



THE MANAGER

www.nycmea.org

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MEA LISTENS TO ITS CHAPTER DIRECTORS, WHO LISTEN TO MEA MEMBERS

By Bendix Anderson

Mario Guerrero has been a member of the New York City Managerial Employees Association (MEA) Executive Board and chapter director for the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) for over five years. Previous to being chapter director, he served as assistant chapter director for several years. He has developed a strong relationship with the managers at his agency and has very clear understanding of what is important to his colleagues.

"Their main concern is pay raises," says Guerrero. "They see their staffers receive pay raises. Some staff members at this point — because of those pay raises — make more than their managers."

MEA's chapter directors provide vital input at the Executive Board meetings on issues that are most important to managers. If you have a question or an issue you feel MEA should be made aware of, the chapter director for your agency should be your first call. (Contact information for your agency chapter director can be found on the MEA website: nycmea.org/about, under Meet Our Team.)

If your agency is one of the few agencies that does not have chapter director, this may be an opportunity for you to volunteer to become a chapter director. As chapter director and member of the Executive Board, you will be able to communicate the concerns of managers at your agency directly to MEA leadership.

"I listen to the chapter directors," says MEA President Darrell Sims. He meets the chapter directors every month at meetings of the MEA Executive Board, which includes all the chapter directors. He shares Executive Board and member concerns at meetings with the City Administration and at hearings conducted by the New York City Council.

"I try to express their concerns when I meet with the City Council, the Office of Labor Relations or other public officials," says Sims. The MEA does not have the ability to collectively bargain, like a union does. However, the Administration depends on managers all the same. "We're the ones that carry out the Mayor's mandates," says Sims.



Mario Guerrero

PAY RAISES

MEA has made it clear to the Administration that the issue of pay raises for managers will not go away.

"They're losing staff," says Guerrero. "You have current managers that are taking exams trying to get into titles that are union-based. You have attrition — folks that are retiring. You have those that can become managers but don't want to."

Managers had their last pay raise in October of 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic.

"We've been patiently waiting and waiting," says Umran Malik, MEA's new Chapter Director for managers at the Department of Education (DOE). DOE is not a Mayoral agency. After the managers in the Mayoral agencies receive their raises, DOE and the other non-Mayoral agencies, including the Comptroller's Office, Health and Hospitals, New York City Housing Authority, and School Construction Authority, will make separate determinations about raises.

"I think a lot of people are passionate" says Malik.

"While it is important to have a work life balance, managers deserve a raise for they have been doing more with less for over four years. This would truly raise our morale because managers are overtime-exempt and often work beyond their prescribed work week to ensure the work still gets done."

More managers work from home, sometimes.

The vast majority of City managers would also like to be able to work from home at least part of the time, according to chapter directors like Malik.

More managers will now be able to perform at least some of their work from home, according to an October announcement by City officials.

City managers and other non-unionized employees are now included in a pilot program that had let workers represented by District Council 37 work remotely up to two days a week, according to City Hall.

"Mayor Adams made a 180-degree turn on telework based on the return to office mandate imposed on the municipal workforce in 2022," says Sims.



Umran Malik

President Sims joined MEA Executive Director Alice Wong to testify before the City Council in September at a hearing on telework. They shared concerns and experiences expressed to them by the Executive Board, along with data regarding work from home included in the MEA's July 2022 survey of managers.

"We also mentioned the lack of timely well-deserved pay raises as part of the reason morale has been low," says Sims.

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RAIN

I would like to wish everyone a happy autumn as rainbow-colored leaves brighten our days.

On September 7, 2023, the MEA sent a letter to Commissioner Renee Campion of the NYC Office of Labor Relations (OLR) inquiring about the status of pay raises and flexible work options for managers. MEA received a response to our letter from OLR on October 23, 2023. It stated that Mayor Adams will announce a remote work option program for managers and non-unionized employees that day. The remote work option shall be approved by a Flexible Work Committee based on job performance and specific duties. Then, it will be at the discretion of agency commissioners to permit employees to work remotely.

