



The  
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# Manager

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

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## MEA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# ADVANCING AND ENFORCING THE RIGHTS OF CITY MANAGERS

By Vanessa DeSantis



MEA President Stuart Eber

President Stuart Eber delivered the President's Report to the June 15 General Membership meeting. He also updated the attendees on recent events.

The Managerial Employees Association continues to fight for City workers and their rights even when met with challenging push backs.

### NYC H+H

MEA is working closely with NYC H+H leadership to minimize the impact on the 396 managerial employees whose positions were eliminated effective June 2.

"Our sympathies go out to the professional managers being impacted by the massive elimination of management positions at H+H," said President Eber, "We hope each of these managers will receive individual exit interviews that will include a detailed explanation of the options available to them and all will have a liaison assigned to them for the next six months during this most difficult time."

He also cautioned that H+H's finances may become even more precarious if the Federal government decreases Medicaid and Affordable Care Act funding.

### PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

MEA Counsel Stuart Salles filed a lawsuit and an Article 78 on behalf of members on May 9, 2016 in State Supreme Court in Manhattan. The named defendants are Mayor Bill de Blasio, Comptroller Scott Stringer and Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina.

New York State Supreme Court dismissed the case late last year. Counsel is filing an appeal this month.

President Eber and Executive Director Linda Barnes met with OLR and OMB in June to discuss PPL. OMB reported that there were 11,608 managers eligible to use the benefit in 2016, with participation rate projections of 36 new users each month, 432 a year, using at most 12,960 days. The 322 employees in 2016 used at most 9,660 days. The OMB doesn't know how many days were taken during the year from managers with 15 or more years of service.

"While we applaud the initiative, we maintain serious reservations with the way it's being financed," said Mr. Eber.

The MEA thinks the policy – progressive in theory – uses a flawed funding method that discriminates against older workers. It currently mandates that managers relinquish two days of annual leave as well as forego the July 1st 0.47% pay raise.

### IMPROVING MEMBER BENEFITS

MEA officers discussed member recruitment and benefits at the meeting. The MEA ended 2016 with 471 new members. The total number of managers is now 3,259.

Joel Fishelson continues to lead the association's Organization Committee that develops, implements and monitors MEA members' only benefits. He's currently in contact with the Management Benefits Fund about member dental benefits in the interest of getting service improvements with Healthplex.

MEA membership now provides additional benefits, called the Voluntary Insurance Program, that give employed members comprehensive options and greater choice to meet their individual lifestyle and family security needs. They have been designed to enhance and complement the benefits already in place through the Management Benefits Fund.

"Members will have access to outstanding voluntary benefits all offered on a guaranteed-issue basis," said Mr. Eber, "That means no exams, no tests or even medical questions."

Members will not be turned down for coverage regardless of past or present health problems. Universal Life Insurance with Long Term Care Benefits and Lay-off Waiver, Short-term Disability Income Protection plan and Discount Dental and Vision plans are immediately available to members.

### OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS AND REMINDERS:

- MEA Elections – MEA chapter elections were completed in 2016. President Stu Eber is resigning no later than December 31, 2017. The Executive Vice President will then become President in accordance with the bylaws. Both chapter elections and MEA officer elections will be held in 2018.
- Toastmasters International – T.I.P. Club, the name of the MEA-sponsored chapter of the Toastmasters International Organization, is approaching its sixth anniversary. The "anni" dinner is being planned for June 22.
- Pension Counseling – All MEA members remain entitled to unlimited pension counseling. Call the MEA office at 212-964-0035 to arrange your appointments.
- The text of this report is available on our web site – [www.nycmea.org](http://www.nycmea.org)

# Bits & Pieces



## EIGHT YEARS IS NOT ENOUGH

By Linda A. Barnes, NYC MEA Executive Director

*Eight years – such a short period of time.*

*This retrospective view of my time as the Executive Director of the Managerial Employees Association (MEA) reveals that we've accomplished a lot and there's still more to do.*

### A CLOSER CONNECTION

When the MEA Board of Directors appointed me in 2009 many managers had never heard of the MEA. I was shocked. The organization had been around for more than 40 years! A change was needed immediately. We developed a work plan to increase direct connection with our members and the managerial workforce. From 2010 to 2013, President Stu Eber, Executive Vice President Shelly Shulman, Director at Large Joel Fishelson and I attended more than 400 activities. From January 2014 through December 2016 more than 200 event activities were conducted. Managerial employees appreciated meeting “real live persons” from the MEA!

