

THE FONTANAN

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HAPPY SUMMER



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President's Message

By Connie Verhulst

As I started to write this article, I considered recapping all we have been through during this school year. Then I remembered when the movie *Miracle* came out in 2004— a movie about the 1980 USA Olympic team winning the gold medal – I asked a friend if she was going to go see it. Her response was, “Why would I go see it? I lived it. I watched them win the gold in 1980.”

I do not need to recap. We all lived this past school year. Each of us has a different perception of all that occurred, but we all lived it. We all have stories we could share about our experiences during this past school year – looking back, some stories will make us laugh, some will make us happy, and some might make us cringe.

Even though we all may have a different perspective on this past year, I believe we can all agree on one thing – it was not ideal, and it was far from easy. I have heard many people refer to teaching during the pan-

demic as “building the plane while flying it.” Then I have heard the added - “and the plane is on fire” and “using Common Core math calculations.”

Every time I heard the statement about building the plane, I thought “who in their right mind would build a plane while flying it?” and “if it is on fire, then put it out.” And yet, this year certainly felt like we were figuring it out as we went. It may not have been on fire, but it was certainly off-center. There were moments I was convinced I had entered “The Twilight Zone” and I expected Rod Serling to step out from behind Dr. Fauci and say, “You’re traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind; a journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That’s

a signpost up ahead – your next stop, the Twilight Zone.”

This has felt surreal much of the time; something I never could have imagined experiencing. This year has likely changed each of us in some way, either personally, professionally, or both.

But here we are, at the end of the school year and you survived. Probably a bit tattered, bedraggled and indescribably tired, but you survived. I am positive that you made a difference in the lives of your students because you reached them.

As we go into summer, I implore you to go enjoy whatever makes you happy and relaxed. Take time to really take care of yourself, to rest and recharge. It is deserved every year, but this year? More than ever.





Retirees

The time has finally come
To go enjoy and then some
No more alarms, no having to get up
Sit and enjoy coffee in a warm cup
Students...you may miss a few
But no more report cards due
Staff meetings are a thing of the past
No more lesson plans or grading, at last
Teaching during COVID-19
Not ideal, know what I mean?
Distance teaching through TEAMS
Very stressful, makes you want to scream
But you survived, now time to rest
For the next years will be your best
Thank you for your time
I will now end this rhyme
Thank you and enjoy your retirement.

The WHO Awards

Each year, the Association gives the WHO (We Honor Ours) awards to FTA members, who have given exemplary or outstanding service to FTA in the effort to support public school and public education. This year recipients were Jill Schuster, Margaret (Meg) Vollmer, and Rosann Gray. Below are descriptions of some of their contributions to the association. Thank you and congratulations.

Jill Schuster

Jill has stepped up and made sure members at her site are well informed of all that is happening with the association. Jill is the Elections and Rules chair. She has ensured all information is available to members concerning elections. She has prepared ballots, distributed voting materials, counted ballots, and shared results. This past year, when it became apparent due to COVID-19, that we would not be able to hold an election through paper ballots, Jill researched companies offering electronic voting. She prepared a presentation of pros and cons of each company. She worked tirelessly to ensure all members updated their personal emails, guaranteeing everyone would have the opportunity to vote. Jill provided a seamless transition from paper ballots to electronic voting.

Margaret Vollmer

As a 4/5 enrichment teacher, she saw a need to make sure those science and music enrichment teachers had a place to voice their concerns and receive answers to multitudes of questions. When the district added K-3 enrichment teachers 2 years ago, Meg took them under her wing and made sure they knew she was available to answer questions and help solve any concerns. Meg is all about problem solving with the district. Since each program, science, music, and K-3, each have different and multiple supervisors, Meg sometimes must call multiple people before she receives an answer that satisfies her. Meg also volunteers on a variety of other com-

mittees, including Community outreach and Human Rights. She is always willing to help whenever and wherever needed.

Rosann Gray

As the rep at her site, Rosann reaches out to new teachers, walking them through all the things a new teacher might need. She is there to support them anyway she is able. Not only is Rosann busy representing the teachers at her site, but she is also the community outreach chair. Through a variety of outreach such as fulfilling wishes at a nursing home and creating cards for veterans, Rosann has helped the association build a relationship with the community. Each year Rosann helps coordinate the collection of Christmas stockings which are filled with toys and given away at the annual Fontana Santas event. Approximately 700 stockings are collected and filled. This event is always a community pleaser, as the children are overjoyed as they pick their stockings. Rosann continues to ensure this event is successful.



8 WAYS TEACHERS CAN RECHARGE OVER THE SUMMER

Summer is almost here, and you know what that means! Summer is a great time to relax and get away from the stress of teaching (during a pandemic). Here are some great ideas on how teachers can unwind and de-stress over the summer.

1. REFLECT

Reflecting on the past school year is a great way to slow down your teaching gears and smoothly transition into a relaxing summer. When reflecting, think about what went well and what you need to work on. This is also the perfect time to plan lessons and make changes to your curriculum. If you surveyed your students at the end of the school year, you will have some important feedback to use as you plan for next year.

Once you have reflected, take your mind off work so that you can relax and enjoy the rest of your summer, guilt-free!

