



AFTerthoughts

VOLUME 54 • ISSUE 6 • MAY 2024

Diverse, Dedicated,
Determined



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR

2024 LOCAL 943 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!



Julia Stalzer-Oak Lawn Hometown School District 123



Kaitlyn Kirk-Wentworth Wilson School District 155



Congratulations to Richards High School graduate Julia Stalzer! She has been chosen as the recipient of Local 943's scholarship to pursue her passion for design and architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Julia comes from a long line of proud union members, including her mother who is a member of Local 943 and works at Hannum Elementary School. This scholarship will be instrumental in helping her achieve her dream career and contribute to a healthier future.

Julia plans to major in Industrial Design with a minor in Photography. Her focus is on sustainable and environmentally friendly building practices. She envisions using her skills to create affordable housing structures that benefit both the community and the environment, fostering a more stable and healthy future.

This scholarship is a well-deserved recognition of Julia's dedication and ambition. We're excited to see how her talents and commitment to sustainability make a positive impact in the world of design and architecture.

Victor J. Andrew High School graduate Kaitlyn Kirk has been awarded a scholarship from Local 943 to fuel her passion for advocating for the deaf community.

Kaitlyn's dedication to this cause stems from her close friendships with deaf individuals who faced challenges in school. Inspired by their experiences, she aspires to become an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter and work within the education system.

Much like the way unions fight for the stability and security of their members, Kaitlyn aspires to create a secure and supported environment for the deaf community. Her mother, Michelle Kirk, a Local 943 member at Wentworth Jr. High, exemplifies a similar commitment to service.

This scholarship will empower Kaitlyn as she takes the first step towards her dream. She plans to attend Morraine Valley Community College in the fall, continuing on to Columbia University. Her hard work and determination are a testament to her unwavering spirit, making her an ideal candidate for this scholarship.

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President's Message

By: Elaine Barlos, AFT Local 943 President



View the IFT
latest issue of
Union Link

Time to Renew, Reflect, and Relax!


Now that another school year draws to an end, take a moment to reflect on your personal growth and professional progress. Self-reflection gives you the knowledge to actively improve your teaching skills, set life-goals, and provides clarity for improving your experiences in this lifetime. Consider taking a moment to do some journaling. Record some of your thoughts, accomplishments and student outcomes, as well as some of your trials and tribulations throughout the past year. What were your strengths and weaknesses? How have you developed your skillset? Are you becoming the person you want to become?

Summer is a great time to update your resume and create a professional website page, like Indeed. Be sure that you are up-to-date on your licensure renewal and professional development by checking the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) on the Illinois State Board of Education site, ISBE.net

Also, be sure that you are doing something productive besides work this summer. Plant a garden, visit a local farmer's market, travel, practice the art of meditation, or spend quality time socializing with your family and friends. Taking time to become a well-rounded person is worth the investment towards your happiness. Summer is a great time to refresh, renew, and and to enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation, YOU DESERVE IT!

On behalf of everyone at AFT Local 943, I thank you for the love, patience, and passion that you bring to work every day! I look forward to hearing about your fabulous summer adventures and embarking on new ones with you in the next year!

Elaine Barlos



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Orland Park, IL 60462
(708) 633-0943 www.aft943.org fax (708) 633-0944

Mark Your Calendars

Meeting Dates 2024-2025

President/Treasurer Workshop - MANDATORY
Thursday, August 1, 2024
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (IN-PERSON)

Back to School Legislative Meet & Greet Picnic
Saturday, September 14, 2024
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (IN-PERSON)

Universal & Executive Board Meetings
Tuesdays 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. = Universal (REMOTELY)
Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. = Executive Board (REMOTELY)

- *June 25, 2024 - *Executive Board Only - (IN PERSON)
- August 20, 2024
- September 24, 2024
- December 3, 2024
- January 28, 2025
- February 25, 2025
- April 29, 2025

Senate Meetings
Tuesdays 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (IN-PERSON)

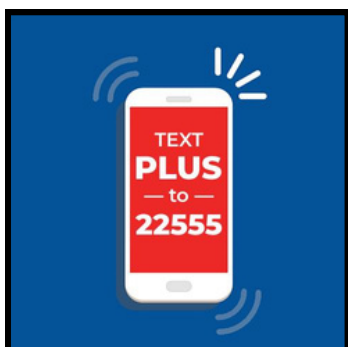
- September 10, 2024
- October 8, 2024
- December 17, 2024
- February 11, 2025
- March 11, 2025
- May 13, 2025

Union savings sent right to your phone!

Text & save. INSTANTLY!

Sign up for Union Plus text alerts to find out about the latest savings, deals and limited time offers!!

Text "PLUS" to 22555 to sign up now!





Working hard for union families since 1986

Spring savings have sprung

Union members save big all season long. Click the button to start saving today!