The statement “We’ve never heard of you before” definitely decreased.

But communication efforts still needed improvement to increase our visibility. February 2010 through April 2013 saw at least 34, 275 letters sent to managers throughout New York City in all Mayoral agencies, the New York City Housing Authority, Health and Hospitals, Department of Education and the School Construction Authority. This process continued for Calendar Years 2014 through December 2016 and into Year 2017, with an estimated 18,634 managers reached each year.

### A RECORD IS BORN

In 2008, MEA membership increased to 1,718. At the end of December 2010, a new record had been established – a whopping 550 new enrollees! Meeting face-to-face at onsite locations was effective. There were 550 new members in 2014 and 585 in 2015.

Those numbers fall slightly short of the target of 600 new members but for us it’s a stunning achievement – it had never been accomplished at the MEA before. Today, we have more than 3,000 members standing together in unity.

### ACROSS THE BOARD RAISES IN ALL AGENCIES

During my walk down memory lane, I would be ignoring a huge achievement if I did not mention how wonderful it felt to know that most of our members received the 10.47% salary adjustment signed off by Mayor de Blasio. President Stu Eber and I met with leaders in mayoral, as well as non-mayoral, agencies to advocate for managerial raises. Unfortunately, Paid Parental Leave has affected the remaining 0.47% salary adjustment. We’re still fighting to reverse the Mayor’s decision.

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

MEA officers unanimously agreed to create a program to enhance scholarship benefits for members and their dependents, as well as provide training opportunities. In December 2011 we established our Career Development Program (CDP). We’d never proposed a 501(c)(3) at the MEA before and it was a challenge that Treasurer Warren Lewis and I welcomed. Receiving approval upon first submission was exhilarating! This program has maintained stability for the past five years. We hope to see it only grow.

### MEMBER SERVICES

Imagine talking to more than a thousand people. That’s exactly what our officers, staff, Counsel Stuart Salles and I have done since 2012. We’ve provided member services for work related problems, benefit issues, and referrals for legal and pension counseling to 1,713 members. We didn’t successfully solve every concern but in every case we listened and provided the professional guidance required. Occasionally a member would contact us to offer a special thank you for helping to resolve a problem.

We are fortunate have a team of dedicated officers and board members who understand that our members always come first.

# TREASURER LANDAS REPORTS SURPLUSES FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2015 AND 2016

*By Vanessa DeSantis*



**MEA Treasurer Edgar Landas**

MEA's balance sheet looks stable, strong and fiscally sound – with a surplus that Edgar Landas, the association's Treasurer, ascribes to improved member outreach and a talented Finance Committee.

"Our outreach efforts have increased our membership and therefore our income,"

reported Mr. Landas at the June 15 General Membership Meeting.

An independent audit of the MEA's financial statements showed a \$93,403 surplus in 2015 and \$111,483 surplus in 2016. Gould, Kobrick & Schlapp, P.C. conducted the audit. Surpluses increased by over \$345,000 since 2009 – an average of almost \$50,000 a year, according to Treasurer Landas.

Large public accounting firms once suggested that nonprofits should have three to six months of budgeted expenses as reserves. "Our reserves of \$200,000 represent over three months of obligations," said Mr. Landas.

With extra financial room, NYC MEA has been able to create the Career Development Program, a 501 (c) (3) organization started back in 2013. The CDP awarded \$18,255 in scholarships and tuition reimbursements and paid for the annual Holiday Scholarship Party at The Copa in 2016. The CDP ended 2016 with a surplus of \$974. That's a four-year

surplus of \$20,272. The Heroes Dinner is another program the MEA is currently investing in along with other educational opportunities for its members.