2. SET GOALS FOR YOURSELF

Aim at trying something new like eating/cooking a new cuisine, woodcarving, or going paintballing with friends. You can even start a new hobby or try activities that you never got around to doing.

Make sure you pick a manageable number of activities to devote your time and energy to. It's impossible to do everything over the summer.

3. GET LOST IN A BOOK

Reading books keeps your mind sharp and active during the summer, and helps you mentally prepare for the upcoming school year. Summer break is the perfect time to read books for pleasure or read anything that you have always wanted to read, but never had the time to.

4. CATCH UP ON YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS

What's not to love about a classic Netflix binge? Stay in your pajamas all day and catch up on all those favorite shows that you missed out on during the school year. It's guilt-free this time.

5. TRAVEL

A change of scenery gives you the experience of being a tourist and provides a thrilling and exciting feeling that disrupts the monotony of everyday life. Separating yourself from the world of stress and work is an excellent opportunity to get to know yourself better and try new things.

If traveling is outside your budget, a staycation is also an amazing way to relax and recharge. Go to your local zoo, go bowling, visit a national park - the possibilities are endless!

6. VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is a great way to connect with the community and work with organizations to

help those in need. It is a fun and self-fulfilling experience that leaves you with the sense of feeling accomplished.

7. RECONNECT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Summer is the perfect time to catch up with friends, especially those that live far away, and hang out with family. Create lasting memories with your loved ones by visiting local attractions.

8. PREPARE FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR

As the new school year approaches, it is a good idea to prepare yourself for what is to come. Start buying those school supplies, organizing your papers, and setting schedules for an easy start to the year.

No matter what you do over the summer, it is important to come back into the school year feeling recharged and ready to start the year off right!

Have a fantastic Summer! Enjoy your well-deserved break!!

Written by Chris Torre
Induction Mentor



Teachers At Greater Risk For Voice Disorders

Adapted from: Jessica M. Tucker, MM, MS, CF-SLP Speech-Language Pathologist, Franciscan Health Lafayette East
Compiled by: Jennifer Barrett, CCC-SLP Speech-Language Pathologist, Fontana Unified School District

From preschool to postgraduate education, teachers play a crucial role for almost everyone. Vocal communication is critical to traditional teaching, and therefore teachers use their voices for longer periods of time and more loudly than most people in the workplace.

Over time, the additional strain on the vocal cords makes a difference in vocal health.

On average, teachers develop voice disorders at twice the rate of non-teachers and are three times as likely to seek medical attention for a vocal problem. About 11% of teachers report a current voice disorder, and 58% will report at least one over the course of their careers. More importantly, student learning may suffer as a result of voice disorders due to loss of classroom time, poor vocal quality and reduced volume.

Symptoms Of A Voice Disorder

Voice disorders may be anything from temporary laryngitis to vocal nodules and permanent voice changes. If you have a voice disorder, your voice may:

- Have a quivering sound
- Sound rough or harsh (hoarseness)
- Sound strained or choppy
- Be weak, whispery or breathy

Be too high or low or change in pitch

Many voice disorders can be cured with treatment when diagnosed early. If you have a voice change that lasts for a few weeks, your healthcare provider may send you to see an ear, nose, and throat specialist (ENT) or a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP).

Tips For Teachers: Caring For Your Voice

There are a few practical tips teachers can follow to reduce the risk of developing a voice disorder.

order.

- **Rest your voice.** Group exercises or student discussion to allow your vocal cords to rest during the teaching day. Avoid speaking over background noise whenever possible and plan vocal rest after strenuous vocal use. Avoid shouting.

- **Stay hydrated to lubricate the vocal cords.** Hydration is essential for vocal health, so be sure drink enough water. Decrease caffeine intake. Eliminate smoking. Run a humidifier.

- **Know the effects of medications** you're taking. Some medications, such as decongestants, antihistamines, antidepressants and diuretics, may also dehydrate your vocal cords. Try to minimize talking when sick with a cold or laryngitis.

- **Be aware of health conditions that could impact your voice.** Gastric reflux and sinus drainage can have a significant impact on vocal health. If either of these is a problem, consult with your primary care provider to find a management plan that works for you.

- **Adjust your teaching style.** Consider using visual outlines and handouts to decrease verbal repetition. Use nonverbal cues, like ringing a bell or turning lights on and off to gain attention of students. Incorporate quiet reading, student projects and questions/answers into teaching style.

Treating Voice Disorders In Teachers

Even with best efforts, voice disorders remain common across the teaching population. With these challenges in mind, treatment for teachers with voice disorders is treated in specific ways.

Amplification is usually recommended if possible. Simple devices, like microphones with a small speaker attached to the body, are relatively inexpensive and widely available. Schools may

already have a few devices available.

In addition, a skilled Speech-Language Pathologist can work on strengthening and conditioning the voice to recover from a voice disorder and condition a teacher for the heavy vocal demands of the classroom.

Together with an ENT, a Speech-Language Pathologist will work with teachers, or anyone with vocal difficulty, to form the best plan of care with an eye toward the requirements of everyday life.

Please see your Primary Care Physician if you feel that you have had a voice concern that lasts more than a few weeks for an appropriate referral.

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