Save big this spring

Click Here

Monthly Happenings

May Resources -



Asian Pacific American Heritage, Scoop

Mental Health Awareness

Women's Health Care Month

June Resources -

Pride Month



Read about the "Grandmother of Juneteenth"



Retiring?

Join the IFT/Local 943 Retiree Council/Northern Illinois Retiree Action Committee.

The Retiree Council provides:

- Informational workshops and presentations
- Group rates at Drury Lane musicals
- Continued Union membership
- IFT/AFT membership benefits and discounts
- Local 943 AFTerthoughts and IFT publications
- Legislative/Pension updates
- Low \$20 annual fee

Membership term: Sept. 1, 2024-August 31, 2025

Questions? Call Judy Spirakes at 708.633.0943 x225
Send below information w/\$20 check payable to:

AFT Local 943
15521 S. 70th Court
Orland Park, IL 60462



Join our Retiree Council

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Current School District: _____

Phone # Home: _____

Phone # Cell: _____

Personal email address for future notices:

Retiree's Corner

Please be sure to update your address and email information.

Most correspondence from Local 943 and the Retiree Council will be by email. Send updates to Donna Rehm. at DRehm@comcast.net



April Meeting Local 943's Retiree Council

Key points discussed:

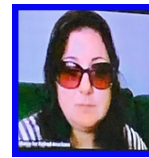
- **Presentation on Prescription Drug Affordability:** Krystle Able, from the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans (IARA), spoke about the Prescription Drug Affordability Board. A surprising fact highlighted was that pharmaceutical companies spend more money on advertising than research and development.
- **PulsePoint App Demonstration:** Lt. Josh Girdick, from the Orland Park Fire Protection District, showcased the PulsePoint app. This app empowers trained individuals to assist in CPR emergencies before EMTs arrive, potentially saving lives.
- **Social Security Act Update:** There was an update on the WEP-GPO related to the Social Security Act (H.R.82/S.597).
- **Call to Action:** A video message from Congressman Garrett Graves urged members to contact Senator Dick Durbin to gain his support for the aforementioned Social Security Act.



Presenter: Lt. Josh Girdick, Orland Fire Protection



Donna Rehm, President Retiree Council



Krystle Able, Executive Director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans

RETIREE CALENDAR 2023- 2024

Wednesday, May 22 - Guys and Dolls
September 25 - The Audience

Next Retiree Meeting - TBA

[Retire Wisely Guide](#)
[New! IFT Retiree Page](#)





IFT Administrators' Academy

IFT is offering Initial Teacher Evaluation Training and Retraining courses. Evaluators who have taken the initial evaluator training must complete retraining "once within the next renewal cycle." Check [HERE](#) for detailed information. Training dates are available from November 2024 through February 2026.

TEACH PD Calendar 2024-2025

Thanks to everyone that responded to the Local 943 Professional Development survey. Your feedback matters! We will be very busy this summer working to tailor our PD opportunities to your needs. Look out for our upcoming PD Calendar this August.



For more information and to register for TEACH classes email Elaine Bernal at ebernalteach943@gmail.com

Student Debt Clinics

These UNION BENEFIT programs are available not only to teachers but also to ANY educational employee. These clinics are FREE to our card-signed union members as a benefit. There are still dates left in May!!! [LINK with Dates!](#)

Sign up for one of these clinics by emailing Stella Kapusta (skapusta@ift-aft.org) or calling the AFT Local 604 office at (815) 725-0402.

Thank you!

I would like to thank all of our TEACH presenters for their dedication and providing engaging PD sessions. And to our attendees, your commitment to self-improvement and growth is truly commendable, and it is this collective dedication that makes our community so strong.

[AFT 2024 eLearning Trainings](#)
[IFT Professional Development Opportunities](#)

Migrant Resources



K-12Dive
Mental Health



Legislative Update

By Andrew Weber



Check out our website!

www.aft943.org



The Illinois General Assembly is in the last weeks of the Spring Legislative Session and they will be determining key legislation and the state budget that has an impact on Public Education. Proposals for bills have progressed through the House and Senate Committees including expanding teacher tenure eligibility and affording student teachers to be granted stipend pay for their service. Other key legislation includes paid plan time, limits on standardized testing for elementary students, expanded placement for high school courses, enhancement for supporting students experiencing homelessness, and freedom of speech protections in the workplace. Some initiatives being explored are the improvement of mental health resources for students, addressing climate change in education, and the implementation of school bus electrification grants. The Spring Session is expected to conclude on May 24. Any updates will be communicated on the IFT Under The Dome webpage: <https://www.ift-aft.org/news/categories/under-the-dome>

For an overview on the aforementioned legislation and initiatives, [CLICK HERE](#)



AFT Convention 2024

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024 TO THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024 - ALL DAY
GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER
HOUSTON, TX

Arrival day is Sunday, July 21.

