

UCATS Momentum

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU, Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Volume 30 Number 1 | Winter 2009

Members Plan Art Show

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Now, we must be citizens

"It can't happen without you, without a new spirit of service, a new spirit of sacrifice. So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism, of responsibility, where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves but each other."

—Barack Obama



■ Stephen Rechner, Law School

The world certainly has changed since our last issue of *Momentum*! First, a financial crisis that revealed the moral and monetary bankruptcy of Wall Street, and then the historic, election of Barack Obama.

Let's reflect on how Obama's election victory was achieved. He wasn't elected just because of his intelligence and charisma, though he has an abundance of both. He was elected because millions of Americans exercised the privilege of citizenship and answered the call to get involved in the election process. A grassroots organization of campaign volunteers was assembled in every state and every institution, including the labor movement, and probably some of you reading this issue of *Momentum*.

Doing our part

UCATS sent delegates to the conventions of our state and national affiliates, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), where both organizations gave their endorsements to Obama. Members of the UCATS leadership team also wrote over 50 postcards

to AFT members in swing states as part of a nationwide effort by that organization.

So, what happens next? Do we sit back, relax, and wait for President Obama to fix everything for us? NO! In Obama's campaign slogan — "Yes We Can" — the operative word is **WE**. "We" is the privilege of citizenship. We must now do our part to achieve the potential of Barack Obama's presidency.

UCATS elections

How? By getting involved in your union. In a few short weeks you will have the opportunity to nominate the people you want to represent you on the UCATS Executive Council for the 2009-2011 term. (See Election Calendar, page 9). You also have the opportunity to be nominated yourself. All UCATS members past probation are eligible to be nominated for a Shop Steward position on the council. For the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary you must be a UCATS member for at least six months. Those are the only requirements/qualifications of service. Training is provided and ongoing, so you will never be left out on a limb, and

our union contract provides paid release time to attend the monthly council meetings.

Executive Council service is a tangible way for you to help Barack Obama achieve the full potential of his promise to our nation. SERIOUSLY! Think about his two main campaign promises: universal health insurance and fixing our economy.

Universal health insurance will be easier to achieve if those of us who already have it hang on to it. Fixing the economy will only be possible if working people have living wages. The only institution that has effectively proven its ability to do both is the labor movement. Sure, unions have taken it on the chin the last few years because government and big business have been working hand in glove to destroy the labor

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UCATS Momentum

636 Broadway, Room 614
New York, NY 10012

Momentum is published quarterly by and for the members of the Union of Clerical, Administrative, & Technical Staff (UCATS), at NYU, Local 3882, New York State United Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO.

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Members' questions

Q: *My workload has recently increased; can I get more money?*

A: As union members we are defined as hourly workers, paid to work a set number of hours each week — full-time is defined in our contract as 35 hours per week or 7 hours per day. If you are given 10 hours of work to do in a seven hour day, the union contract requires NYU to pay you at a rate of time-and-a-half for the additional 3 hours, or give you compensatory time off during the same week (Article 7). In other words, if your workload increases beyond 35 hours per week you get more money by being paid overtime.

Of course, life is rarely as simple as the example above. If you are accustomed to a certain amount of down time, because you've become very efficient at what you do, or because there are natural slow periods in your school/division, that down time belongs to NYU and management has the right to assign additional tasks to fill that time.

When a new assignment is also more responsibility, or requires

you to learn substantive new skills, then you have the right to request a reclassification to a higher paid grade (Article 10). A reclassification request is a process by which you will work with a UCATS representative to rewrite your job description and then have it reviewed by NYU's Salary Administration Department for a determination as to whether your current grade is appropriate or if a new grade is in order.

Q: *My professor requested a merit raise for me, but my school's HR manager said that the union had agreed to a wage freeze; why would UCATS do that?*

A: There is not now, there has never been, nor will there ever be an agreement by UCATS to deny our members raises, merit or other.

We do not recommend our members for merit raises, however, because we have an equal fiduciary obligation to every member by virtue of the fact that every UCATS member pays dues. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for UCATS officers or staff to pick and choose

among our members who deserves additional money based on merit. That doesn't mean we stand in the way of any professor or manager who is willing to go to bat for a UCATS member to get her/him a merit raise. The fact that NYU's HR managers have routinely responded to requests for merit raises with some form of the answer implied in the question above only underscores the importance of a union contract. Without a union contract annual raises would not be guaranteed, and all raises would be subject to denial, or adjustment downward, by management.

