



# *The Retired Educator*

Vol. XXVIII Issue 2

Winter 2024: Dec., Jan., Feb.

## OCREA

### General

#### Membership

#### Meetings

10:00 a.m.

(11:30 Feb & May)

First Thursday

Sept.—May

(Jan. no meeting)

#### Location:

Church on the Drive  
1914 Edgewater Dr.  
Orlando 32804

#### 2024-2025 Theme

Rock-n-Retirement

#### OCREA Website

[ocreafl.org](http://ocreafl.org)

#### Facebook

OCREA

#### OCREA Officers

President

**Janice Quint**

Vice President

**Monica Johnson**

Rec Secretary

**Kim Stutsman**

Cor Secretary

**Cathy Thompson**

Treasurer

**Jennifer Cunningham**

#### FREA Website

[frea.org](http://frea.org)

#### Convention

May 20-22, 2025

Renaissance World Golf Village  
St. Augustine, FL

## **President's Message**

Our year has started out strong!

This is our first newsletter that is being sent via email. We are very excited to use technology to spread our news and events.

Our September gathering was a success with a visit from Jason Locker, the OCPS Performing Arts Director. We reconnected with old friends and met new friends.

In October we learned about "Fly into a Book" and will continue to collect school age

children's books at each meeting for that wonderful organization.

It was also wonderful to learn our volunteer hours. We are continuing to support our schools and community through volunteerism.

I look forward to the rest of the year with exciting speakers and continuing to meet new friends.

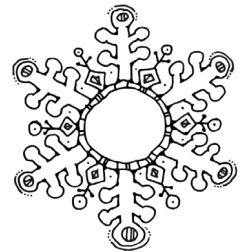
You can stay connected with us on Facebook at OCREA.

Thank you for being an

integral part of OCREA. Together, we continue to inspire and uplift one another, providing that the spirit of education and community remain strong!

Keep rocking your retirement!

Janice Quint  
President



**Our holiday musical program is just around the corner. Please join us on December 5th and bring a friend! Apopka and Edgewater High Schools will be performing.**



## Vice President, Programs: Monica Johnson

We have had some great programs and speakers during our fall months and are looking forward to our spring speakers. We will welcome Hilary Ayers from the UF/IFAS Extension of Orange County on February 6, to discuss home gardening. We will learn "All About the USO" from Ernesto Roman Cruz on March 6, and have a lively presentation from Hsian Alisson Lin from the Red Cross of Orange County on April 3. Our May meeting welcomes ADDition Financial, one of our outstanding supporters. This gathering is always a wonderful celebration of our outstanding OC-REA volunteers, our scholarship recipients, and our

Necrology Service. Let's all gather and celebrate our wonderful association.



## 5th Grade Essay Contest

### Chair: Debbie Smith

We are hoping that more schools will become involved in our essay contest this year. In anticipation, I contacted several more venues on International Drive for donations. I have already picked up wonderful ticket packages from the following:

Fun Spot America- \$280 value for arcades and rides

Pirates Cove Adventure Mini Golf-

\$215

Dezerland Park-trampoline jumping, go karts, laser tag, and bowling- value \$121

Dave & Busters-food and arcade games-value \$150

Sky Zone Trampoline Park on West Colonial-value \$104

Andretti Indoor Karting & Games-value \$100

Congo River Golf- value \$90

In appreciation, it would be nice if you

would support these businesses when you have a day to spoil your grandchildren!

I am looking forward to getting together at my house with our returning committee members and any one new that would like to read our amazing essays. This will take place sometime after January 20<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested, contact me at (407)242-1530. Please leave a message.

Thank you in advance,

Debbie Smith



## Volunteer Services Chair: Monica Johnson

Everyone should make sure that you submit ALL of your volunteer hours. Submit your hours at our gatherings, or by emailing Monica Johnson at [cimabonniejean@outlook.com](mailto:cimabonniejean@outlook.com) or texting the hours to 407-325-7718. We are currently ahead of last year's volunteer total, so let's surpass the 2023 total and make this our best year ever. Remember, you should submit your hours even if you are not actively attending our monthly gatherings. *All members should submit their volunteer hours.*

Continue to bring your books for school-aged children to our gatherings. If you are unable to attend the gatherings, email or text Monica (see above) to set-up a time that she can pick the books up.

# VOLUNTEER



**Membership Chair:**

**Cathy Tapley**

Thank you for renewing your membership in OCREA and FREA. If you know someone who might be interested in joining OCREA, please share the application found in this newsletter.

