



OKANOGAN COUNTY SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, August 2025

Website: <http://wssra-units.org/okanogancounty>

Greetings,

We have a great privilege and opportunity through OCSRA to encourage and enrich the lives of others. I am very excited for the start of a new OCSRA year! Thank you for your support and generosity through your donations, time, and effort. As we work together, we can make a difference in the lives of individuals and our community. I truly appreciate your membership and your participation. When we invest in the lives of people, the rewards will be significant, not only for a moment but for years to come.

Grateful,

John LaGrou, OCSRA President

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

August 1, 2025 Compilation: OCSRA had 338 members: 26 Cash Payers, 210 Retirees on Pension Payment, 2 Honorary Status, and 100 Actives working in Okanogan County school districts. Total WSSRA membership: 16,988

OCSRA Welcomes New Members: **Paula Schroeder**, Winthrop; **Leland Barnett**, Tonasket; Okanogan School District: **Jennifer Giles** and **Ryan Thompson**; Omak School District: **Lisa Tonseth**.

In Memorial:

Darrel G. Duncan, North Port, Florida, died Feb 4, 2025. No further information has been provided.

Marion Gadberry, Ocean Shores, died February 20, 2025, at age 84. Over his 32-year career, Marion taught foreign languages at East Wenatchee, Medford, Oregon, and for 22 years at Oroville High School.

Norman Mandak, Omak, died at age 81 on April 1, 2025. Norman taught woodshop, driver's ed., history, and special education at Okanogan School District. He also coached girls' basketball and tennis.

Mary Lou Richardson, Omak, died May 31, 2025, at age 82. In 1984, she began her career teaching home economics in Oregon and later spent over 20 years teaching in Westport, Spanaway, and Battle Ground. After retiring in 2008, she substituted in junior and senior high schools in the Okanogan Valley.

PRE-RETIREMENT NEWS:

- WSSRA will provide a Pre-Retirement 2-Part Webinar in October. An informational flyer will be sent to school districts later, or contact Tara at WSSRA: 360-413-5496.
- Check the Department of Retirement Services (DRS)'s website under "Life Events" for retirement articles and checklists: drs.wa.gov
- Remember: With 30 years of school employment, you can retire with a full pension at age 62 using the 2008 ERF (Early Retirement Factors) schedule. One caveat: health care coverage.
- Need one-to-one help? Financial Alternatives, East Wenatchee, partnered with North Central ESD to provide free retirement help: 509-663-7526

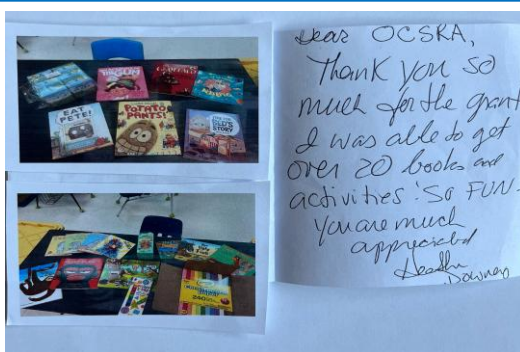
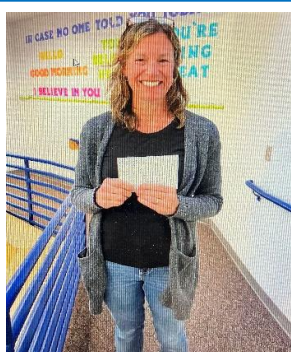
DONATIONS TO OCSRA'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND

OCSRA's Scholarship Fund received \$700 in memorials last year. The donations will help an Okanogan County high school graduate reach his/her goal of a college degree in an educational field. Since OCSRA is a 501(c)(3), all donations are tax-deductible. To donate, write a check payable to OCSRA. In the "For" section, write "Scholarship Fund in memory of or in honor of _____." If possible, include a note with the name/address of the person to be notified of your donation. Mail your check and note to: OCSRA, 185 Hennepin St, Okanogan, WA 98840.

OCSRA Awards \$6,950 in Grants, Scholarships

Okanogan County School Retirees' Association provided \$6,950 for schools and community projects in 2024-2025. Educators receiving \$300 school grants were:

Okanogan Schools: **Kathy Bryson**, flash for Yearbook cameras; **Heather Downey**, books and art supplies; **Jill Streeter**, water bottles and stickers for lesson incentives.



"Thank you" card from Heather Downey for the \$300 OCSRA Grant to purchase books and art supplies for her 6th- 12th Life Skills students at Okanogan. FYI: This is the 10th grant she has received from OCSRA.

Jill Streeter receiving the grant; Carol Payne is presenting it to her.