Every UCATS member received a 3.25% wage increase effective September 1, 2008, every UCATS member will receive a raise in September 2009 and 2010, and every UCATS member has received a raise on, or about, September 1st, every year for the past 29 years. In September 2011 we will be in negotiations for a new contract that will determine future raises. ☞

Citizens

(Continued from page 2)
movement, but with Barack Obama there is now light at the end of the tunnel *if* we redouble our efforts within our own union local.

At no other time in the recent past has the labor movement been better poised to push back against declining wages and rising health insurance costs. Now is the time to step up to the plate and exercise the privilege of citizenship in your union. The people we elect to the

council this spring are the people we will most likely call upon to serve on the contract bargaining team in 2011. Three years may seem like an eternity, but if we are to succeed in negotiations then we need to begin preparing new leaders now.

We also know from experience that UCATS members who work in areas that have a union representative on site are treated more respectfully by management and

that there are fewer grievances and attempts to violate the union contract.

This is a time when each UCATS member must look into your heart and decide if you really want our union to continue to improve wages and benefits and if you really want to hold the line on increasing health insurance costs. There is no other way but with committed members who are willing to step up to leadership positions in the union. ☞

Ward lights the night for Leukemia

UCATS shop steward Kerissa Ward participated in the Light the Night walk to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) on Thursday, October 16. Kerissa walked in memory of her cousin Amanda Jane Ward.

About her cousin Kerissa said, “Amanda was someone who everybody loved — she was one of those rare people who have a true vitality and love of life. Unfortunately, Amanda passed away twelve years ago from leukemia. She and I were very close, more like sisters. She was only 25.”

A moving experience

“This was my first charity walk so I wasn’t quite sure how everything would be organized. When I arrived I looked around for a bit and then joined the line to turn in my raised funds and register. It was very crowded and there were a lot of groups milling about on Pier 17 of the South Street Seaport. I had about an hour and a half to look around and gather the walk materials since the event itself didn’t begin until the sun went down at seven thirty.”

“Everyone there was carrying a balloon with an electric light inside of it. White balloons were for people supporting a loved

one battling or recovering from leukemia; red balloons were carried by survivors; and gold balloons were held by those who have lost a loved one to leukemia. I held my gold balloon in memory of my cousin, Amanda.”

“For me, there were two very moving moments in the pre-walk activities. The first was a small event for remembering the loved ones who have died from leukemia. There was a small tent with a large scroll for people to write messages on. A short poem was read while some of us with gold balloons quietly brushed away tears.”

“Once the walk began, it was amazing to see all of the balloons and white t-shirts walking through the financial district on the way to the Brooklyn Bridge. People stood in their windows looking down on the parade, encouraging others to come and look.”

“I’m glad that I walked in honor of Amanda and that I was able to tell people about her. She and I meant a lot to each other. She was always supportive of my dreams. I miss her everyday.”

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s (LLS) Light the Night Walk is an annual event to raise



Kerissa Ward

funds for cures. It’s the nations’ night to pay tribute and bring hope to thousands of patients and their families.

Funds raised through Light the Night Walk support the work of hundreds of the world’s best and brightest researchers in their search for better therapies and cures for leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

LLS achievements

Now in its 10th year, *Light the Night* is celebrating a Decade of Difference. Funds raised from the *Light the Night Walks* and other events have made these achievements possible:

Nearly half a million patients and their caretakers have called the LLS Information Resource Center and received critical information about blood cancers, therapy options and issues surrounding treatment and survival.

Nearly \$40 million

was disbursed to patients through the LLS Patient Assistance program to help them get the treatment they needed to fight their cancer.

Over 100,000 patients and family members found comfort and hope through LLS First Connection and Family Support Groups.

LLS granted \$425 million to more than 400 scientists searching for cures and improved treatments for patients.

LLS funding contributed to the development of a host of new drugs that are affecting patient survival and quality of life.

LLS-funded researchers began working in novel areas that hold great promise for finding cures and better treatments including new, less toxic stem cell transplants, immunotherapies and other targeted therapies.

