President’s Message

Thank you to all who were able to join us for the Zoom meeting in September. I found it a little crazy to be communicating like that, but it worked to get our information out to everyone. We had some new members and we welcome those of you who joined us!

Thank you to all the executive committee members who worked before the Zoom to help make it happen!

A shout out to Carol Lunsford for making our website as up to date as she can. She must wait on some things – like pictures I’ve yet to photograph our 8th grade leadership award recipients from last year. Please go to our website: fayettegaretirededucators.org and mark it as a favorite on your device. That way when someone asks you for information about FCREA or GREA, it’s just a few clicks away!

Also, like our Facebook page: Fayette GA Retired Educators Association. Cathy Geis is keeping us informed, and that is where she will profile different members as soon as she gets some of the questionnaires back from members.

Our next meeting will be face to face (with masks and physical distancing) at the United Methodist Church in Fayetteville on October 8th. We are going to have a guest artist, Ellen Mitchell, put us to work making art that day! I am looking forward to seeing her in action. 10:30 AM! Bring a friend. I will be sending out a reminder with more info about the art lesson just before the meeting.

Until then – stay safe, wash your hands, wear your masks, and be thankful we are retired!

Tracie Fleming
President
Facebook

Have you been to the FCREA Facebook page lately? No? Well, be sure to check it out: We have our meeting dates posted there as well as other information we hope will be helpful. Sometimes there will be a little fun too! A new addition is Profile of a Member. To help us get to know each other a little more, we are profiling a member. Feel free to add a comment about how you know that member.

The first profiled member was our president, Tracie Fleming. It was fun to read how so many of you worked with her in various places. Cathy Geis will contact members to answer a few questions and to request a picture.

Please feel free to go ahead and answer these questions and send them along with a picture to geisc@bellsouth.net.

Profile Questions

1. What positions have you held and where?
2. What do you enjoy the most about retirement?
3. Where was the last place you visited?
4. What are you reading now?
5. What is one thing most people don’t know about you?

It is crucial that all citizens complete the 2020 U.S Census. If you have not responded, please be sure to do so soon. Your response helps direct billions of dollars in federal funds to states and local communities for schools, roads, and other public services. Results from the 2020 Census will also be used to determine the number of seats each state has in Congress and your political representation at all levels of government. Georgia’s response rate is only 81% which is 49th in the US. We need to do better so be sure you respond and encourage family and friends to respond, also.

Happy Fall to All
2020-2021 FCREA Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SPEAKER</th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 10, 2020</td>
<td>FCREA Executive Board</td>
<td>Education Program Facts about FREA, FCREA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 8, 2020</td>
<td>Ellen Mitchell</td>
<td>Arts Education – Make and Take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12, 2020</td>
<td>Patty Brown, Professional Auctioneer and Real Estate Services</td>
<td>FCREA Annual Scholarship/Awards Auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 14, 2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 11, 2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation of Slate of Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11, 2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vote on Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8, 2021</td>
<td>Andrea Donilla, Vicki Davis. Area 10 Director</td>
<td>Memorial Ceremony Induction of Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 2021</td>
<td>Dr. Julie Turner, Assistant Superintendent, FCBOE</td>
<td>Scholarship/Awards Luncheon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Join Us: FCREA Monthly Meetings

We have some great programs scheduled for the year and are planning other meetings based on continued improvement in the status of Covid-19. Our first meeting will provide some facts about FCREA and GREA. In October, Ellen Mitchell, retired FCREA teacher, will provide a Make-And-Take activity. We can use some arts education about now. As of now, our Annual Scholarship Auction is scheduled for November 12, and our second semester meetings are being planned. You will receive more information soon.
Birthdays March – September

**March:** Peggy Hambrick, Terry Wilson, Angela Spagnuolo, Charlene LaBonte
**April:** Deborah Posey, Angie Meredith
**May:** Dorothy Jefferson, Adele More, Carol Love, Judy Caldwell, Cathy Geis, Marion Key, Connie Davis, Darlene Day, Linda Brem, Vickie Davis
**June:** Janice Massenburg, Pat Bankston, Shirley Tolbert, Jane Hannon, Denise Woods, Gerry Haymans
**July:** Patty Daniels, Karen Bulloch, Barbara Russell, Tracie Fleming
**August:** Carol Lunsford, Winnie Anderson, Cathy Szegedi, Cindy Smith, Jeffre Ray, Lori Tallman, Anne Hertzog, Kathy Chitty, Jim Haymans
**September:** Sue Cleek, Karen Neuner, Beth Weil, Mary Maud Hiestand, Sandy Holcomb

---

**For Your Information**

It is open enrollment season for our Medicare advantage programs.

This year the information programs are via teleconferencing or online, and you must call and make a reservation. You should have received this information about the second/third week in September. Call 855-477-4455 to discuss your meeting preference and to get the event number and password.

---

**FCREA GOALS for 2020-2021**

- Support the State President’s *Cheering for GREA* theme and humanitarian project, *Alzheimer’s Organization*.
- Increase FCREA membership by 10%
- Strive to meet the requirements to achieve the GREA Unit of Distinction.
- Collaborate with the Fayette County School System to support Schools, teachers, and students.
- Implement FCREA community projects by supporting the Fayette Samaritans and the Teacher Resource Center through donating and volunteering.
- Encourage members to wear FCREA shirts to meetings, community activities, and/or service projects to create our FCREA brand in the community.
- Increase member attendance and participation at monthly meetings.