AFT Convention Registered

Delegate List of Ten (10):

- Elaine Barlos (Ranking Delegate Officer, Retiree Council),
- Elaine Bernal (Officer, D123),
- Andrew Weber (Officer, D123),
- Robert Goldsbury (Officer, Retiree Council),
- Alfreida Jamison (Officer, Retiree Council),
- Catrina Niven (Officer, D135),
- Donna Rehm (Retiree Council),
- Val Wilhoite (WW 155 PSRP),
- Julie Molony-Stephan (WW 155 Teachers),
- Schenia Jamison (Hoover Schrum 157)



2030 Census Change to Categorize Middle Eastern and North African Classification

Click [HERE](#) for more information

Thank you for fighting to Fix Tier 2

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your efforts to address the critical issue of fixing Tier 2 pensions. Last week during the Fix Tier 2 Week of Action, IFT members were among the 63,000 public workers who called or emailed their legislators to urge them to Fix Tier 2. What a powerful call for change!

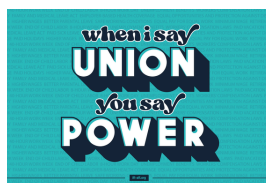
Fixing Tier 2 is about fairness. And it's about ensuring that Illinois can continue to attract and retain outstanding professionals to serve our students and citizens.

Again, I thank you for taking action. Our fight is not over, so please watch your inbox and ift-aft.org for updates and future calls for action. Together, we can Fix Tier 2.

In Unity,
Dan Montgomery, IFT President



& STEM Resources



Illinois State Board of Education

www.isbe.net
for current ISBE updates





Save the Date
Back to School
Legislative Meet
& Greet Picnic

SATURDAY
14 SEPTEMBER, 2024

TIME:
11:00AM - 1:00PM

WHERE
15521 S. 70TH COURT,
ORLAND PARK, IL

friendship
Food

Bring the Family



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UNION-MADE

FOURTH OF JULY



BUNS

ALFRED NICKLES BAKERY,
 FRANCISCO, ARNOLD,
 STROEHMANN

DRINKS

BUDWEISER, LANDSHARK LAGER,
 MILLER LITE, SHOCK TOP,
 MICHELOB, PEPSI, A&W ROOT
 BEER, COUNTRY TIME

SIDES

MELCH'S POTATO SALAD,
 FRITO LAY CHIPS AND SNACKS

BURGERS & DOGS

BALL PARK FRANKS, DEARBORN
 SAUSAGE, HEBREW NATIONAL,
 EXCEL FRESH MEATS, HORMEL
 FOODS

TOPPINGS

HEINZ KETCHUP, FRANKS RED
 HOT, VLASIC BRAND PICKLES

AFL-CIO

Share Your Joy!

Is there something exciting
 happening at your
 school/district?

We would love to hear from you!

Email Local 943 at
 squero.local943@gmail.com

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 the SWCCCASE Council had a meeting at Local 943. They shared information with their members about legislative updates, Tier 2, insurance and more. They catered from Portillos for their members. Need to use the Local 943 meeting room for a council meeting?

Call the office to check availability 708/633-0943



AFTerthoughts

Official Publication of the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers AFT Local 943

Executive Board

- Elaine Barlos, President
- Alfreida Jamison, Treasurer
- Catrina Niven, Secretary
- Bob Goldsbury, VP of Communications/Public Relations
- Andrew Weber, VP of Political Activities/COPE
- Elaine Bernal, VP of Educational and Professional Issues/TEACH Coordinator

IFT Next Generation Constituency Council

Kate Kosner and Andrew Weber

IFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) Constituency Council

Angelita Alvarez, Lourdes Angel and Valerie Wilhoite

IFT PreK-12 Constituency Council

Leisl Brown and Jill Decker-Doom

IFT Racial and Social Justice Constituency Council

Elaine Barlos and Amber Jackson

IFT Retirees Constituency Council

Elaine Barlos, Donna Rehm and Judy Spirakes

IFT Special Education Constituency Council

Elaine Bernal and Ashley Isherwood

IFT Union Leadership Development Constituency Council

Jill Decker-Doom

Local 943 Defense Committee

Alfreida Jamison, Chairperson
 Elaine Barlos, Sue Benigni, Tina Thauer, and Elaine Bernal

Staff Members

Charles Harper, IFT Field Service Director
 Spencer Saal, IFT Field Service Director
 Karen O'Dea, IFT Support Staff
 Judy Spirakes, Webmaster and Member Services
 Sandra Quero, Staff Writer

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Member Information: kodea@ift-aft.org



FOLLOW US ON:

- **FACEBOOK:** Southwest-Suburban-Federation-of-Teachers-Local-943
- **TWITTER (aka: X):** #AFTLocal943