The LLS Advocacy Network has successfully supported pro-patient legislation that will:

- ➔ Help advance blood cancer research
 - ➔ Extend Medicare coverage to include oral anti-cancer drugs
 - ➔ Help fund efforts to reach underserved blood cancer patients.
- Ward’s effort raised over \$220 for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. ⇌

2009 childcare subsidies awarded

Childcare fund awards for the 2009 calendar year were calculated in October and will be available in January to the 73 UCATS members who applied. Over \$115,000 in funds were distributed this year because unused awards from the previous year are returned to NYU for redistribution to UCATS members who apply in the upcoming year. Eligible parents among the UCATS membership received \$1600-\$1800, or 80% of their reported childcare



expenses, whichever was less. The UCATS Child Care Fund was first negotiated for our members in the 1993 contract. At the time it was a mere \$50,000 but we have

negotiated \$5,000 annual increases to the fund in each subsequent contract. Here we share the parenting experiences of two of our members:

Shafon McNeil

Robert Lesko, SCPS Center for Philanthropy

SHAFON MCNEIL has worked for NYU for eight years, and is now with the Office of Career Services at the Law School. This year was Shafon's first experience with the UCATS childcare fund—she gave birth to her first child in late October!

Currently on a leave of absence with her new son, Shane, Shafon thinks that paid maternity leave would be a great improvement to our benefits. "Taking an unpaid maternity leave is hard and heartbreaking," says Shafon. "No one wants to leave their newborn at such a young age. Even a few weeks of paid maternity leave would make a big difference to a mother bonding with her new baby."

As Shafon lives far from the NYU campus, she is also concerned about balancing her new family responsibilities with those of her job when she returns from maternity leave. "A big challenge I see is making it to the daycare center by 6 P.M., with my workday ending at 5 P.M. On-site daycare and flex-time would help to balance work and family."

Leyla Alvarez

Diana Corzen, Health Services

LEYLA ALVAREZ has worked at Student Health Services in the insurance department for the past four years. She has three beautiful children; her oldest and only daughter is Sheyla 15, and then there are her two boys, Matthew 14 and Jeremiah 3.

Leyla appreciates the childcare fund award, and notes that, "with the escalating cost of daycare, that can run approximately \$150/week, I wish it could defray at least a 1/3 of the cost." She also says that on-site day care "would make things easier for parents, who currently have to run around from site to site before work."

In addition to the childcare fund, Leyla is looking forward to the day when her children will have the opportunity to attend this great university using her tuition remission benefits.

In the meantime, she enjoys cooking for her family, and supervising homework and chores. For herself, working at NYU provides the opportunity to advance through networking and education.

As a self-assured and strong single mother, Leyla is a role model to her children and to everyone who has to juggle parenting and full-time work.

Art show moves forward

■ Mathias Sias,
Bobst Library

The art exhibition for code 106/104 University employees moved forward as artists among the UCATS membership responded to the call for volunteers in the fall issue of *Momentum*. The Art Show Committee is chaired by Liz Schnore. The date and venue of the exhibition are still to be determined. Interested UCATS members are still welcome and encouraged to join the effort.

Ideas and potential

Two meetings of the group this semester have been attended by approximately ten participants. The meetings have been “get acquainted” sessions where we shared examples of our work, and discussed our background and influences. The work of those involved is wide-ranging and the group is beginning to get a scope of the show’s potential and ideas for the venue. Although no definite plans have been made, several strategic ideas have been discussed. The group is aiming for a Fall 2009 event, depending on the chosen venue.

Enthusiasm among the participants is high and the accomplishment of those already involved ensures that our show will be first-class. The group will meet again early in the Spring semester.



Liz Schnore of Bobst Library is chairing the Art Show Committee.

If you would like to participate or help organize, we would like to hear from you! Even if you are not an artist yourself, if you have event planning experience, or are interested in gaining experience in the field of art exhibition this opportunity is for you.

Please send an e-mail to codero6arts@gmail.com, and tell us the kind of work you do, and/or at what level you would like to be involved.

For questions or more information please contact:
Liz Schnore liz@lizschnore.com x81420 or Mathias Sias
ms181@nyu.edu x82476. ✉

Sneak Peek

Mike Tice, from the Law School, is a volunteer on the Art Show Committee and will be one of the featured artists in the show.



Quiet and Little Known, by Mike Tice.

The lowdown on H-EyeGla\$\$es

■ Stephen Rechner, Law School

During the benefits open enrollment period we advised you not to sign up for the new VSP Vision Care benefit offered by NYU that replaced the *EyeMed* discount plan (if you missed it go to our website ucats3882.org and click on “Member Alerts”).