If you happened to renew directly with FREA, please let us know. They notify us once a month, so your membership may not reach us in a timely manner.

If you know a retired educator who might enjoy our

interesting programs, informative gatherings, culturally and socially valuable field trips and the collegiality of fellow educators, please invite them to become a member.



**Hospitality Chair:**

**Suzanne Lincoln**

I'd like to thank all who have attended our meetings so far this year. We have enjoyed the refreshments in September brought to you by your board members and in October by those whose last names ended in A - D.

Refreshments for the General Meeting will be according to last names.

November: E - H, December: I - L, NO JANUARY MEETING, February: Pot

Luck luncheon and 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

Please remember to bring your refreshment ready to serve with a serving utensil and when the meeting is over, please take it with you.

**November:**

Door Greeters: Jane Barry and Mary Chesnut

Thought for the Day: Monica Johnson

Table Decorations: Janice Quint

**December:**

Door Greeters: Joanne McNamara

and John & Anne Gardepe

Thought for the Day: Kim Stutsman

Table Decorations: Jennifer Cunningham

**January: NO MEETING**

**February:**

Door Greeters: Debbie Smith and Chris Daniels

Thought for the Day: Pat Franklin

Table Decorations: Pat Franklin

**Cultural Affairs Chair:**

**JoAnne McNamara**

Do you love the wonderful aroma of cookies baking in the oven? If the answer is YES! Join the OCREA Ronald McDonald /AdventHealth House "Baking Buddies" on Thursday, November 21st, 2024, 1pm - 3pm. Our cookies, conversations and smiles will uplift the spirits of the families as we host the afternoon "Baking Buddies" session.

If you would like to join us and need more details.

Email Joanne McNamara [mcnamaj@comcast.net](mailto:mcnamaj@comcast.net)

Next event - Remember those ten scholarships OCREA awarded to students at Orange Technical College? In late February, we will tour their new west campus.



**2024 VOLUNTEER HOURS  
REPORT FORM**

Return to Monica Johnson  
cimabonniejean@outlook.com

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Month(s): J F M A M J J A S O N D

(circle the above months)

Religious \_\_\_\_\_

Literacy \_\_\_\_\_

Environment \_\_\_\_\_

Ecology \_\_\_\_\_

Library \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Help \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Nursing Home \_\_\_\_\_

OCREA/FREA \_\_\_\_\_

Shopping \_\_\_\_\_

Schools \_\_\_\_\_

Other Projects \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Hours** \_\_\_\_\_

**Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF)/  
OCREA**

**Scholarship Chairman:  
Kim Stutsman, Ed.D.**

FREF Scholarship Information: High School Seniors wishing to become teachers can apply for a scholarship from the Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF).



Information has been given to OCPS career counselors.

Application deadline is January

20, 2025. The applicant who is selected by our scholarship committee will also be the recipient of the Ernest and Ruth Hawk Scholarship of \$1000 supported by OCREA through donations to The Little Red Schoolhouse.

**OCREA Membership Application**

**Hand out the application below and  
invite a friend to a meeting!**

**Orange County Retired Educators Association**

**2024-2025 Membership Application**

**Dues: \$65.00 Annually (FREA/OCREA)**

**July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025**



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  **New**     **Renew**

\_\_\_\_\_ **General Member:** Retired School Teacher, School Administrator, School Transportation, School Maintenance, School Cafeteria, School Para, etc.      \_\_\_\_\_ **Associate Member:** Any person not affiliated with a school system but wants to support the mission of The Association may apply for membership

**FREA Benefits are fully available to ALL General or Associate Members.**

**Name and Title** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone—Cell preferred** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birth Month and Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\$65.00 FREA/OCRA Unified Dues**

**\$ 4.00 Legislative donation**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ FREF donation**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ OCREA Ernest & Ruth Hawk Scholarship donation**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to OCREA)**

**Mail check to:**  
OCREA  
P.O. Box 464  
Lake Helen, FL  
32744

**PayPal**  
Send payment to  
Ocrea.treasurer@gmail.com  
Please remember to add \$2 to  
the total to cover the PayPal fee.

Legislative Donations—OCREA and FREA are advocates for your pension and the future of education in the State of Florida. Donations support advocacy for all present/future Retired Educators and other beneficiaries of the Florida Retirement System like First Responders. All donation Money will be used in a non-partisan way.



