



OKANOGAN COUNTY SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, August/September 2026

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

Greetings,

The start of a new school year is an exciting time for all of us! Students are eager to reconnect with friends, meet their new teachers, and explore fresh ideas. This time also presents us with a great opportunity to collaborate and work together. Remember the saying: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Let's join together to make this year amazing and create a positive impact in our communities and in our lives!

Best regards,
John LaGrou, OCSRA President

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

August 1, 2026 Compilation: OCSRA had **338 members**: 25 Cash Payers; 212 Retirees on Automatic Deduction; 2 Honorary Status; 99 Actives employed in schools. **WSSRA Total Membership: 16,941 members**

OCSRA Welcomes New Members: Omak School District: **Kimberly Dehart, Cassandra (C J) Hendrickson, Estelle McCormack, Christina Ortiz, and Jennifer Sherwood**

In Memorial:

Jayne Haun of Kennewick died March 18, 2026, at age 80. Jayne worked as a specialist in Special Education at Okanogan School District for 25 years.

Joy Humphries was originally from Oroville before moving to Marysville. No other information was provided.

Larry Oty, Spokane, died April 13, 2026, at age 84. Larry began his teaching and coaching career in Sprague, WA, before moving to Okanogan, where he taught math, coached football, and ran the winter sports scoreboards for 35 years.

Peggy Steffen, Omak, was 91 years old when she passed on February 18, 2026. Peggy taught PE and Health for many years at Omak School District.

OCSRA Awards \$6,800 in Grants & Scholarships

Okanogan County School Retirees' Association provided \$6,800 for schools and community projects in 2025-2026.

Educators receiving \$300 school grants were:

- **Tonasket Elementary:** Retiree **Scott Olson**, 20 chess sets for 4th-5th grade Chess Club members.
- **Omak Schools:** **C J Hendrickson**, garden supplies for 3rd grade plant life science class; **Amy Porter**, math and reading games for East Omak title classes; **Mary Riggan**, 3D Meat Cuts Poster or hydroponic garden for high school foods classes; **Ellie Swartsel**, classroom library books and sets of novels for Highlands Alternative School.
- **Okanogan Schools:** **Heather Downy**, baked potato project for 6-12 Life Skills students; **Jancey Marsh**, books and materials on Washington State history for third grade class.

Community Service Grants totaling \$2,000 were awarded to the following: "Our House" is operated by Cancer Care of NCW, Okanogan County Community Action Council's Weatherization and Food Bank Programs, Okanogan Outreach School's Bulldog Bites Food Pantry, Meals on Wheels, Omak Highland Alternative School, and Okanogan County Sheriff's Office's Hope Bags program.

Scholarship donations included \$400 to Washington State School Retirees' Foundation for high school scholarships and OCSRA's \$2,000 college scholarship to **Anna Bergh**, Tonasket. Bergh is studying early childhood education at EWU.

OCSRA MEETINGS FOR 2026-2027

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

Meeting Location: St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 639 W. Ridge Drive at Emery, Omak

Lunch Available: No Charge

11 AM, Tuesday, September 29, 2026: General Meeting

11 AM, Tuesday, October 27, 2026: General Meeting, *Vote on Grant Winners.*

9:30 AM, Wednesday, October 28, 2026: **E-5, E-6 Coordinating Council Meeting,**
Wenatchee Golf & Country Club, 1600 Country Club Dr., East Wenatchee, WA

11 AM, Tuesday, February 23, 2027: General Meeting, *Vote on Grant Winners*

11 AM, Tuesday, March 30, 2027: General Meeting. *Election of Officers & Scholarship Trustee.*

11 AM, Tuesday, May 25, 2027: General Meeting. *Vote on Scholarship Winner and Budget Proposal for 2027-2028*

June 7 - June 9: WSSRA's 80th Convention: Tri-Cities Convention Center, Kennewick, WA

OCSRA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES 2026-2027

OFFICERS:

President: John LaGrou

Vice President: Evon LaGrou

Secretary: Marcelle LaGrou

Treasurer: Penny Garrison

Past President: Rita Figlenski

SCHOLARSHIP TRUSTEE BOARD: Betty Ray, Janet Shacklett, Bob Shacklett

COMMITTEES:

Communications: Newsletter: John LaGrou, Joe LaGrou

Media & Website: Penny Garrison

JOURNAL: Rita Figlenski

Community Service: Sherry Pitts, Helen Lees, Carol Payne

Grants: Carol Payne, Marcelle LaGrou, Sibyl Wehmeyer, 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, Janet Shacklett

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. Each grant must be used in a single school year to fund projects and materials (excluding field trips) not covered by other financial means.
- All grants must be used in an OCSRA School District.
- 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, 2026, to apply for the fall grant or by February 15, 2027, 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 and/or supporting documentation for the Committee to examine. Please use the back side for further explanation for the need.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Dated: _____

Signature of Building Principal: _____ Dated: _____

Office Telephone Number of Building Principal: _____