Article 18, paragraph I of our contract states that “*The University will provide to full time permanent employees the same optical discount plan that it provides administrators.*” This language is modeled on similar language we have for our dental benefits. The history of dental benefits is that they steadily improved over the years, but NYU would improve the benefit for administrators in the middle of our contract and then make us wait until our contract expired to negotiate for the improvements. Our current language for both dental and vision care provides us the benefit improvements at the same time administrators get them which allows us to focus on other benefit improvements when we negotiate a new contract.

Of course, we found out this year that, at least with vision care, benefits don’t always improve. Since we also don’t want you to get soaked the next time you need glasses I decided to go shopping to find you the best deal. When it comes to purchasing eyeglasses there are deals and there are rip-offs.

The rip-offs:

I started my shopping at *General Vision Services (GVS)* on 14th St. The prices of their designer frames range from \$329-\$399 and their upgraded lens package is about \$159. If you have Oxford Health insurance, GVS will give you an eye exam for free, and even sell you a complete pair of (hideous) glasses for \$60, but they kept me waiting over an hour for my appointment so I walked out. Next, I went to *Cohen’s* where I had a \$100 off coupon, but the price of the first pair of frames I looked at there was \$499! No sale. From there I went



to *Lenscrafters*. Their designer frames range in price from \$169-\$399, but when I asked for an eye exam they referred me to an independent optometrist next door who charges \$85. I kept shopping.

The deals:

So how does two pair of glasses for \$99, including lenses, with a choice of over 200 frames sound? This deal is available from *For Eyes*, 420 Lexington Ave., less than one block from Grand Central. Designer frames at *For Eyes* range in price from \$149-\$225, basic single vision lenses are \$69, or for \$99 you can upgrade your lenses package to include thinner lenses with UV protection and coatings for scratch resistance and glare reduction. The eye exam at *For Eyes* was just \$49; the optometrist was thorough and the exam equipment was new. At the time I went there was a 20% off sale on their designer frames. I really did get two complete pair of glasses for only \$99 — they weren’t the most fashionable frames, and that price does not include the upgraded lenses package, but if price is your main issue you won’t beat that.

What clinched the sale for me was that I’d been looking for a pair of fabulous green frames and I found them (Pradas) at *For Eyes*. Total cost for that pair was just \$250 including the upgraded lens package.

What most impressed me about *For Eyes* was that the salesperson explained that the optometrist was not connected to their retail operation and that it made no difference to him whether or not I purchased glasses there. The salesperson even gave me a copy of my prescription before she made a sale! This allowed me to continue my search for cheap glasses on-line.

Did you know that you can also purchase a complete pair of glasses on-line for as little as \$8? Well, yes and no. Eight bucks is the bait, but you have to require a very mild prescription to get glasses for that price. By the time I found a pair of frames I wanted, and added the cost of the lens upgrade that the on-line retailer required for my prescription, I managed to purchase a great pair of glasses for just \$63, including shipping.

Don’t make my mistake

Before purchasing glasses on-line, however, have your eyes examined at the same place you purchase at least one pair of glasses and wait until you get them

(Continued on page 9)

UCATS Election Calendar

For 2009-2011 Executive Council

February 18, 2009

Election Committee sends notice of March 11 General Membership Meeting

March 11, 2009

General Membership meeting for Nominations

March 12-20, 2009

The election committee will notify each nominee of his/her nomination and certify that the nominee accepts/declines the nomination.

March 23-March 27

Election Committee will notify the membership of the election and manner in which it will be held.

March 27-April 17, 2009

Fifteen Day election period

April 21, 2009

The secretary of UCATS will cast one vote for all nominees for uncontested seats on the council and the election committee will certify the election of those members running unopposed. If any seat(s) on the council is/are contested, ballots will be sent to the members only for those contested seats and the ballots will have been counted and certified by the election committee or in conjunction with a designated third-party vendor that specializes in organizational elections on a date to be announced.

H-EyeGla\$\$es

(Continued from page 8)

— if there is anything wrong with your prescription/lenses the retailer/optometrist will determine the cause of the problem and replace the lenses at no cost to you.

