

# INTERLOC

UNION COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2018



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Union County  
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**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!**

The new year begins with new beginnings. As we begin the

new year, let us all reflect on what took place last year and think of what you would do differently this year, whether it be with work, home or within your community. Maybe it's getting more involved with your association or community or spending more time with your family. The New Year comes with new changes. I've been serving as your county president for four (4) years and I look to do or change something not only within myself but for the county. One of my goals, that I continue to keep, is to continue to be of service to my members and to work on how to get my members more involved at all levels of the association.

Remember that the UCEA Works, Aids, Sponsors, Provides, Has, Keeps, Lobbies, Coordinates, Maintains, and Provide for YOU.

February 1, 2018 begins the NJEA online self nomination for the National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA RA) which will be held in Minneapolis, MN. You can find more information on this at the [njea.org](http://njea.org) and the [nea.org](http://nea.org) website.

Remember to take advantage of what is being offered to you either through your local, county, state or national. Everything that is being offered is for you. If you should have any questions or concerns, the UCEA is here to assist in any way they can.

Lisa Palin  
UCEA President

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right." –

*Oprah Winfrey*



## VICTORIA SASSO: UNION COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**H**ats off to teacher Victoria Sasso, who has been named the Union County Teacher of the Year for 2017-2018 by the New Jersey Education Association. Sasso teaches at the Carl H.Kumpf Middle School in Clark. A co-leader of her school's Sixth Grade Team, Sasso currently teaches sixth grade language arts, including two Honors classes. She is quite active in terms of school and district initiatives, serving on such committees as Professional Development, Technology, and Effective Teaching. She recently conducted a professional development session on "Designing Stations for the Student-Centered Classroom." Sasso has also moderated the school's Law Fair Competition Mock Trial, created and implemented a Gifted and Talented program for Grades K through 5, and wrote and applied for a grant to conduct "America's Battle of the Books" among sixth graders.

Sasso says there are so many aspects of her role as an educator that she enjoys. She explains, "I value the connections I make with my students and the feeling I get when I reflect on the year and see the growth my students have made. I enjoy the process involved in developing and guiding a student's educational plan. I appreciate the parents and former students who continue to reach out to share what has been happening with them. For me, teaching success means making a difference in a student's life." She shares that she is especially driven by "the looks on my students' faces when they are completely engaged in the learning process."

Sasso notes that collaborating with her colleagues has resulted in exciting new learning experiences for her students. "Whether it is reflecting on lessons gone right, or wrong, learning new strategies and tools, or generally sharing ideas, I love collaborating with my colleagues," she explains. "Some of the most effective lessons have grown from a conversation with fellow educators."

Sasso initially sought a career in the field of child psychology. However, her experience working as a substitute teacher while a senior in college inspired her to instead pursue a different profession. She says, "I found I loved my time in the classroom. It felt very natural to me, so I decided to pursue a teaching certification."

Sasso is married to Dennis Sasso, who teaches Social Studies at River Dell Regional High School in Bergen County. Dennis is also a coach at Newark Academy in Livingston and was named Essex County Coach of the Year for baseball in 2017. Their daughter Francesca is an energetic



six-year-old who Sasso says “is loving her first year of school” as a kindergartner at Lincoln Elementary School in Caldwell.

Sasso offers sound advice to newcomers in the field of education: “Don’t go it alone! Rely on your mentor, or someone else you’ve connected with, in your building/district. Reach out to them to talk through your experiences. Teaching is tough and we are better because of those around us.” Sasso refers to “The Marigold Effect,” a concept that promotes the importance of surrounding oneself with supportive, positive peers and coworkers. She states, “If you can find at least one marigold in your school and stay close to them, you will grow. Find more than one and you will positively thrive.”

Sasso also encourages new employees to continue learning. “Stay fresh!” she says. “I find great ideas by following fellow educators on Twitter.” She says it is also important to be prepared: “Learn your content! It’s important to learn and relearn what you are going to be teaching. Don’t be afraid if you don’t remember something, or don’t understand something, but know that before stepping in the room! Study up!”

