



Public education at epicenter of NYSUT's mission

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Education ensures an informed life, a chance for students to grow, develop skills and prepare for and excel at careers.

It's NYSUT's mission to protect this fundamental right, especially at a time when public education and critical

public services are under financial duress and derogatory attacks.

"Part of what we do ... is to raise people up. That's what social justice is — empowering people," said NYSUT Vice President Paul Pecorale, who oversees the statewide union's social justice platform. "It's a tenet of our organization."

Raising awareness about the critical need for equitable funding for public education and public services

is one of NYSUT's foremost goals, particularly in the face of ongoing threats from the so-called education "reformers" and private corporations, like publishing giant Pearson, that want nothing more than to siphon taxpayer dollars away from public education.

"We have the expectation that there will be equitable resources for all our students, but it's just not the case," said Pecorale, a longtime

teacher in Patchogue-Medford on Long Island.

Simply put, wealthy communities can contribute more to their schools; other communities cannot, he said. "That's where we expect our government to come in."

Instead, state funding for public education from kindergarten through college has been cut dramatically, causing the elimination or reduction of vital programs and

services for students. And schools with high needs are hurt the worst.

"It comes down to equality," he said. "Inequalities are too often found in communities that are low-income and those that serve students of color."

Students have lost after-school clubs, music, band, languages, theater, business classes and library services. They have lost an array of educators and social workers.

College is now often out of reach because of rising tuition and fees. The four-year degree is now extending to five or more because chronic underfunding dwindles the course offerings students need to graduate. Many students leave college with hefty debt burdens.

"We have to speak up for equity in funding, resources and programs," Pecorale said.

NYSUT, he said, will continue to

advocate for students and educators at the state Capitol, work hard to elect candidates who support public education and inform union members and the public about the critical need to support public education.

"Fighting for every student's right to a sound, basic education isn't easy — and it isn't an option," he said. "We'll never give up the fight to keep that door open."

FOR MORE

NYSUT, through its social justice mission, publishes this annual calendar to direct educators to some standard, new or underserved causes students can learn about. It offers you a sampling. For more events and causes, visit www.nysut.org.

September

Hispanic Heritage Month — Celebrated Sept. 15 — Oct. 15. NYSUT's 2014 poster features labor and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta, who founded the National Farmworkers Association in 1962 in partnership with fellow activist Cesar Chavez. The organization was later renamed the United Farm Workers of America (UFW).

Huerta has lobbied for many California and federal laws and received numerous awards, including the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights from President Bill Clinton in 1998, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama in 2012.

To download a printable copy of the Hispanic Heritage poster and for more information on the important contributions of Hispanic Americans, visit www.nysut.org.

To order an individual copy of the free poster, email orders@nysutmail.org. Reference project 514A_14 and include your name and mailing address. A Spanish language version of the poster is also available.

Sept. 21 — World Peace Day. Cease hostility and advocate about peace. Visit www.un.org/en/events/peace/day/.



October

Domestic Violence Awareness Month — For ideas and suggestions on age-appropriate activities, visit www.ncadv.org.

Fair Trade Month — Learn how Fair Trade helps to improve lives, protect the environment and help farmers in developing countries support their communities. <http://fairtradeusa.org/>. Become a Fair Trade School at <http://fairtrade campaigns.org/campaign-type/schools/>.

Oct. 6 — Child Health Day. Teach children the benefits of good health and teach parents how to support their children with good nutrition, year-round fitness and exercise. <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/childhealthday/>.

Oct. 9 — National Depression Screening Day. Promotes social justice for those with mental health challenges. Go to www.stmentalhealthscreening.org.

November

Nov. 16 — World Food Day. Sept. 30 deadline for student poster contest at www.fao.org/world-food-day/contest/2014/en/.

Nov. 17-21 — American Education Week. This week, sponsored by the National Education Association, celebrates public education and honors individuals who make a difference to ensure every child receives a quality education.

Nov. 25 — International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women. www.un.org/en/events/endviolence/day/. The cost of intimate partner violence in the U.S. exceeds \$5.8 billion per year: \$4.1 billion in direct medical and health care services; \$1.8 billion in productivity losses. To support the cause, wear orange on the 25th of each month.

December

Dec. 3 — International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The promise of technology is the theme of this year's recognition. Visit www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=111 for more info.



Dec. 10 — International Human Rights Day. The UN created Human Rights Day in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement. Poverty, torture, discrimination and more are addressed. Go to www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/.

January

Jan. 11 — National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. More than 20 million men, women and children worldwide, including the U.S., are victims of human trafficking, which includes forced labor, debt bondage and sex trafficking. Visit www.acf.hhs.gov/news/january-11-national-human-trafficking-awareness-day.

Jan. 27 — Holocaust Remembrance Day. www.usshmm.org.

February

Feb. 12 — Red Hand Day. More than 250,000 child soldiers are pressed into service around the world. Visit www.redhandday.org.



Feb. 20 — World Social Justice. www.un.org/en/events/socialjustice/day/.

March

March — Every year the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State conducts a 40-hour fast to call attention to hunger and promote worker justice. Visit www.labor-religion.org for information on the 2015 fast.

March 21 — International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. www.un.org/en/events/racialdiscrimination/day/.

April

April 4 — International Day of Mine Awareness. Visit www.un.org/en/events/mineawareness/day/ to learn about progress to eradicate land mines.

April 22 — Earth Day. Plant trees, clean an outdoor area or plant flowers that attract butterflies. Visit www.amanac.com/content/plants-attract-butterflies.

May

May 5 — National Teachers Day. Part of Teacher Appreciation Week to honor teachers and the hard work they do.

May 25 — National Missing Children's Day. Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at www.missingkids.com/home. Pledge 25 minutes to talk to children about safety at www.take25.org/.

June

June 12 — World Day Against Child Labor. Visit the International Labour Organization at www.ilo.org.

June 15 — World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Focuses attention on the physical, emotional and financial abuse of elders.

June 20 — World Refugee Day. Visit www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/.

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www.everyonehasrights.com www.speaktruthvideo.com

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