



The  
New  
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City

# Manager

[www.nycmea.org](http://www.nycmea.org)

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

# 2014 "Historic" Year for MEA

*By Bendix Anderson*



*MEA President Stu Eber presented the annual president's report to the June 2 meeting.*

**S**trong, united membership has helped the New York City Managerial Employees Association (MEA) accomplish a lot in the last year, from compensation to benefits.

"The past twelve months have been historic for the MEA," said President Stu Eber in his report to the June 11 General Membership Meeting.

New York City managers are still celebrating the raises they received earlier this spring after years of deferred salary negotiations. All managers received the same raises as their subordinates, many before the collective bargaining unit members received theirs. The raises were across the board. And managers received a \$1,000 bonus.

MEA continues to work with Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration to

authorize a revised Pay Plan for Managerial Employees (PPME) that addresses salary compression. All minimum Level I salaries should be set at least 10 percent above the immediate lower title's minimum.

MEA is also working with the City to improve benefits, such as the dental benefits provided by Healthplex. Members can access new supplemental benefits through MEA's Voluntary Insurance Program, in addition to pension counseling, legal assistance, financial planning seminars and the NYC MEA Career Development Program.

The elections for MEA President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and the two Director-at-Large positions will be held this fall. The new team will take office January 1, 2016.

### **STRONG MEMBERSHIP MAKES IT POSSIBLE**

A record-breaking 550 new members joined MEA in calendar year 2014. That's the most new members MEA has ever enrolled in a single year, up from 343 in 2013 and breaking the old record of 530 new members enrolled in 2010. The organization now has 3,000 members, another all-time record, despite losing hundreds of members in recent years to unionization.

MEA plans to continue to increase its membership by 15 percent a year. To accomplish that, MEA officials have made more than 450 visits to members and prospective members in their workplaces since January 2010.

"Each of us needs to reach out to managers who are not members," says Eber. "There is strength in numbers."

### **MEA'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

- Increase active membership by 15% annually.
- Develop and obtain improved employee benefits and compensation.
- Improve finances by exploring innovative funding resources.
- Improve, develop and implement new MEA members-only benefits.
- Improve agency operations for managers.
- Improve and develop better communications and publicity techniques.

# Bits & Pieces



*By Linda A. Barnes, NYC MEA Executive Director*

## **3,000 Strong and Moving Forward**

The New York City Managerial Employees Association is now 3,100 strong. We blew past the 3,000 barrier in April and continue to grow at a faster rate than ever before.

Everyone is capable of recruiting at least one new member a year. Talk to your fellow managers and tell them what the MEA has done for you and other managers. It was the advocacy of the MEA that brought home the same raises as DC 37 before other unions' members received their raises. We are continuing our advocacy on other fronts, including promotional opportunities and diversity.

### **CIVIL SERVICE EXAMS**

The de Blasio administration is working to comply with the Long Beach law suit requiring civil service exams for all competitive titles. I am so pleased to have provided test prep for the Administrative Manager and Administrative Staff Analyst Promotion and Open Competitive exams to over 300 MEA members (yes, over 300!).

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services informed us at a recent meeting with MEA President Stu Eber, MEA Counsel Stuart Salles and me that there are other managerial exams being scheduled, including Administrative Director of Parks and Recreation and Administrative Director of Social Services (which Child Protective Services Managers will be eligible to take).

As requested by MEA, DCAS will first present the civil service exams for the underlying engineering titles before giving the Administrative Engineer exam. As requested by MEA, Computer Systems Manager will be a competitive title, a change from the previous administration's plan to convert it a non-competitive title. The projected exam date is 2017. Administrative Accountant, Administrative Architect and Construction Project Manager are not scheduled for 2015.

DCAS told us that equality and inclusion is at the forefront of how they apply the civil service system. DCAS is working to provide agencies with the critical resources needed for planning future hires. They are also updating and implementing plans to ensure that the highest level of EEO standards are

maintained during the selection of candidates from employment pools. The process also includes ensuring that selections are equitable, current employees feel valued, and appropriate development is provided.

