

Union Pulse

Colorado Springs Education Association
May 19, 2020

What's Your Story?

Again, we thank members for sending us their thoughts on the value of CSEA. Today we hear from **Gretchen Bitner** (Penrose), who appreciates the union's support of her **professionalism**.

The CSEA has truly shaped the educator I am today. Teaching is about so much more than standing in a room full of young learners and striving to do "what's best for kids". After serving as a CEA Ambassador Fellow and through the support of CSEA, I've learned that teachers must stand up and insist we have a Voice in our **professional** growth and teaching environment. Knowing that I am respected as a professional truly is "what's best for kids". I will be forever grateful to the CSEA for helping me find my Voice.

CEA is currently accepting applications for the next Ambassador Fellowship program. More information is available below.

Striving To Improve Working Conditions

As CSEA continually strives to improve our working conditions, we have sponsored a program that works with individuals experiencing workplace conflict. CSEA Sponsors the Mediation Support Team, which works with employees experiencing conflict with each other to identify core issues, find common ground, and work to resolve the issues through mediation. Our services are free, confidential, and voluntary.

One of the members of the Mediation Support Team, **Stacy Strobel** (Doherty), shares her story here:

As I finish my 27th year of being a teacher and counselor in School District 11, I can still remember my first Association Representative at Wasson High School talking to me about joining the union. Jim Smutka explained to me how important it was to be a member because of the protections it provided a young teacher and how the union fought for our rights and working conditions. After the first few years, I realized how they truly did protect us by providing us guidelines for what we were expected to do and how to stand up against situations where we were treated unfairly. As I became further involved with CSEA, I learned so many valuable life-long skills that has served me well my entire career. I learned to stand up to protect others and myself. I have been an Association Representative, served on the Board of Directors and served on several committees. What I love about CSEA is the leadership is only one phone call or email away when I have a problem or there is an issue in my building. They are innovative in the ever-changing times and are always fighting for the teachers. CSEA has invested in my career with training and guidance. I know I am a better teacher and counselor because of their investment.

Thank You, Volunteers

One of the most rewarding CSEA events is our annual Volunteer Banquet, at which we honor the many volunteers who have donated their time so generously to CSEA throughout the school year. As we were not able to hold the banquet this year because of the pandemic, we would like to say a special thank you to just a few of our incredible volunteers.

We would like to thank outgoing CSEA Board of Directors members **Adrienne Hause** (Palmer), **Rachel Taylor** (West Elementary), and **Beth Waller** (Fremont), for tirelessly and faithfully representing members on the Board.

We would also like to thank the members of the CSEA Bargaining Team who worked skillfully and with dedication as they negotiated on your behalf with the District. Thank you to **Jeanette Applin** (Henry), **Bruce Cole** (Doherty), **Sarah Jacobs** (Coronado), **Adrienne Propsom** (Galileo), **Eric Rewey** (Palmer), **Shelly Ritchie** (King), **Joe Schott** (CSEA President), **Kelly Stroup** (Doherty), and **Rob Watson** (Audubon)

Thank you, also, to **Leslie Miller** (Jackson), who has represented members in our region by serving on The Fund, which is a CEA committee that reviews candidates and incumbents for political offices across the state

and makes electoral recommendations. This is an example of how we work on members' behalf through our Government Relations program.

Our volunteers and friends are the lifeblood of our organization. Countless hours of volunteer time are given to our Association every year, and we appreciate everything that you have done to make us successful! We cannot list you all by name, but please know how very, very much we appreciate you.

CEA Ambassador Fellowship

Are you ready to leverage your experience as a public school educator and be at the forefront of education policy in Colorado? Are you ready to step up to advocate for our students and public education in this time of uncertainty? Are you ready to amplify your voice?

The [CEA's Ambassador Fellowship](#) helps teachers and support professionals expand their knowledge and ability to influence educational policy and professional practice at the local, state and national levels. Through the fellowship, you will gain the necessary skills and knowledge in order to amplify educator voice on issues that influence public education policy and policy makers. *Now is the time* for educators to lead the discussion and the decisions that will shape the future of public education and your voice is needed and matters.

The deadline to apply is May 28th. Go to the [CEA Ambassador Fellowship](#) website for more information!

Correction

Yesterday we incorrectly listed **Jessie Trovik**'s school as Columbia. Jessie is at Galileo.

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This correspondence is intended for members of CSEA, ESPA, CEA, and their families. It is not intended for public distribution.