

November 2011



# GAEA FOCUS

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## Educational Support Professional's Day

November 16th

Remember our Educational Support Professional's (ESP Day) on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The association made a donation in honor of all ESP's to the Albany Public Schools Foundation. We appreciate all that they contribute in the education of our students here in Greater Albany!!!

Be sure to thank them for all that they do for kids, (and us)!!!



## Lucky to have a Job?

A comment on the OEA website about a teacher fed up with being reminded she is lucky to have a job!

**"Aren't you lucky to have a job?"**

I was in the District Office the other day to take care of some business. As I was finishing up, the District Office staff person said to me: "Aren't you lucky to have a job?" I smiled and said "Yes," then left.

While driving home, I thought more about that question. It turns out many of my colleagues have told me they were asked the same question when visiting the District Office — hmm, part of a

district directive? I realize that this is how I **SHOULD** have responded:

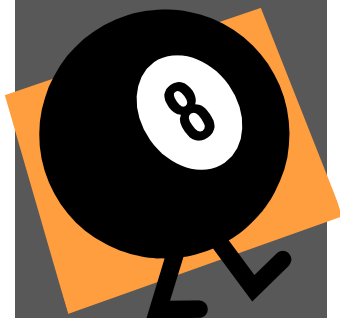
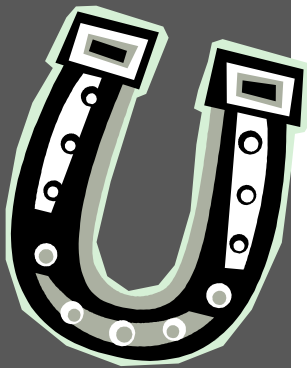
*"Aren't you lucky to have a job?"*

No, actually. I **CHOSE** this job because I was passionate about teaching and knew I would enjoy it. I loved the idea of working with students and watching them learn. I had this crazy idea that I could make a small, positive difference in the world.

*"Aren't you lucky to have a job?"*

Nope. I **EARNED**

this job. I worked to make money to pay for college. I filled out forms to get financial aid, took out loans, interviewed then got a job as a Residential Assistant to cover living expenses, I did work study and worked every summer to be able to pay for college. After I graduated from college, I worked odd jobs in the summer and after school for years so that I could pay off my loans.



## Lucky to have a Job? Con't

"Aren't you lucky to have a job?" Not in the least. I

**STRUGGLED** to get and keep my job. I substituted for 3 years, sometimes in very difficult classrooms, to establish my credibility. To be hired in this district, I had 3 interviews and had to teach a lesson in front of 3 Administrators to demonstrate my competence for my job. I have needed to advocate for my job every year we have bargained because it was always on the chopping block. I helped rewrite the curriculum for my job aligning it with State and District standards

to give it more clout. I have had to advocate many times for public education with legislators and the community to show that my job is worth their time and money.

"Aren't you lucky to have a job?" No. I have **GAINED RESPECT** for the job that I do. I have the respect of my colleagues and friends because they tell me so. I have the respect of parents of the students that I teach because they tell me so. Former students have sent me cards and letters over the years telling me they respected me as their teacher. I have the

respect of my current students because they demonstrate it to me every day in the classroom.

"Aren't you lucky to have a job?" LUCK has nothing to do with it. I chose my job, earned my job, struggled to keep my job, and gained respect for my job. Now, I'll be LUCKY if my district administrators and board members show me the same respect.

- Regina Norris,  
Gresham-Barlow  
Education Association



TO DEAL WITH OVER-CROWDING IN OUR CLASSES, WE'VE PUT THE STUDENTS ON "STAND-BY"

### Dates to Remember

- PERS classes - One Year from Retirement-December 13<sup>th</sup>, and February 21<sup>st</sup>
- PERS class - Five years from Retirement-March 6<sup>th</sup>
- "ACTION DAY" (formerly Lobby Day) February 20<sup>th</sup>
- PIE Convention March 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Doubletree in Portland