

# Elkhart County Retired Teachers Association

ECRTA Newsletter, August 2025

Website: [www.ecrta.com](http://www.ecrta.com)

## From Your President: Barb Hrynewycz



As I start my next term as president, we are going through a heat wave. I plan my day carefully to avoid the dangerous heat and humidity as I work in my yard and garden. We all need to plan ahead. Our April program from Sheri Beck of Everence was a good reminder that we need to plan ahead for upcoming life events. Jim Dreier, of Downtown Ministries, spoke at our June luncheon about the work they are doing to help develop the skills to get and keep jobs, financial planning and the support needed to escape addictions. On the political front, we will be receiving a “13<sup>th</sup>” check through the efforts of our IRTA lobbyists. Plan ahead to thank those legislators when you see them in the community. Encourage them to make it permanent. We had good participation in our community service project. More totes have been made to donate to CAPS/CASA and First Light Mission. We received a certificate of commendation at the June Representative Assembly for our efforts. Bonus- I was contacted by the Marion County Retired Teachers Association wanting information on how they could do a similar project in their county.

Our local is strong because of the efforts of our members. We have a committed executive board that has the desire and passion to see our group continue. I want to thank Carol Larson and Gary Stoltz for their MANY years of service to ECRTA. After 20+ years each, they have chosen to step back from their positions on the board. I have been privileged to call them colleagues and friends.

Looking ahead, that means we have openings and opportunities for others to serve. Please, seriously consider joining the board. We need a vice president, necrology compiler, legislative representative, and someone to head up the scholarship committee. Perhaps you know of a former colleague who would be ready to join ECRTA and grow our membership. They might also be someone you would recommend to fill one of the open positions.

I encourage you to participate where you can.

### Mark your Calendars:

**September 18**—Fall Leadership Workshop at Swan Resort, Plymouth, IN

**December 31**—Volunteer hours due to Lenette Burckhardt  
[klburckhart@gmail.com](mailto:klburckhart@gmail.com)



### ECRTA Luncheons:

**September 12, 2025**—West Goshen Church, Program & Donation—First Light Mission

**November 13, 2025**—First Presbyterian Church  
Program—Crimsonaires

**April 9, 2026**—Harvest Community Church

**June 11, 2026**—TBD

## Legislative News by Gary Stoltz

The Indiana General Assembly started their session early in January and concluded at the end of April. Their major goal was to prepare the state budget for the next two years, which they did. The good news for all retired teachers is that IRTA has informed us that our request for a “13th check” was included, minus a 5% reduction, payable with the September 1, 2025 pension payment. This is significant in light of the most recent state revenue shortage now predicted to be in the area of \$2B causing across the board budget cuts and limitations. Any pension enhancement means something to each of us in helping to keep up with increases in the cost of living.

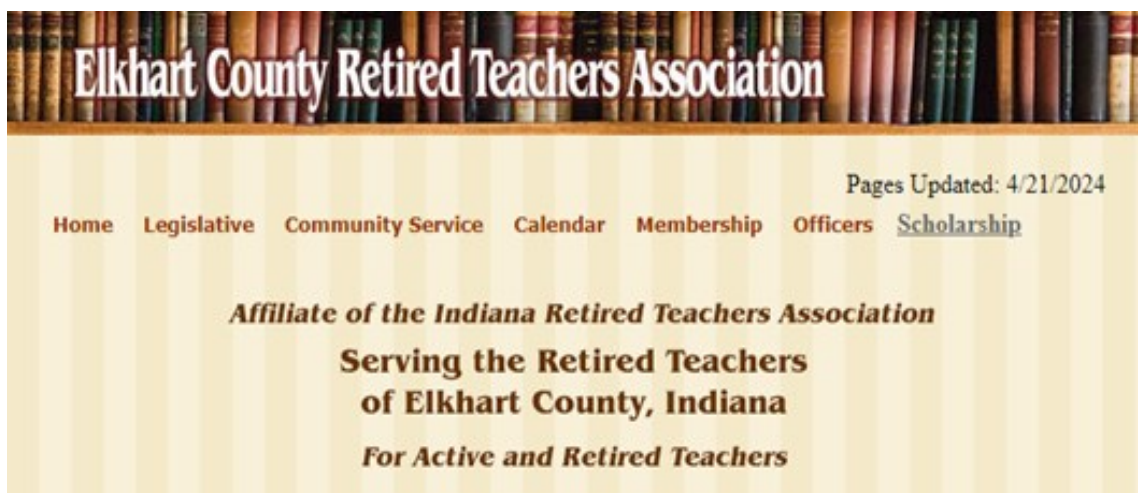
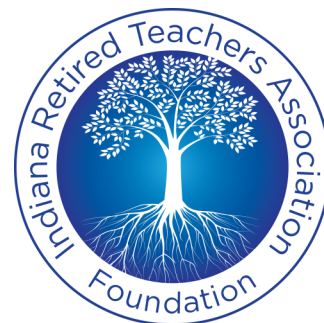
Our IRTA leadership team has recommended that each of us should contact our own state representative and senator to thank them. Contact information, if needed, appears at [www.ecrta.com](http://www.ecrta.com). Click on the Legislative Page and scroll down.