My mistake was purchasing a pair of glasses on-line before I had received the glasses I purchased from *For Eyes*. When I did receive the glasses from *For Eyes* all seemed well in the store and even when I walked forty blocks to work the next morning (in my fabulous green Pradas). Then I sat down at my computer. At first I thought my computer monitor was crooked; then I realized that the monitor, a perfect rectangle, appeared to be a trapezoid! The problem was consistent with all three pairs of glasses I had purchased from *For Eyes*.

I returned the glasses that evening and the *For Eyes* sales help and optometrist couldn't have been more

courteous and diligent in working together to resolve the problem. The optometrist reexamined my eyes and did additional tests without charge. The lenses in all three pairs of glasses were replaced at no cost to me.

Although purchasing a pair of glasses on-line prematurely was a mistake, it gave me the opportunity to test the return policy of the internet vendor. I called their 800 customer service number, was immediately transferred to a representative who knew exactly what to do and she even emailed me a postage label for returning the glasses. The lenses were replaced at no charge; all I had to pay was the postage, both for returning the glasses and for the replacements to be sent back to me. Even with the extra postage (\$10) it was an incredible deal on a great pair of glasses. This deal, and excellent customer service, is avail-

able from 39dollarglasses.com, but just google "cheap eyeglasses" and you will get lots of hits.

New "Perks For Eyes" discount plan

The outcome of my experience is that UCATS will soon proudly bring you the "Perks For Eyes" discount plan. There is no monthly premium for the plan, and you can purchase as many pair of glasses as you want, as often as you want, and receive a discount on all of your purchases. This discount plan also covers your entire family at no cost to you. Just present the "Perks For Eyes" membership card that we will be sending you shortly in a separate mailing. The only catch is that there is only one *For Eyes* store in the New York metropolitan area, but it is conveniently located less than one block north of Grand Central Station, at 420 Lexington Avenue. ⇨

Making do in hard times

■ *Joan Rechner (Stephen's Mom)*

I was born at the beginning of the Great Depression. "Making do" was just the way we lived. I was a child and totally unaware that there was an economic depression.

We were a close-knit extended family consisting of cousins, second cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, great-grandparents and great-aunts and great-uncles. Holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, religious milestones and graduations were all causes for celebration, and they were our primary source of entertainment in an era when home entertainment centers hadn't been invented and movies and restaurants were unaffordable luxuries.

Learning thrift

When we got together there were over 25 of us. Everyone had a talent to share, including the children. There were several piano players to accompany the family sing-alongs, as well as a violinist and a tap dancer. Whoever hosted the celebration cooked the main course and everyone else brought a dish to complete the meal. We didn't have television, but the men would listen to the ball games on the radio and, after a large meal, invariably fall asleep until the dishes were done and the singing began.

Stephen and his sister, Kathleen, make jokes about the thriftiness I learned as a child (and taught them when they were growing up), but he asked me to share my experiences with you since the current economic situation is being compared to the great depression in which I was raised. He specifically asked me to



Joan Rechner

tell you how I make tea. Tea is a delightful and inexpensive alternative to coffee and can be an event in itself with just a little effort.

So, to a six-cup teapot you only need one tea bag. Preheat your teapot with hot, but not boiling, tap water so it won't crack when you do fill it with boiling water. Your tea water should be brought to a rolling boil and you should let the tea bag steep for no more than five minutes. Why only five minutes? After five minutes the tea will become bitter. Don't discard any unused tea. You can either reheat it or put it in the refrigerator for iced tea. A nice teapot with cups and saucers will make this simple inexpensive beverage a treat for your whole family.

Another bargain in these tough economic times is a whole chicken. You can either cook it yourself, or buy it precooked. After you've had a meal or two of chicken, you can make chicken salad with the leftovers to brown bag your lunch, and then don't forget to make chicken

soup with the carcass. For the best soup, I save the water from the vegetables I've steamed or boiled as side dishes from the previous meals, and use that in lieu of buying broth. To your soup you will add diced celery, carrots, onions, seasoning and rice or noodles.

Seen this play before

When it was announced that we were in a recession and money would be tight and jobs may be lost, etc., my first thought was "what a great time to go on a diet." Cut out all the fast food, dinners out, sweets, Starbucks and snacks. Rediscover the public library for free movies and great reading. While trimming your household budget during tough economic times may seem unpleasant, you will quickly learn the difference between what you need and what you want, and set yourself on a path to a sound financial future.