Approved employees will have the option of working remotely up to two days per week. Working remotely is a very relevant and viable option for employees during emergencies and as a means of improving work-life balance. It is an incentive to retain existing employees and to enhance competitive recruitment of new employees from the private sector. The program is scheduled to be implemented on December 1, 2023.

The MEA continues its un-wavering advocacy in pursuit of well-deserved manager pay raises. Based on information posted on the Administration's website, collective bargaining agreements representing approximately 88 percent of the City's workforce have been completed. Collective bargaining discussions are progressing with unions representing the re-remaining unionized workforce. It is anticipated that when these collective bargaining agreements are completed, managerial raises will be approved.

Resulting from the continued influx of asylum seekers to the City causing dire economic strain on the City, on September 9, 2023, Mayor Adams announced additional budget cuts to City agencies totaling 15%. The budget cuts are scheduled for 5% in November of 2023, 5% in January of 2024, and another 5% cut in April of 2024. These budget cuts are in addition to the 3% cut for Fiscal Year 2022 and 4% cut for Fiscal Year 2023. The Mayor indicated that these proposed budgets cuts may be re-evaluated if the City receives substantial funding to support the continued influx of asylum seekers from the Federal Government and New York State.

Along with the budget cuts, the Mayor imposed a hiring freeze that went into effect on October 1, 2023. The hiring freeze will affect all agencies, except for the filling of vacant essential worker positions. Presently, there are over 20,000 vacant employment positions throughout City agencies that will most likely not be filled at any time in the foreseeable future.

Prior to Mayor Adams' announcement of a remote work option program for managers and non-unionized employees, MEA Executive Director Alice Wong and I testified at the September 26, 2023 New York City Council Hearing on "The Future of

Municipal Work". We testified in support of *Intro 481* that would provide telework options for all municipal employees at the discretion of agency commissioners. *Intro 481* is the same as *New York State Bill A.1435: "New York City Teleworking Expansion Act"* (NYS Assembly and Senate Bill A457 and Bill S5536 respectively) that MEA endorsed in February of 2022. During our testimony, we also expressed support for *Intro 567* that would limit the use of City devices to communicate with municipal employees during off-work hours.

The City is scheduled to implement health insurance cost reductions for in-service employees, pre-Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents on January 1, 2024. A Request For Information (RFI) was posted by the Office of Labor Relations and the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) on June 16, 2022 for a new Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) to provide and administer a health insurance program that would reduce City costs by 10%. GHI-CBP, which is presently the main health insurance plan, may be discontinued in exchange for a less expensive health insurance plan. There has not been an official announcement from OLR regarding the selection of an insurance provider or the specifics about insurance plan changes at this time.

Municipal retirees are lobbying NYC Council members to gain support for *Intro 1099*. *Intro 1099* would amend *Section 12-126* of the *NYC Administrative Code* to codify the provision for the City to offer Medigap insurance equivalent or better than that provided on December 31, 2021 as a supplement to original Medicare. It has been stated that some unions have threatened to withdraw campaign donations and support from Council members who endorse *Intro 1099*. It would appear that after the general elections on November 7, 2023, additional



By NYCMEA President Darrell L. Sims

Council members may support *Intro 1099* without being intimidated by those opposed to the amendment.

MEA Chapter elections are being conducted in-person unless scheduled specifically as a Zoom meeting. Please be reminded, that at least five-chapter members must RSVP prior to the meeting to satisfy the quorum requirement for a chapter election to be conducted. We encourage members to participate in chapter elections and volunteer as candidates to fill chapter officer positions — especially vacant positions. It is extremely important for all agency chapters to be represented on the Executive Board. As chapter director, you are an ambassador for your agency and MEA - sharing managerial concerns and issues, and having a vote as a member of the Executive Board. We also encourage members to invite non-MEA managers to chapter meetings in an effort to recruit new members for your chapter as well as to increase MEA's membership. Please remember, recruitment leading to membership growth is the MEA's life blood — "There is strength in numbers".

