed by the author on one side only of the page. Only the WINNING essay from each school building is to be submitted to the local Retired School Personnel (formerly Retired Teachers) Association, SDRSP, contact, along with Form A. The author’s name and school must also be written at the end of the essay.

Judging Criteria & Awards: Qualifying characteristics: 60% Creativity and Expression 20% Grammar and Form 20% Neatness Winning essays may be viewed by individual years on the website, www.sdrsp.org. Use the Grandparent Essay link.

Deadlines: School winner’s deadline: February 1. The school winner is chosen by 5th grade teachers (or other appropriate judges) from the participating school based on the judging criteria provided. The winning essay from each school must be received by the local SDRSP unit contact by the deadline provided. Form A MUST be attached to the school winner’s essay.

Unit winner’s deadline: February 15 Judging for the unit winner will be among all the school winners in that unit’s area. The unit winner is chosen by representatives of the local SDRSP unit. Local units are encouraged to keep a copy of their unit's winning essay so that their winner can be invited to read it at one of their meetings. The winning essay from each unit, along with Form B, must be completed and sent to the RSP Essay Committee Chairperson: Donna Fischer 2209

Burleigh, Apt 109 Yankton, SD 57078 605-661-2616
(ddfisch@vyn.midco.net)

The top three essays in the local unit judging will receive first, second, and third place medals. If a unit has fewer than three schools from which to judge, medals will be provided according to the number of essays submitted for local unit judging. If units choose to provide participation certificates, it will be a decision made and followed through by the local SDRSP unit. The local unit should also indicate on Form B the number of medals they need (up to three). The medals will then be given to the unit representatives at the SDRSP convention in May.

Regional judging: March 1 The Yankton RSP will do the regional judging for the essay contest. AARP Regions are Southeast, Northeast, and West. The three regional winning essays, chosen by the Yankton RSP Essay Committee, will be submitted to the AARP South Dakota State Office by March 1. Forms A and C must be attached. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will inform the regional winners that they have reached the finals of the essay contest.

State finals judging: April 1 The AARP South Dakota office will establish a judging panel consisting of members of the AARP South Dakota Executive Council and the AARP South Dakota State Director. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will notify the first, second, and third place winners of their placing on or before April 15. The committee will also notify all participating units of who the state winners are. The person submitting Form B will be the one notified by email or if necessary, by mail. The committee will invite the first place winner to read his/her essay at a noon luncheon on the second day of the SDRSP Convention in May. The winner is not required to attend the convention. Four meals at the luncheon and mileage for one vehicle will be provided to the winner’s family if they choose to attend. The local units of the second and third place winners will receive their checks at the annual meeting so that they may be presented locally at the appropriate time. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will provide an electronic copy of the winning essay to the SDRSP website (www.sdrsp.org) following the May convention.

Awards: Cash prizes – First place—\$250; Second place—\$150; Third place—\$100

Educators Rising South Dakota

Travis Lape presented at the convention about Educators Rising. Below is an opportunity to financially support the program either individually or through your local unit.

Grow your own teachers with Educators Rising SD – Developing the next generation of highly skilled professional educators

Giving Tuesday on December 3, 2024 is more than a day—it's a movement that unites people around the world to make a difference. Started in 2012, this day encourages us all to pause, consider what generosity means, and take action to create positive change. At **Educators Rising South Dakota**, Giving Tuesday provides a vital boost to our mission of cultivating the next generation of dedicated teachers across our state.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, our Giving Tuesday contributions have directly impacted our members and chapters by:

- Offering essential support for student expos, leadership events, and chapter activities at no cost to schools.
- Funding the **Teach SD Scholarship**, empowering aspiring educators to pursue their passion for teaching.
- Helping us grow from just 6 schools and 50 members in 2018 to over **55 schools and 400 members** today.

Every gift, no matter the size, contributes to building a brighter future for South Dakota's schools and communities. This Giving Tuesday, consider joining us in this movement to "do good" and inspire tomorrow's teachers. Together, we can make an impact that lasts for generations.

<https://www.edrisingsd.org>

Educators Rising South Dakota
200 Willow St
Harrisburg, SD 57032