MEA is dedicated to equal pay for equal work. We have been asking every agency we meet with to review their payrolls and tables of organization to determine if there are managers earning less than their subordinates or less than their colleagues with similar titles and years of experience. If there are such discrepancies, we ask the agencies to take remedial action. Some agencies have done so. We are optimistic that many more will perform the reviews over the next 30 months.

The Comptroller's Office and the Department of Education, which are not Mayoral agencies, are also implementing aggressive diversity programs. We continue to meet with their leadership and monitor their progress.

### **IRIS RODRIGUEZ-ROSA**

Parks and Recreation Department Chapter Director Laurence Major recently shared with us fantastic news about the Assistant Chapter Director, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa. Here's the text of the statement from Parks and Recreation Department Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver: "I am pleased to announce the appointment of Iris Rodriguez-Rosa to Bronx Parks Commissioner. Iris has nearly 30 years of experience working for NYC Parks and has served in a number of capacities in various divisions citywide."

"She has most recently served as Queens Chief of Recreation since 2006 and through this role has advocated for recreational funding on both the local and state levels, oversaw the opening of the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Aquatic Center and the Al Oerter Recreation Center, and secured funding for musical performances through a partnership with Queens College. Prior to coming to Queens she had served as the Bronx Chief of Recreation since 1994 and was instrumental in converting all Bronx recreation centers to multi-purpose facilities, increasing the recreational opportunities in the neighborhoods they serve. She also oversaw the renovation and expansion of the St. James Recreation Center which was upgraded to be a full service membership center."

"Iris is a leader in organizing communities and getting residents involved in their parks. She helped to establish "friends of" groups in the Highbridge and East Harlem neighborhoods and was also one of the founding members of NYC Parks' Latino Society. She resides in Ozone Park in Queens with her best friend and husband Manuel and has four children, daughters Sylvia, Jasmine, step-daughter Rosa and Jason, and grandchildren Noel, Sophia, Annabel, and Justin – with another one on the way! Family means everything to Iris and she is very proud of her Puerto Rican heritage."

We congratulate Ms. Rodriguez-Rosa for rising through the ranks. She exemplifies why MEA advocates for adherence to the civil service system as the best way to ensure diversity in the managerial work force.

# Member Profiles: MEA at Work



**DENISE WILLIAMS**

Denise Williams remembers New York in 1988 – the noise, the crowds and the people living in the street. That was early in her career when she was working with the homeless as a social worker. She'd find them everywhere, it seemed. Grand Central Station, the Staten Island Ferry and Penn Station were common quarters for the residence-challenged. Tents were lined up along broad stretches of the FDR.

"You had a lot of shanty villages," said the Program Administrator at the Department of Homeless Services, "You don't see as many street homeless anymore."

An MEA member since 2004, Denise works with directors and managers like herself whose key roles include counseling and tracking the people who move out of the shelter system, so that they can sustain an independent life.

MEA helps her communicate with other New York City managers and find solutions to the problems she faces on the job. "MEA makes me realize it's not just me – there are certain issues across the board that everyone is having. And being able to reach out and talk to other people makes a difference."

Better communication is also helping city agencies bring families into self-sufficiency and connect individuals and families with the help that they need.

"The assessment tools we're using now are more defined," said Ms. Williams. Now ACS and DHS regularly interview at-risk families to ensure they receive the right services. Families that need preventative services and children who might need special services are more likely to get them.

– Vanessa de Santis



**RAMON GARCIA**

MEA member Ramon F. Garcia is helping to reform the way that New York City keeps public schools safe by cutting down the number of arrests, police summonses, suspensions and metal handcuffs.

"It's an opportunity to diminish the number of students who can be criminalized," says Garcia, Assistant Commissioner for the School Safety Division for the New York Police Dept.

Mr. Garcia is part of the School Climate Leadership Team, created by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio in February.