Omak Schools: **Tiarha Agee**, two geology experiments for each East Elementary 4th grader plus supplemental geology texts for classroom libraries; **Emily Gurnard**, art supplies for North School 2nd graders to create stories on planters in the school courtyard garden with the help of high school and PSIS art students; **LeeAnn Schrock**, two Connect Four Giant Yard Games for East Omak's covered play area; **Gavin Voelckers**, supplies for Agricultural classes.



Tiarha Agee with Penny Garrison



Emily Gurnard

Community Service Grants totaling \$2,000 were awarded to the following: "Our House" Cancer Care of NCW, Okanogan County Community Action Council's Weatherization and Food Bank Programs, Okanogan Outreach School's Bulldog Bites Food Bank, WVC at Omak-Gas Cards for Students, Meals on Wheels, and Omak Elks Lodge's Community Baby Shower Project.

Dear Okanogan County School Retirees' Association,
Thank you so much for selecting me for this wonderful scholarship! I feel honored to receive support from teachers as I enter the field of education. I am excited to finish my last year of college and return to Okanogan County to teach. It was wonderful to be able to meet part of the Committee to take a picture for the paper. Thank you again for this opportunity. Sincerely, Brooke Richey

Thank you card from OCSRA's 2025 \$2,000 **Scholarship winner, Brooke Richey**, Tonasket. Brooke is a junior at the University of Montana Western, majoring in elementary education. She plans to return to Okanogan County to teach after her graduation next May.

Scholarship donations included \$550 to the Washington State School Retirees' Foundation for high school scholarships.

OCSRA MEETINGS FOR 2025-2026:

Meeting Location: Community Presbyterian Church of Omak, 9 Birch St S, Omak (near Omak Library and downtown park)

Lunch Available: \$5 cash only

Meeting Dates: Last Tuesday of September, October, February, March, and May

- **11 AM, Tuesday, September 30, 2025:** \$5 Lunch and General Meeting
- **11 AM, Tuesday, October 28, 2025:** \$5 Lunch and General Meeting
Voting on Grant Winners.
- **11 AM, Tuesday, February 24, 2026:** \$5 Lunch and General Meeting
Voting on Grant Winners
- **11 AM, Tuesday, March 24, 2026:** \$5 Lunch and General Meeting
Election of officers
- **11 AM, Tuesday, May 26, 2026:** \$5 Lunch and General Meeting
Budget Proposal for 2026-2027

WSSRA 79th Convention: June 8 - June 10: Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound



OCSRA members at the May 27 meeting,
Community Presbyterian Church of Omak

OCSRA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES 2025-2026

OFFICERS

President: John LaGrou
Vice President: Evon LaGrou
Secretary: Marcelle LaGrou
Treasurer: Penny Garrison
Past President: Rita Figlenski

SCHOLARSHIP TRUSTEE BOARD: Bob Shacklett, Betty Ray, Dee Blank

COMMITTEES

Communications:

Newsletter: John LaGrou and Joe LaGrou

Media & Website: Penny Garrison

Journal: Rita Figlenski

Community Service: Carol Payne and Sherry Pitts

Grants: Carol Payne, Marcelle LaGrou, Sibyl Wehmeyer, and Sherry Pitts

Health: Vacant

History: Ida Laurie

Legislative: Gordon Pitts

Membership: Marcelle LaGrou

Program: Evon LaGrou

Retirement Planning: Penny Garrison

Scholarship: Sibyl Wehmeyer, Barbara Christensen, and Janet Shacklett

WSSRA PAST PRESIDENT 2025-2026: Rita Figlenski

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR OCSRA MEMBERS

ATTENTION: Members of Okanogan County School Retirees' Association (OCSRA) currently employed or volunteering in one of the Association's school districts—

- OCSRA offers members eight \$300 grants this school year. The grant must be used in a single school year to fund projects and materials (excluding field trips) not covered by other financial means. The grants must be used in an OCSRA School District, and the application must have the signature of the *building principal*. This year, four grants will be awarded in the fall with an October 15 deadline, and four grants will be awarded in the spring with a February 15 deadline.

To apply, complete the form below and return it to OCSRA Grants Chair, Carol Payne, 13 Kermel Road, Omak, WA 98841 by October 15, 2025, to apply for the fall grant or by February 15, 2026, to apply for the spring grant.

Applicant's Name: _____

School District's Mailing Address: _____

Applicant's Email Address: _____

Applicant's Home Address: _____

Grade Level/Area of Instruction: _____

Number of Students to Benefit: _____

Estimated Cost: _____

Will the Grant Provide Resources for More Than One School Year? ____ If Yes, How? _____

How Will the Grant Be Used? Attach Any Helpful Pictures/Supporting Documentation for the Grants Committee. Please use the Back Side for Further Explanation of the need.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Dated: _____

Signature of Building Principal: _____ Dated: _____

Office Telephone Number of Building Principal: _____