Notably, Sasso has been active in her association, serving as building representative (‘13-’14, ‘15-’16) and Pride Chair (‘15-’16). Aside from being named Union County Teacher of the Year, Sasso’s earned the “Team of Excellence” for Middle Level Education in 2015. The UCEA is honored that Sasso represents the county as Teacher of the Year.



*Victoria Sasso, Union County  
Teacher of the Year 2017-18*



## MICHAEL MANZELLA: UNION COUNTY ESP OF THE YEAR



*Michael Manzella, Union County  
ESP of the Year 2017-2018*

The Union County Education Association congratulates Michael Manzella from the Clark Township School District as ESP of the Year for 2017-2018. Manzella started working as a custodian for the Union County Regional School District in 1996. When the school district split, he continued with the Clark School District as a maintenance man and groundskeeper. Essentially, he is responsible for groundskeeping, which encompasses not only lawn care but setting up for sports and community events as well. Manzella also assists with snow removal, painting, custodial operations, and bus driving.

Manzella's supervisor, John Pingor, says Manzella serves as a "true mentor to the younger maintenance staff" guiding them to work "effectively, efficiently, and positively." He adds, "Because Mike goes above and beyond for not only his colleagues and the grounds on which the community and schools play, he really does make a difference."

Henley teacher and Clark Education Association building representative Jacqueline Caplette agrees. She points out that Manzella "maintains the district school grounds as if they were his own. He is quick to always lend a helping hand and has an excellent rapport with the students and staff." She adds, "His dedication, strong work ethic, and friendly disposition make him an excellent role model to his colleagues and the school community."

Notably, Manzella has served on the CEA Representative Council for the past three years. In addition to providing a voice for the maintenance staff, he played a key role in the last two rounds of contract negotiations. Caplette says Manzella "took pride in this responsibility as he attended all negotiation meetings and brought valuable insight to the table."

Manzella says his father-in-law, a Teamster organizer, inspired him to become involved in Association activities. "I learned about the importance of being involved with my union and uniting with my co-workers to stand for what we believe in."

On a personal level, Manzella says he is "blessed with a wonderful wife and three amazing children" who love and support him. Overall, Manzella finds his work in Clark to be very rewarding both professionally and personally. He says, "My motto is if you love what you do, you never work a day in your life!" The UCEA proudly commends Manzella for his hard work, his dedication, and his service.



## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- February 6, 2018..... Understanding the Role of the  
Paraprofessional in the Classroom
- February 13, 2018..... Kaleidoscope
- February 21, 2018..... Cyberbullying/Cyber Safety
- February 28, 2018..... Gangs

### MARCH

- March 7, 2018 ..... Preparing for Your  
Summative Evaluation
- March 21, 2018 ..... Teaching Students  
Responsible Digital Citizenship

### APRIL

- April 10, 2018 ..... Pensions
- April 11, 2018 ..... Your Social Security
- April 25, 2018 ..... Administrative Professionals Dinner

### MAY

- May 9, 2018..... Nurses' Dinner

**WORKSHOP REGISTRATION: A \$10.00 deposit is required; a separate \$10.00 check is required for each workshop.** Send a check made out to Union County Education Association, along with Name, District, Home Phone & Work Phone number to the UCEA office. Deposits will be returned to participants at the end of the workshop or if the workshop is canceled within three (3) business days prior to the workshop. All workshops are held at the UCEA office from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm and refreshments are provided. **No one will be admitted after 4:30 pm. NO EXCEPTIONS!**



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UCEA website: <http://unioncountyea.org>

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# **READ ACROSS AMERICA**

*In honor of Dr. Seuss' Birthday*



**Thursday, March 1, 2018**

**4:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

Barnes and Noble

240 US Highway 22, Springfield, NJ 07081

If you would like to volunteer for 15 minutes, please contact the UCEA office at (732) 574-0033.