Member participation in the Organization Committee; Compensation, Benefits and Professional Development Committee; and the Events and Fundraising Committee is also highly encouraged. These committees provide the opportunity for members to become proactively involved in the MEA. Additionally, in early 2024, I will establish a Bylaws Committee to review member proposed amendments to the MEA Bylaws. It is important that the Bylaws stay current and be adopted to reflect policies, operations and activities of the MEA.

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LONGTIME MEA MEMBER RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

MEA Profiles

MICHELLE CENTENO

By Vanessa DeSantis



Michelle Centeno

Former MEA Recording Secretary Michelle Centeno received the Hispanic Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Hispanic Business Group (NHBG) last July. The award was presented at Cipriani on Wall Street at a gala event also featuring corporate leadership awards. The NHBG was founded in 1985 by a group of Hispanic entrepreneurs with the aim to assist Hispanic businesses.

Ms. Centeno joined the MEA in 2006, she was a Chapter Director for the Comptroller's Office before becoming its Recording Secretary, an office she held for many years.

She left the Comptroller's Office in 2017 when she was hired as Senior Labor Policy Advisor at NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Office of Citywide Contracts.

A LONG AND REMARKABLE CAREER PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

Michelle began her work with the City in 1999 as a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("M/WBE") Compliance Officer with the New York State Dormitory Authority, where she was assigned to ensure minority women contractors or vendors were given an even playing field to get contracts on dormitory authority projects. She monitored several areas in the New York area and uncovered corruption where contractors had falsified documents to make it look like they were M/WBE compliant.

She worked at the Dormitory Authority until she was offered a job in 2006 at the NYC Comptroller's Office Bureau of Labor Law taking her first management title there as the Director of Outreach. Her career at the Comptroller's Office involved uncovering any worker exploitation at construction sites.

There, Ms. Centeno was responsible for making contractors aware of the mandatory prevailing wage compliance for the contract award. (A contractor who wins a contract bid must pay a worker a wage rate dependent upon the trade classification involved, under New York State labor law. Any person employed under a public work contract — even undocumented — is entitled to the prevailing wage rate set for where the work is performed if they are performing work on a public work site.)

One of Michelle's very first prevailing wage enforcement cases involved contractors hired to install Verizon Fios in residential areas in Staten Island. She received a call from a union member who'd learned that the contractors Verizon had hired to install Fios were not paying their workers, who were undocumented, prevailing wage.

"The workers were feeding the fiber optics through these houses, and had no idea about prevailing wage," she said. "The contractors had brought them up from down south and put them up in New Jersey."

A settlement was reached in 2007 for a little over \$500,000 and not all of the workers received the money. Centeno recalls using LEXIS/NEXUS back then to try to track down the workers owed payment.

"We tried to find creative ways to reach the workers — who'd return to their country for whatever reason," she said. "We would find out where they were and send them money since the Labor Law allowed us to release the money no matter where they were in the world." At one point Ms. Centeno's team sent the owed payment all the way to Portugal.

"Anywhere they were in the world we were able to get them their money."

As for the contractors, they had to pay the money and the penalties, and the penalties would go to the City.

Much effort went into ensuring workers received their fair share of pay; getting them to talk was often tricky, according to Ms. Centeno. In the case of undocumented workers, who often feel vulnerable in these arrangements, it can months or even years to get the money back to them.

"They are lied to by the contractors," said Centeno. "One time we were doing a sweep; this had to do with Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) contracts, and it was in Harlem. When we approached one particular building the contractor found out and immediately told the workers ICE was arriving and to go run and hide."

To get around these kinds of issues Centeno and her team would find ways to meet the workers away from the job site. She'd often invite them to talk to her at her office on the weekends or sometimes she'd even go out to where the workers were staying.

"That's how we were able to get their complaints filed."

In 2017 Michelle — already known in many different city agencies for her success stories with prevailing wage — was approached by a colleague at DCAS and asked if she'd work on wage enforcement there.