## Indiana Retired Teachers Association Foundation (IRTAF) News by Gary Stoltz

The IRTAF receives our annual donation each November, as well as individual donations all year long. These funds help carry out the three following state wide programs:

1. Scholarships—Current college students majoring in Education from Elkhart County can apply for a \$2,000 scholarship before their junior or senior year. Applications are due by April 1 each year.
2. Active Teacher Grants—Current classroom teachers can apply for a grant to fund that special classroom activity not covered by state or local funds. Applications are due during the window of August 15 to September 30 each year.
3. Hand Up Grant—This grant is available to any retired teacher to help pay for an unexpected emergency event. Applications can be filed any time during the year as needed.



## Officers & Committee Chairpersons

President: Barb Hrynewycz  
President Elect/Programs: **need a volunteer**  
Recording Secretary: Sherry Huang  
Corresponding Secretary: Maryann Shultz  
Treasurer: Karen Tobias  
Past President: Carol Grieser  
Public Relations: Dawn Wysong  
Legislative: **need a volunteer**

IRTA Foundation: **need a volunteer**  
Retirement: **need a volunteer**  
Community Services: Bonnie Reagan  
Volunteer Hours: Lenette Burckhart  
Membership: Marie Palacios  
Scholarship: **need a volunteer**  
Necrology: **need a volunteer**  
Web Site: Ron Geyer

## Membership Information by Marie Palacios

For the 2024-2025 year, ECRTA has 169 members. Just to remind you, your current membership is for the school year 2024-2025 and not the calendar year. This means your membership will expire August 31, 2025. You will receive a membership card with the Newsletter. Please complete it and return it with \$15 dues payment for the school year 2025-2026.



It is important to renew your membership each year because each member is an important part of our association. Dues are \$15 for the year. Ten dollars of your dues are used for organization expenses and five dollars goes to the ECRTA scholarship fund. (We also welcome extra money for the scholarship fund.) Every year we give a \$1,000 scholarship to a sophomore, junior, or senior in an Indiana college with an education major.

We appreciate your support each year. On the membership card: update your addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. There is a line for you to indicate if you wish to receive information by email or U.S. Mail. Receiving notices by email reduces the cost of postage for the ECRTA. We will continue to send postcard notices to those who request U.S. mail. We look forward to having all of you as ECRTA members.

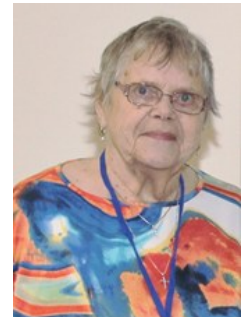
Please encourage all your teacher friends to join and encourage all new retirees to join as well. Looking forward to seeing you at the September luncheon.

## The 2025-26 ECRTA Scholarship Recipient by Carol Larson



At the June meeting we had the privilege to present a \$1,000 scholarship to a young lady. Emma Wogomon, a graduate of Northridge High School was our winner. She is in her senior year at IUSB. Emma states that she has always had an interest in becoming a teacher. Her father, a high school teacher, has been a big influence as she watched his connections with his students. Emma has had several teachers in her own life who made a real difference for her. Congratulations to Emma and Best Wishes as you enter the world of teaching.

Specific details can be found at [www.ecrta.com/scholarship](http://www.ecrta.com/scholarship).