**Addition Financials' Board of Directors honors Mary Lynn Williams with the honorary title of "Director Emeritus"**

We are incredibly proud to announce that Mary Lynn Williams, former Secretary of the Board of Directors has been granted the title of "Director Emeritus". Thank you, Mary Lynn, for over 50 years of dedication to Addition Financial!

**UCF Welcomes Addition Financial as a Pegasus Partner!**

We're proud to be named a UCF Pegasus Partner, joining a select group of organizations committed to making an impact in our community. From talent development to strategic philanthropy, this partnership strengthens our bond with UCF and its students.

**Supporting Students with Orange Technical College Partnership!**

We've teamed up with Orange Technical College to provide students with career-focused training and financial education. Whether they're studying automotive, nursing, or esthetics, we're here to help them on their path to success with the financial skills they need.

**Two Great Ways to BOOST Your Savings!**

Get a great return on your savings, at any amount. Think you need to lock up a lot of money to get a great savings rate? Think again!

**4.00% APY\* Savings Plus Account\***

When you take advantage of any of our great checking accounts, you get access to our high yield Savings Plus account that's a great option if you don't plan to keep more than \$5,000 in your savings. This account earns a higher dividend rate and APY than our regular Savings account while providing access to your funds.

**Growth Plus Money Market Account**

With our Benefits or Classic Checking account, you get access to our Growth Plus Money Market that's great for growing savings balances of \$10,000 or more. With a Growth Plus account, you get a great savings rate, but access to your money when you need it. See current Growth Plus savings rates.

Visit [AdditionFi.com/HighYield](http://AdditionFi.com/HighYield) to learn more!

Annual Percentage Yield (APY). Rates effective October 1, 2024. Active Addition Financial checking account required for access. Active Benefits Checking or Classic Checking account required for access.

**Addition Financial Holiday Closures**

Wednesday, December 25 in observance of Christmas Day

Wednesday, January 1 in observance of New Year's Day

Monday, January 20 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, February 17 in observance of President's Day

**Legislative Chair:  
Claire Stephens**

The Florida House and Senate will be holding committee meetings during the coming months. The next

legislative session will start on March 4th and continue thru May 2, 2025.

Even though our legislators

are not in full session the committee work is important and a time to let them know your thoughts on

matters of interest to you. Don't hesitate to reach out to your state law makers; you can find out who

represents you at: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find>

If contacting your representatives, don't forget to mention these FREA issues as well:

1. Re-instating the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for those in the Florida Retirement System.

2. Funding salaries for veteran teachers.

3. Allowing retired teachers who want to return the classroom sooner than the currently required

one year moratorium a pathway to do so.

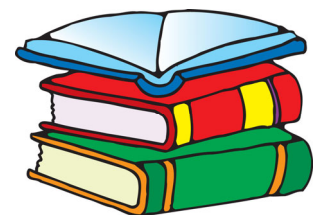
4. Returning the default retirement option to the pension plan not the investment plan current new-hires are defaulted to.

**Information Services Chair:  
Pat Franklin**

As this year ends, consider how you can save money in 2025. How much do you spend on ATM fees? The average free is \$4.77. That is up from last year. To avoid these fees, join a fee free bank like USAA or Charles Schwab. Withdraw at Publix instead of an ATM. (They will give you cash back when you purchase.) Use your bank

ATM. If you are going on a trip, download an app that shows you where free ATMS are located. (information from [Clark.com](http://Clark.com)) Also stop writing checks! It's dangerous! Transit numbers at the bottom of the check let anyone into your account! The only person you can trust with a check is Jennifer when you pay your dues!

Looking for a good book for 2025? Try *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See. I read all her books!





**THANK YOU to ADDITION FINANCIAL for sponsoring our Newsletter.**

**2024-2026 Officers**

**President**

Janice Quint

**Vice-President**

Monica Johnson

**Recording Secretary**

Kim Stutsman

**Corresponding Secretary**

Cathy Thompson

**Treasurer**

Jennifer Cunningham

**Directors**

**2023–2025**

Richard Gomer

*(completing another's 2nd term)*

Prince Kelley (1st term)

**2024–2026**

Pat Franklin (1st term)

Chris Daniels (1st term)

Suzanne Lincoln (2nd term)

**Ex Officio**

Christine Woods

**THE RETIRED EDUCATOR**

**Published**

September, December & March

**Orange County Retired  
Educators Association**

PO Box 464

Lake Helen, FL 32744

**Editors**

Yearbook – Jennifer  
Cunningham, Janice Quint, & Dr.  
Kim Stutsman

Newsletter - Janice Quint

**Sunshine Contact**

Monica Johnson