Prevailing wage wasn't being adhered to at DCAS at that time, according to Centeno — not too many people really understood it. During the de Blasio administration the person who had created her title at DCAS felt it was necessary, along with the approval of the Commissioner, to educate staff about prevailing wage. Her former work at the Comptroller's office came in handy since the same office would conduct the contractor audits at DCAS.

"The key here is where is the funding coming from?" said Centeno. "If the workers' contract is funded by DCAS it's public funding and they are owed prevailing wage."

MAKING CITY PARKS AND RECREATION BETTER FOR ALL

MEA Profiles Member

LEROY TEMPLE

By Vanessa DeSantis



LeRoy Temple

LeRoy Temple, Assistant Commissioner for Citywide Services at NYC Parks Department, practically grew up in Flushing Meadows Corona Park: his house in College Point, Queens was just down the block, and his bedroom had a view of Shea Stadium. If he peered carefully enough, he could watch the Mets play. Every summer was spent in the park: he and his siblings and his aunt would arrive early to nab a spot by the boathouse — a popular picnicking area. There, they'd spend the day relaxing, swimming in the pool, (then called the Aquacade) and enjoying sandwiches with mac salad, until the sun began to set.

Mr. Temple would go on to experience a career spanning four decades in New York City Department of Parks and Recreation — beginning as a young man working as a parks service worker and going on to a range of work in different boroughs before assuming a management title in 2000.

He joined DPR's Citywide Services in 2014 as Chief of Operations and was recently promoted to his new position as Assistant Commissioner there.

In his current role, LeRoy works with several different divisions, including a building optimization team that

oversees all the work with DCAS managing upgrades to save energy and improve the facility's functioning. They also have the agency's largest citywide storehouse that receives the majority of the materials and equipment that are needed for the agency and a synthetic turf team that does repairs as well as new installations for all the synthetic turf.

"We recently rehabbed a basketball court and gave it a brand-new sports coating and a kid in the area gave me a smile like he'd won the Lotto! It's just an amazing feeling to see how happy they are."

LeRoy and his team have a motto that little things as well as large things are always being heard, which relates to another thing Mr. Temple enjoys about his work: that it brings a high standard to all New Yorkers.

While he was in charge of managing Rockaway Beach, the largest urban beach in the U.S. with two disparate demo-graphics, LeRoy found that one side of the beach was upper middle class, while the other was predominantly low income and could use the assistance.

"I don't look at the job and say I have to do more for so and so because they make more," he said. "Our goal is making sure all New Yorkers receive the same kind of services."

ON BEING A MANAGER AND PART OF A TEAM:

One benefit to having a career that began with keeping City parks and pools clean before working up to a management title, is that LeRoy's teams can always trust he's familiar with what they do.

"When asking someone to jackhammer a pool deck, well, I was a jackhammer operator many years ago. I've done all of this work," he said, adding that, "If you can get the people to understand what your

goal is — it's not going to really hamper what you're trying to do."

UPCOMING PROJECTS

LeRoy's Design team at Citywide Services currently has plans for new pool decks and mechanical systems. Another plan is to make more use of the interiors of recreation sites — so that they are more multi-seasonal, and the public has more places to go to when it's cold outside.

Currently his department's synthetic turf crew is going out to five different locations where new turf fields were installed to make sure the work was done properly and that the facilities work for football, soccer or baseball. "We are ensuring the quality is on par with the best in the City no matter what neighborhood. We want the kids to think about having fun instead of getting into trouble."

ON MEA MEMBERSHIP:

LeRoy Temple has been an MEA member for many years and as a father of seven he is especially grateful that his children could get eyeglasses through the MEA's optical benefits plan.

"I know many people that are part of the MEA and all the good work that they do."

As a lifelong New Yorker, Mr. Temple thinks what draws people to the City is the culture. "It's synonymous with jazz, with amusement parks, with good food — overall it's the vibe."

While New York City's vibe might be full of energy and bustle, LeRoy considers himself calm and easygoing. He tries to always be positive — an attitude he adopted after becoming a Stage IV cancer survivor.

At one point he was told he might only have six weeks to live.

