



February, 2026

Broward County Retired Educators' Association

<https://browardrea.org>

Number 331

## January Program is a Workshop



### February 5 Meeting

Time: 11:30

Place: Tropical Acres Restaurant

Address: 2500 Griffin Road  
Just west of I-95

Program: : Surprise!

Theme - I Love Rock 'n Roll



February is  
Black History

### Bring to meeting:

Luncheon Ticket

Loose Change for  
Pot of Gold

Wear 50's Attire



### From Luncheon Chair Diane Texer Reminder!!!!

**Annual Scholarship Luncheon**  
Thursday, February 5, 2024, 11:30 am

Tropical Acres Restaurant,  
2500 Griffin Road 954-761-1744

Tickets are \$55

Order them by mail with the coupon on Page 5.

**DEADLINE is January 24**

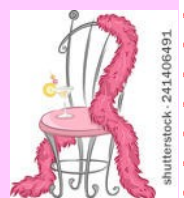
If you have new or "like new" items to donate for  
our scholarship fundraiser please call me at  
954-972-8032.

We are asking each member to bring a new or  
gently-used children's book to the Luncheon.

Our theme this year is "I Love Rock  
and Roll" See you there for a fun  
day!

I will have my pink boa!

**Diane**





## President's Corner

We have hit the year off in grand fashion. Cupid and her Crew diligently made over 200 Valentine Day cards to deliver to our esteemed members. We even had youth from a local school participate in decorating the cards, making this project inter generational. The members also prepared for our annual scholarship luncheon, taking place February 5, 2026 at **Tropical Acres**. Tickets for this event are sure to sell out, so please see **Diane Texter** for more information.



Our March monthly meeting will take on a sobering manner as we reflect on our loved ones who are deceased. **Darcy Drago** is our contact person for this event. If you have a memory or experience that you would like to share with us, please reach to her prior to that meeting. We will also have someone from the **Supervisor of Elections** present any and all updates that will impact your capacity to vote. Please make certain to attend.

Please know that each of you is valued, and have a plethora of experience that I draw from whether you realize it or not. Therefore I would like to see someone step in the position of president-elect. This will give you the opportunity to work alongside me the remainder of this year, and then 2026-27, and thereafter settling in as president in 2027-28.

Again, thank each and every one of you for all that you do.

Sincerely  
Dr. JAKS



## BCREA Officers....

President

JoAnne Kitchen Simmons

954-804-0647

President-Elect

Vacant

Secretary

Karen Avery

954-806-1678

Treasurer

Gwen Lampkin

(ask for her #)

## About the FREF District 10 Trustee

**Judy Hunter** was voted in at the State Conference in July 2025 to represent FREF as the District #10 Trustee which encompasses Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Judy is a retired principal with 34 years in education.

Her responsibilities include attending all state meetings and conventions. Judy attended the Board of Trustees meeting last August in Ocala, Florida. The Theme of the conference was Reach Out, Reconnect, Recruit New Life, and Together We Thrive.

Her main focus is to share information about scholarships (process and deadlines) for future educators, practicing educator grants, financial assistance for retirees in financial crisis, and the process for receiving a unit award.

Her duties also include visiting each district, disseminating FREF information to members and completing requested reports to the State in a timely manner. Welcome to BCREA, Judy!



## Cultural Affairs

Chair: Anne French

954-579-1719 [Annefrench10@gmail.com](mailto:Annefrench10@gmail.com)



Want to have some fun?

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 11, 2026, starting at 12:30 pm. BCREA will be hosting **Fun in the Park** at **Heritage Park** in **Plantation** 1100 S Fig Tree Lane, Plantation

We will play badminton, toss bean bags for cornhole, and topple Jenga towers- and have fun!

Admission is snacks for the group.

Plan on rediscovering your childhood.