*Congratulations Emma!*



2025 Elkhart County Retirees

<p><u>Concord</u> Linda Bohn Lisa Puckett Katherine Burkert Michael DuBois Jacqueline Foy Margaret Shelly Kristal Slovinski</p> <p><u>Elkhart</u> Theresa Harmon Kathy Stump John Taylor Denise Uitdenhoven</p>	<p><u>Goshen</u> Kaylene Miller Denise Tahara Christina Weaver</p> <p><u>Middlebury</u> Janice Robinson</p> <p><u>Mishawaka</u> Debbie Anderson</p> <p>These are the official retirees from the Indiana Retired Teachers Association.</p>	<p><u>Wa-Nee</u> Kathy Anglin Beth Beer Robert Bilinski Robin Bilinski Debra Fisher Shelly Lengacher David Mangel Jan Snider</p> <p>Please invite retired teachers you know to our next gathering on September 12.</p>
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2024 Volunteer Hours by Lenette Burckhart

A thank you for the 11,498 volunteer hours recorded by 40 members and a thank-you even for the volunteer hours not reported—an appreciation for generously giving your time to others. Each hour represents \$33.49, a large sum donated to the State of Indiana. It’s very important to keep track of your volunteer hours and to report them to the volunteer coordinator at the end of the year. The IRTA lobbying team uses these hours when it approaches the legislature representing retired teachers to show how retired teachers give back to the community and state.



Indiana Retired Teachers Association recognized ECRTA members: Pennie Phares as an Outstanding Volunteer and Elaine Frey received an Honorable Mention. Both donated over 600 hours working in the community. Congratulations!

ECRTA also received commendations for our group project sewing totes for CAPS. Sixteen totes were donated at the June luncheon. Ten were given to CAPS, the rest will be presented to the First Light Mission. Our project has generated interest by other local groups. Marion RTA contacted Barb Hrynewycz for our pattern. Teach one, reach another.



Thank you volunteers!

11,498 X \$33.49 = \$385,068.02 “Volunteers in the United States hold up the foundation of civil society. They help their neighbors, serve their communities, and provide their expertise. No matter what kind of volunteer work they do, they are contributing in invaluable ways.”  
rate & quote from Independent Sector

## Necrology Report June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025 by Marie Palacios



Darlene Adkins

Sandra Bartley

Larry Eugene Bilger

L Arden Boyer

Marilyn Bunn

Alvin W. Cripe

Sharon K. Cripe

Robert Davis

Patricia Fawley

Sarah Cooke Gurka

Ann Mae Harness

Richard Hinkley

Juanita Hughes

Gordan Jay Kauffman

Brian Kirk

Robert Maloney

Patricia May

Darla McLemore

Robert Miller

Dennis Myers

Barbara Sue Naab

Ramona P. Prough

Carol Ratzloff

Dwight C. Rodgers

Dana Snider

Nelda A. Snider

Phil Teegarden

Charles Walker

Erma Lou Yoder

### A Place to Volunteer or Donate by Dawn Wysong

Our ECRTA group heard from Lindsay Diener-Locke and intern, Jazmine Davis, from Ryan's Place during the September 2024 luncheon. Rex and Nancy Gleim and Don and Eunice Munn founded Ryan's Place in 2002, named in honor of the Gleim's son, Ryan, who died in 1992 at the age of 20. Ryan's Place helps an average of 1,400 individuals a year from adults down to age three. One in ten children in Indiana experience the death of a parent or sibling before the age of 18, demonstrating how necessary these services are.



*"The mission of Ryan's Place is to provide support in a safe environment where grieving children, teens, and their families can share their experiences as they move through the healing process. Ryan's Place is dedicated to all children who grieve."*

(from [www.ryansplace.org](http://www.ryansplace.org))

Currently Ryan's Place is located at Silverwood Mennonite Church, but during our meeting Regina shared the exciting news that ground-breaking for a new center located at 1566 Regent Street near Prairieview School took place in the Fall of 2024. They will be moving into their new facility soon.

Services offered include:

- \* Monday Night Program offering support groups
- \* Ryan's Place school groups
- \* Anticipatory Support can be scheduled
- \* Camp Hope offered each summer in Elkhart and Kosciusko counties
- \* Expressive Art Group meets on Saturdays
- \* Crisis support is available in the immediate aftermath of a sudden death.



**Volunteers are needed**—you may sign up on their website. Also listed is a wish list of items needed. . . a way for you to make a small impact in the life of a child or teen.