"I'm thankful for everyday that I have; for the people that are around me," said LeRoy. "Faith, family, and friends got me through it. I see it as a gift so I can actually do better."

THANK YOU, VETERANS

MEA offers our most sincere gratitude to all our members who are veterans of the US Armed Forces. Their bravery and dedication protect the freedoms all Americans enjoy. That they also choose to serve as members of City government is a testament to their determination to serve others. We are proud of all of their hard work and achievements and we are honored to serve as their advocates.

In honor of Veteran's Day, be sure to thank your colleagues for all they have done for both our city and country! Here is an honor roll of just some of our MEA veterans:

ARROYO, ENRIQUE (HENRY) B.

Specialist 4, United States Army
Human Resources
Administration,
Retired
Vietnam Service Medal

CALIXTE, RONALD

Sergeant, United States Army
Department of Transportation,
Retired

CHEVALIER, JOE

Specialist 6, United States Army
Department of Education

DAVIS, DENNIS M., SR.

Airman First Class,
United States Air Force
New York City Health +
Hospitals,
Retired

Member of the
Base Basketball Team

DELUS, MARIE G.

Lance Corporal,
United States Marine Corps
Office of the Mayor/
Financial Services
National Defense Service Medal

FEINBERG, LLOYD

Specialist 4, United States Army
Human Resources
Administration,
Retired

GAMBLE, PAUL M., SR.

Captain, Judge Advocate
General's Corps,
United States Navy
New York Police Department
Staff Judge Advocate, Navy
Region Mid-Atlantic Reserve
Component Command; Defense
Meritorious Service Medal,

Meritorious Service Medal (3
awards); Army Commendation
Medal; Navy/Marine Corps
Achievement Medal.

GROSSO, JOHN E.

First Lieutenant,
United States Air Force
Department of Transportation,
Retired

HARRIS, ATHENA

Senior Airman,
United States Air National Guard/
United States Air Force
Department of Buildings
Letter of Commendation, Sept 11
2001 to Dec 31 2002; Marksman
Metal 9/99; selected for first Air
National Guard advertisement
campaign 6/00.

HYSYK, EDWARD W.

Major, United States Army
Human Resources Administration,
Retired
Army Commendation Medal

LOPEZ, EDGAR

Master Sergeant,
United States Air Force and
New York Air National Guard
Department of Environmental
Protection
Air Force Commendation Medal;
Air Force Achievement Medal; Air
Force Meritorious Service Medal

LOPEZ, CESAR

Petty Officer Second Class,
United States Navy
Department of Citywide
Administrative Services, Retired

LOUGHRAN, JASON

Petty Officer 3rd Class,
United States Navy
Department of
Veterans' Services

MORRISON, TYRONE J.

Lieutenant Colonel,
United States Air Force
Office of the Comptroller
Air Force Meritorious Service
Medal; Air Force Commendation
Medal; Air Force Achievement;
Air Force Outstanding Unit
Award; Coast Guard Unit
Commendation; Air Force Good
Conduct Medal; Air Reserve
Forces Meritorious Service
Medal; National Defense Service
Medal; Armed Forces
Expeditionary Medal; Military
Outstanding Volunteer Service
Medal; Air Force Longevity
Service; Armed Forces Reserve
Medal; Small Arms Expert
Marksmanship Ribbon; and Air
Force Training Ribbon.

NEWMAN, SEAN

Lance Corporal,
United States Marine Corps
New York City Health + Hospitals
Completed 2 tours in support of
Iraqi Freedom

OHANLON, DAVE

Specialist 4, United States Army
New York City Health + Hospitals,
Retired

O'NEILL, MARTIN

Specialist 5, United States Army
Human Resources
Administration, Retired
Distinguished Service, Vietnam
Service, Combat Infantry

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CHAPTER DIRECTORS

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RETIREES SPEAK OUT ON MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Retired city managers have also shared their feelings about the City's plans to re-arrange their health care, replacing their traditional Medicare and GHI Senior Care supplemental coverage with a Medicare Advantage plan.