Anne

**Broward Mall  
Valentine Craft and  
Vendor Fair Market,  
February 7 & 8.**

## Information Services

Chair: Sallie Sherwood  
954-629-3712 matildatwo@aol.com



We all know that the month of February is all about spreading love and kindness. Do we realize that also includes being kind to ourselves? Here are a few tips from the National Council of Aging (<https://www.ncoa/article/mental-health-9-tips-for-self-care>) related to our own mental well-being. According to research those that practice gratitude not only reduce their stress levels but also feel less pain, get better sleep, have a stronger immune system, experience healthier relationships and perform better professionally. Some ideas for practicing gratitude can include: keeping a log of at least one thing that you are grateful for daily, realize that it is acceptable to say "no" (you don't always have to say "yes" to a request,) accept that there are only 24 hours in a day, be aware of your sleep schedule, diet and daily exercise and perhaps try some form of crafting to enhance your creativity. February is also National Library Lover's Month so find a good "read." Random Acts of Kindness Week is Feb 9 -15. You can join your fellow BCREA members in distributing roses for AARP Cupid's Crew. Other ideas to show thanks: write a card of appreciation to someone who has helped you, offer assis-

tance to a neighbor with a task, donate clothing or food to local organizations, give someone a hug, call an isolated friend or family member, volunteer at a school, animal shelter, community center or simply show a kind gesture when in the grocery store checkout line. So during this month be kind to others AND to yourself. As Maya Angelou said, "Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud." Stay fit, stay sharp and send positive thoughts to others. Thank you to **Darcy, Jeri, Marelise, Susan, Lillian and Josephine** for their contributions to the Information Services Committee. *Sallie*

**"Adopt a Sweetheart" from Humane Society of Broward County Feb 14 -16.**



## Ben's Bytes...

The winners of the scholarship fundraiser were



**\$20 to Judy Hunter.**



**\$10 to Rocky Isacs,**



**\$10 to Josephine Walker**



**And \$10 to Dorothy Moore.**

(Below)

At left are the 4 members who won the gifts donated by **Karen Avery.** Rear:

## Passages



*Happy Birthday to our Birthday Club (members over 85!)*

**Peggy Tingle 2/01  
Michael Kogan 2/22  
Julia Penley 2/24**

Welcome to new member



**Evelyn Johnson**

**Jan Heinrich, and Lenora Smoot; Front, Barbara Bohuny and JoAnne Kitchen Simmons.**



**Alyce Aspler wins Darcy's volunteer hours award! And that's the last byte for February!**

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

*Ben*



## Literacy

Co-Chairs: Sandy Lefkowitz & Cindy O'Linn  
954-557-5817 Slef1234@gmail.com



What a wonderful beginning to the new year. BCREA has chosen the 2026 fifth grade essay winners. The entries this year were fun to read and exhibited the writing skills being taught in our Broward schools. We congratulate all the students who wrote essays and special congratulations to our winners:

### Honorable Mentions:

Emily Moyano - Fox Trail Elementary

Samara Pitts - Westchester Elementary

3rd Place: Gaelle Pierre - Harbordale Elementary

2nd Place: Aadryan Bhandari - Westchester Elementary

1st Place: Brandon Basden - Dillard Elementary

If you missed our January meeting, you missed the expression and tears of **Lenora Smoot** when our first-place winner, **Brandon**, was announced. Lenora is the proud grandmother and the subject of Brandon's essay. We are so lucky to have Lenora as a BCREA member. Congratulations to her and to her grandson. All winners will be invited to our May meeting at which time they will receive their awards and share their essays. Be sure to mark your calendars. You don't want to miss this special event.



## Volunteer Services/Handbooks

Chair: Darcia Drago  
954-977-7247 dardra@att.net



### Volunteer Services

Thanks to our members who turned in their volunteer hours and to those who supported our group projects. I am pleased to announce that we are reporting just under 10,000 volunteer hours to FREA. This is an increase of 1,200 hours over last year. In the words of Helen Kel-

ler: "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much."

### Handbook/Directory

Our 2026 edition has been delayed for publication and distribution.