I wrote the bones of this column some twenty years ago during the first gas shortage, which was followed by a stock market "correction" in the late 1980's. Prior to that, there had been a meat shortage, stagflation in the late 1970's, and my husband, also named Steve, was unemployed for a time in the latter half of that decade. My husband, who had been a newspaper journalist during the early years of our marriage, submitted several photos of me to accompany the article and the editor selected the most unflattering photo! I trust my son will do a better job. ☞

Affordable rental housing

■ Stephen Rechner, Law School

For the past several years I have used space in the Winter issues of *Momentum* to inform/remind UCATS members of the benefits offered to home buyers by our national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). If this is the year you intend to purchase a home you may want to hold off just a little longer because the next fiscal stimulus package being planned by the U.S. Congress may include 4.5% mortgage rates for first-time home buyers for a limited period of time. In the meantime, I decided to do some research on affordable rental housing in the New York metro area.

Although renting hardly has the allure of ownership, there are advantages. For most people, a first home away from parents/roommates is going to be a rental because renting requires significantly less money up front. Renting also has the advantage of letting you



experience a neighborhood before making the commitment of ownership. If you don't like the building, the neighborhood, the landlord, or the neighbors you can always move at the end of the lease term for any reason. Renting your first home will also give you a sense of how much space you need and are willing to pay for. Renting also makes more sense if you are likely to move in a few years to be

nearer family or to accommodate a career change either for yourself or a spouse/partner,

What follows is information about several large rental complexes within commuting distance of New York University. Although there are many more rentals available in the five boroughs from smaller landlords and individual homeowners, these complexes regularly advertise vacancies and offer rents that are affordable on a UCATS salary. All prices quoted were accurate when this issue of *Momentum* went to the publisher.

BROOKLYN

Flatbush Gardens

1403 New York Ave.

Brooklyn, NY 11210

718-564-1260

<http://www.flatbushgardens.net/>

Directions: 2 or 5 train the Newkirk Ave. Station

Studios-\$875, One-Bedrooms-\$1025,

Two-Bedrooms-\$1200

QUEENS

Lefrak City

59-17 Junction Blvd.

Corona, Queens 11368

718-271-7600

<http://www.lefrakcity.com/>

Directions: G, R, V trains to Woodhaven Blvd. Station

Studios-\$800-\$1000, One-Bedrooms-\$1000-1400,

Two-Bedrooms-\$1400-1500

QUEENS

Wavecrest Gardens

20-10 Seagirt Blvd.

Far Rockaway, NY 11691

718-471-7800

<http://rentwavecrest.com/>

Directions: A train to Far Rockaway

Studios-\$775, One-Bedrooms-\$950,

Two-Bedrooms-\$1225

BRONX

Parkchester

Parkchester Preservation Management Company

Open House Days/Time: Tuesday and Thursday 5:00

p.m. to 7:45 p.m.; Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Address: 1480 Parkchester Road, Bronx, NY 10462

<http://www.parkchesternyc.com/>

Directions: 6 train to 177th St. Bronx,

Parkchester Station

One-Bedrooms-\$925-\$1300,

Two-Bedrooms-\$1300-\$1600

UCATS members party in Rosenthal

Neither rain nor snow, nor early university closing could keep over 400 UCATS members from our 29th annual holiday party on Friday, December 19. The party was held in the lovely Rosenthal Pavilion overlooking a snowy Washington Square Park. DJ Raphael Gordon once again manned the turntable.

Four baskets valued at over \$100 each were raffled off to benefit the New York State United Teachers Disaster Relief Fund (NYSUT-DRF). All four baskets were generously donated by UCATS members and supporters.

Although attendance was down by 30%, members raised \$365 for NYSUT-DRF, \$15 over last years' total, once again demonstrating that School Related Professionals are one of the most generous constituency groups in the NYSUT organization.

Established in response to Hurricane Katrina, the NYSUT-DRF provides direct cash assistance to union members affected by natural disasters in New York state and around the country in partnership with the disaster relief fund of our national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers. Since Katrina, NYSUT-DRF has helped union members whose homes were flooded in south-central New York State (spring 2006), victims of the California wildfires (summer 2007), and most recently it has helped our union brothers and sisters affected by the summer hurricanes that destroyed Galveston and parts of Houston.

The UCATS Executive Council thanks all who purchased raffle tickets for their generosity, and wishes all of our members the happiest of holidays, and a new year filled with peace, joy and abundance.

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