Parents demanded the police department change its approach to rely more on conflict mediation and avoid criminalizing students when possible. .

"There was a major outcry from the community," says Mr. Garcia.

Instead of entering the criminal justice system, young people who commit minor offenses are now referred to relevant social services agencies. "We've created a warning card that would be used in lieu of a criminal summons," says Mr. Garcia.

The number of crimes reported in New York City schools has decreased 24 percent over the last two years, while suspensions, arrests, and summonses in schools also declined.

"I started at the bottom as a school safety officer," says Mr. Garcia, who has been a police officer for 31 years – though he could have retired after 25. "I was getting ready to retire," he says. The opportunity to participate in these reforms drew him back. "It's the opportunity of a lifetime," says Mr. Garcia. By the end of the year, this team will report back to the Mayor on the progress of reform.

– Bendix Anderson



**CHARLES A. GILI, SR.**

Charles A. Gili, Sr. grew up in Brooklyn visiting the parks he now cares for as Chief of Operations of Brooklyn's City parks.

"Our family used Prospect Park and other parks all the time, so we knew the conditions that existed in the sixties and seventies. They weren't very good," said Mr. Gili.

He always liked the idea of working outside, and after getting a degree in forestry in the verdant State of Oregon, Mr. Gili returned to Brooklyn as an Urban Park Ranger. It was 1982 – a time when city parks were sorely neglected.

"The changes that came along later were many," said Mr. Gili. "I think the most important ones were leadership changes and a more comprehensive understanding of the value of healthy parks."

According to Mr. Gili, a park is more than just a pretty green space – it's a system that affects the community at large. A city's quality of life depends a lot on the conditions of its parks.

Mr. Gili enjoys being part of the MEA for the assistance it gives to city managers. He recently received the **Sloan Public Service Award** – the highest honor given to New York's civil servants.

"I don't do anything here alone," Mr. Gili responded when asked about the prestigious recognition, "It has always been and continues to be a real team effort."

– Vanessa de Santis



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## TREASURER'S REPORT:

# Lewis Reports Surpluses for 2013-2014

"I am proud to present the independent auditor's review of the MEA's financial statements for 2013 and 2014," reported MEA Treasurer Warren Lewis at the June 11 General Membership Meeting. "It will not be necessary to increase our members' dues for the foreseeable future." The annual financial audit of the 46 year old NYC MEA conducted last month by Gould, Kobrick & Schlapp, and P.C. showed a \$35,723 surplus in 2014 and a \$36,606 surplus in 2013.

"We have increased our surpluses by over \$143,000 since our election in 2009, an average of about \$28,700 a year," said Treasurer Lewis. "The current elected officers are committed to maintaining a fiscally responsible organization. Our outreach efforts have increased our membership and therefore our income."

In the mid 1990's the large public

accounting firms suggested that nonprofits have three to six months of budgeted expenses as 'reserves,' said Treasurer Lewis. "Our reserves of \$200,000 represent almost four months of obligations."

"We established the NYC MEA Career Development Program, a 501 (c) (3) organization, in 2013," said Mr. Lewis. The CDP paid for \$12,750 in scholarships and paid for the annual Holiday Scholarship Party at the Copa in 2014. The CDP ended 2014 with a surplus of \$3,654. That's a two year surplus of \$10,962.

"We remain dedicated to improving members' services while reducing costs wherever possible," Mr. Lewis said. The revenues funded over \$210,000 in direct members services and paid the \$293,000 in salaries and fringe benefits for the six office staff who serve members every working day. The elected



*MEA Treasurer Warren Lewis*

officials of the MEA are unpaid. Treasurer Lewis credited the continued fiscal stability to the Finance Committee – Sam Borkow (Retiree), Fred Sachs (Retiree), Joseph Taffaro (Retiree) and Pat Toner (Retiree) – and the collective efforts of the Executive Board, the elected officers led by President Stu Eber, and the MEA office under the leadership of Executive Director Linda Barnes.