MEA officers joined the fight against the Medicare Advantage plan. On July 6, Justice Lyle E. Frank of the State Supreme Court issued a preliminary injunction, putting the plan on hold. MEA Retiree Chapter members attended the court hearing and helped to fill the courtroom with more than a hundred retired City employees.

The following month, by mutual agreement of the parties, the Court was notified that there would be no further argument or submissions. Accordingly, on August 11, Justice Frank issued a final order permanently enjoining the City from "requiring any City retirees, and their dependents from being removed from their current health insurance plan(s), and from being required to either enroll in an Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan or seek their own health coverage." The City is appealing that decision.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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Information regarding the establishment of a Bylaws Committee will be available in our bi-weekly E-Bulletins.

In September, a members survey was conducted on behalf of the Events and Fundraising Committee regarding whether or not to schedule the 2023 Annual MEA CDP Joel Fishelson Scholarship Holiday Event. Based on the survey, members indicated that the MEA CDP Joel Fishelson Holiday Event should be canceled for this year. Accordingly, the holiday event has been canceled again for this year. We are hoping that for next December circumstances will be improved such that we can have the much-anticipated holiday event.

The MEA Executive Board acknowledges and appreciates the hard work of our members and continues representing NYC managers to the best of our abilities. We wish everyone a Safe, Healthy, Peaceful, and Happy Holiday Season!

2023

THANK YOU, VETERANS

PIERRE, RACHELLE

Specialist 5, United States Army
National Guard
Administration for
Children's Services

PIROZZI, ARTHUR JR.

Sergeant, United States Army
Department of Parks and
Recreation, Retired
National Defense and
Good Conduct

POWERS, RAYMOND W.

Specialist 5, United States Army
Department of Housing
Preservation and Development,
Retired
Honorable Discharge

PRICE, DEXTER

Petty Officer Second Class,
United States Navy
Human Resources Administration

RIMASSA, JOHN

Sergeant, United States Army
Department of Education, Retired

RIVERA, CHARLES

Staff Sergeant,
United States Air Force
Department of Veterans' Services
Air Force Commendation Medal;
Air Force Achievement Medal;
Afghanistan Campaign Medal
with 1 service star;
GWOT Expeditionary Medal;
GWOT Service Medal

SALLES, STUART

Aviation Machinist Mate Second,
United States Naval Air Force
MEA Legal Counsel

SANTAMARIA, JOSEPH M.

Sergeant, United States Army
Department of
Environmental Protection

SCHADY, MICHAEL J.

Sergeant, United States Army
Human Resources
Administration; Department of
Homeless Services;
Administration for Children's
Services,
Retired
Joint Chiefs Commendation;
Army Commendation Award

SCHATT, LAWRENCE E.

Specialist 4, United States Army
Human Resources Administration,
Housing Preservation and
Development, Department of
Environmental Protection, Retired

SHAW, ROBERT G.

Sergeant,
United States Marine Corp
Department of Correction,
Retired
National Defense Service Medal; 2
Unit Citations; Good Conduct
Medal; Expert Rifle and
Sharpshooter Pistol

SHEA, JOHN T.

Lieutenant,
United States Naval Reserve
Department of Education
Graduate of the United States
Merchant Marine Academy;
Served during Operations
Desert Shield/Desert Storm

SWEENEY, THOMAS

Specialist 5, United States Army
New York Police Department,
Retired
Vietnam Service, Good Conduct

TORRES, JORGE A.

Technical Sergeant,
United States Air Force
Office of Technology and
Innovation

WAIKSNIS, WILLIAM

Specialist 5, United States Army
Human Resources Administration,
Retired

WARNEKE, JEREMY HUSSEIN

Specialist, United States Army
Bronx Community Board 11
Army Commendation Medal

WARSHOFSKY, JAY W.

Specialist 5,
New York Army National Guard
Human Resources Administration,
Retired

WATTS, CHARLES S.

Sergeant, United States Air Force
Office of Technology and
Innovation
Air Force Combat Readiness Medal