---

**SHBP State Health Benefit Plan**
Greetings to FCREA members! We are off to a great start as our 2020-21 year begins! We recruited 7 new FCREA members, and 12 new members have joined our state organization, GREA. Let’s continue this momentum as we strive to meet our unit and state goals.

Membership goals for FCREA are: 1) to increase membership by 10%, and 2) to increase attendance and participation at monthly meetings. Help us achieve these goals by bringing a friend, coworker, or neighbor to our meetings or inviting them to join us when we meet. Members can visit and learn more about our local and state organizations through our website then share the information with potential members. You can also “like” our organization on Facebook.

Membership applications for both FCREA and GREA can be obtained at our meetings or on the website.

We need you to join FCREA and GREA!! Dues for FCREA are $15 per year- and you must rejoin each year unless you join for life. GREA dues are $27 per year. You can save money if you join GREA through Automatic Dues Deduction (ADD) of $2 per month. The $2 is automatically deducted from your TRS check and renewed each year. You never miss that $2. FCREA can earn money from GREA when retirees pay through ADD. Now’s a good time to be ADD!!! Sign up using the link below!

https://www.fayettegaretirededucators.org/membership

Let There Be Light

Come together with Ellen Mitchell, retired art teacher, to design your own glowing fall lantern. Transform your ideas into a 3D garden, character of your choice, or anything your heart desires. Lighten the way with your creativity. All supplies will be provided. Bring a friend to enjoy this with you!
What Does It Take to Open a School System During a Pandemic?

As a former FCBOE Educator, I (Sandra Watson) am fascinated by how much time, effort, and energy I imagine it has taken the superintendent, central office personnel, administrators, teachers, school staffs, students, and parents to prepare to open school this year. I am so proud of the school system for the successful opening, so I wanted to find out exactly how this all came together. I spoke with Julie Turner, Assistant Superintendent, and Melinda Berry-Dreisbach, Public Information Officer, who were happy to provide the information. I am going to bullet point the most important and interesting information.

✓ Dr. Barrow graciously postponed his retirement to help guide the county through opening school during this unprecedented time.
✓ A Covid-19 task force was established under Dr. Barrow’s direction consisting of system representatives from food service, health service, academics, technology, facilities, human resources, transportation, finance, and communications.
✓ Task force members spent 11 to 14-hour days and some weekends to open schools. They all came into work (using safety protocols) during the entire summer and met multiple times a week with no vacations.
✓ Multiple factors were taken into consideration to arrive at the plan to use a hybrid model and a total virtual model.
✓ The Hybrid Model includes:
  o Pre-K through second grade are in the buildings (brick and mortar) five days a week for a regular school day.
  o Grades 3-12 are on an A/B schedule with each group in the building two days a week. A= Mon/Tue and B= Thurs/Friday.
  o When not in the buildings, the students are doing asynchronous learning at home. Asynchronous learning includes various forms of digital and online learning such as prerecorded video lessons or game/based learning tasks that students complete on their own and on their own schedule.
  o Wednesdays are flex days. Students can catch up on work and make online appointments with teachers for help. When not working online with students, the teachers can use time for professional learning and planning.
✓ Along with the hybrid model, parents could choose total virtual instruction for grades K-12.
  o Virtual middle schoolers are taught by FC teachers
  o Virtual high school students use The Fayette Virtual Academy Edgenuity platform with support from school system teachers.
Parents selected one of the choices, and about 70% of students opted for brick and mortar leaving 30% in the virtual scenario.

Dr. Turner brought together principals at all levels and HS registrars to tackle scheduling. They had to schedule two groups of brick and mortar students and teachers as well as virtual students and teachers.

All information was given to the technology department to input the schedules and students into the database to send notification to parents. The technology department met every scheduling challenge that was given to them.

All efforts were made to accommodate teachers if they had medical issues based on physician documentation and need.

Prevention protocols such as social distancing, use of face coverings, temperature checks, staff and visitor health checks, frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, extensive disinfecting, and contact tracing are used in the schools and county office buildings.

The FC school system is very transparent with how they are tracking Covid cases in the schools. If you look on their website (fcboe.org), they have a Covid-19 Weekly Update on their banner that shows data for each week.

As the number of Covid-19 cases in FC continue to decrease and the number of cases in the county’s public schools are declining, the Covid-19 Task Force (in conjunction with the Ga. Department of Public Health) plans to bring “brick and mortar” students back for full-time face-to-face instruction in phases beginning September 28. This information is on the website.

Melinda Berry-Dreisbach noted that the system cases are low because of the hybrid schedule (reducing the number of students in the building) and the safety protocols in place. There have been Covid cases in the schools as expected, but Fayette County has been able to mitigate the spread, which was the goal from the beginning.”

We should be immensely proud of our school system. Personnel worked hard and did an exemplary job opening the schools. After investigating the opening of schools and imagining how hard it was to successfully accomplish, I can say without a doubt.......

I’m so glad I’m RETIRED!!! Aren’t you?