*Darcy*



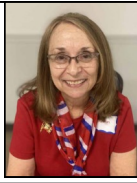
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## Membership

Chair: LuAnn Comes  
954-475-1510 lacomes987@aol.com



Happy New Year and welcome 2026! BCREA is so grateful for each of our members! A lot of excitement seemed to be in the air as 51 members joined together for the January 8th meeting. Friends were meeting up with friends. You could hear a lot of chatting and laughter as our two tasks were completed. Working together made the tasks so much easier, as we found fun together. A big thank you to everyone who invited a new member. This month we welcome **Evelyn Johnson! Linda Gibson** brought in Evelyn. Thank you, Linda! Please encourage others to join. Give someone my number or email if more information is needed. It is my sincerest hope that 2026 brings each of you good health and much happiness. I look forward to seeing you at the February Luncheon!

*LuAnn*

## Fund Raising

Chair: Barbara Lewis  
954-562-1936 barbarabeth1@att.net



On February 5, our Luncheon at Tropical Acres is our biggest fundraiser. Hope to see you there.  
**Zoom Bingo** is coming! Keep the date, April 16 for fun. The cost is \$10 for five games. If you need more info call me.

*Barbara*

## FREF

Chair: Shirley Swartz  
954-536-3401 Shirley.swartz@gmail.com



Be sure to get your FREF Extravanza ticket. You have two chances to WIN. Each ticket is \$10. And it funds scholarships for Florida's Future Teachers. Your support of this effort is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

*Shirley*

### FREF Scholarship Extravanza

Tickets - Only \$10.00

Buy your tickets now for 2 Chances to win:

First, you will be in the District drawing for a \$100 winner in Broward, Dade or Palm Beach.

Second, you will have a chance to win:

\$500 Cash - 1st Prize

\$300 Cash - 2nd Prize

\$200 Cash - 3rd Prize

Fill out the form below and send with a check to:

Shirley Swartz

1921 SW 52 Terrace

Plantation, FL 33317

Make your check payable to FREF (Florida Retired Educators Foundation).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

All donations will be used to fund the general scholarship program as well as the operating expenses of the Foundation.

### Scholarship Luncheon Ticket Order Form

Number of tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ @\$55.00 each

Extra Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrée choices: \_\_\_ Prime Rib \_\_\_ Salmon

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send a check made out to BCREA  
Include a Self-addressed, stamped envelope

to

Diane Texter

742 NW 69 Terrace Margate, FL 33063

Deadline - January 24 954-972-8032

### Attention Members!

**We need a new Newsletter Editor!**

At the end of this club year, I will have been doing the Newsletter for 21 years. I have not missed a meeting in all that time. I need someone to take over for me. I'm tired! And getting older by the minute! Who's ready to have a new job?

**Bev Hoppe**



**BCREA NEWSLETTER**

Published 8 times a year, September – April by the  
**BROWARD COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION**  
1040 SW 52 Avenue  
Plantation, FL 33317

**NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL  
PERMIT NO. 409**

**- DATED MATERIAL -  
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

Happy  
Valentine's  
Day



**BCREA VOLUNTEER REPORTING FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print)

Month \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer hours working with adults** \_\_\_\_\_  
(persons who are non-family members;  
this also includes literacy hours)

**Volunteer hours working with youth** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Persons 25 years of age or younger;  
This also includes literacy hours)

Bring this to our next meeting, e-mail it to me at  
[dardra@att.net](mailto:dardra@att.net) or mail it to me at:

**Darcia Drago**  
2505 Dahoon Avenue  
Coconut Creek, FL 33063

**Calling All Problem Solvers, Achievers, and Leaders:  
Volunteer & Join the SHINE Team!**



**SHINE**

**Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders**

SHINE is a statewide volunteer program providing health insurance information and free, unbiased, and confidential counseling assistance to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers.

Want to help make a difference in the life of a Medicare beneficiary? Our volunteers are caring, committed problem solvers with a heart to serve their community.

**Bilingual Volunteers Welcome!**

To learn more, call  
**954-745-9779**

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[www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org)  
to complete an application.



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