"We remain dedicated to improving services while reducing costs wherever possible."

The revenues funded over \$230,000 in direct members' services and paid approximately \$300,000 in salaries and fringe benefits for the Executive Director and five office staff who serve members every working day. The elected officials of the MEA are unpaid.

Treasurer Landas credited the continued fiscal stability to the 2016 Finance Committee – Sam Borkow (Retiree), Warren Lewis (Retiree), Fred Sachs (Retiree), and Pat Toner (Retiree) – as well as 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.

## NOT JUST ANYONE CAN SERVE NYC...

### MEA Profiles DOP's Kate Spaulding

*By Vanessa DeSantis*

Kate Spaulding loves helping people who need help.

As the Director of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs for the NYC Department of Probation (DOP) she makes sure individuals get out and stay out of the criminal justice system.

"That part of the work is incredibly rewarding," she said.

She's also DOP's political person, liaising with electeds at the city, state, and federal level as well as developing and tracking the agency's legislative agenda.

A common confusion with her department is the difference between Probation and Parole. Probation is a separate sentence where a person convicted of a crime is not considered a public safety risk. Unlike parole, those on probation haven't been incarcerated. "We're the last stop before people go to jail."

Things have changed a lot in the last ten years. Probation no longer involves traveling an hour from where you live. DOP now brings its services to the

neighborhoods that need it and there's more community engagement overall.

"We're always trying to wraparound as many interagency services as possible to where clients are reporting," said Ms. Spaulding.

Recently, Kate was selected for the 2016-2017 DCAS Leadership Institute, a program focused on creating strategic changes in large organizations. She gave the commencement speech at the Institute last month. Here's an excerpt:

"We're all familiar with the stereotypes and false narratives spun about government and government workers. And once in awhile, they may be true. But while Silicon Valley and Wall Street boast that they have a monopoly on the "talent economy" the REAL talent is right here in this room. Because we serve New York City: the biggest, most diverse, and complicated metropolis in America. Anyone can make money for a company; that is easy. But not just anyone can serve the City of New York."

Kate's homage to city workers relates well to the Managerial Employees Association.



**Kate Spaulding, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the NYCDOP and proud MEA Member.**

Asked what the MEA offers, Kate likes the idea of networking in a safe space to share and discuss the issues all city leaders face. "You're getting to know people in a related field of work and once you have that connection you can call them and troubleshoot problems... that trust is there."



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## **MEA MEMBERS GO BACK TO SCHOOL**

### **Generous Tuition Reimbursement For Certificate Programs**

*By Bendix Anderson*

Top managers are always polishing their skills – and MEA is there to help with a generous tuition reimbursement program for coursework at the Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Professional Studies.

“We are giving you the means of expanding your thought process,” says Cherise Mullings, an enrollment specialist for urban studies at the Murphy Institute. She spoke at the MEA General Member Meeting June 15.

MEA has partnered with CUNY to offer members a tuition reimbursement for seven of the certificate and advanced certificate programs offered at the Institute, including:

- Public Administration and Policy
- Health Care Policy and Administration
- Management
- Project Management
- Construction Project Management

MEA members have a chance to educate themselves, at a deep discount. MEA will reimburse half of the tuition costs for up to two classes per semester. Since most students at the Institute attend part time, these reimbursements could easily cover half of the total tuition costs for members.

Tuition for part-time students who live in New York is \$425 per academic credit for graduate students and \$275 per credit for undergraduates. Most undergraduate courses are four academic credits. Graduate courses are three credits.

MEA also reimburses prospective students the fee for submitting an application, which is \$70 for undergraduates and \$125 for graduate student.

To earn the reimbursement, student will have to maintain at least a B+ average.

“If you have been out of school for a long time, you have to get back into the mindset of being a student,” says Mullings.

The classes are held at locations in Midtown and Queens College in Flushing,



***Cherise Mullings of CUNY***

N.Y., in the evening, to be more convenient for students who work.

Managers can start out by earning a certificate – then use those academic credits to build towards a master’s degree.

“Employers love to see that you are engaged with something outside of work,” says Mullings. “We invite you to learn with us.”