

# ***Convention News!***

**DKGNJ State Convention Morning Programs 10:30-11:45, April 13, 2024**

**Cathy Fortunato, EEC/Program Planning Committee Chair**

**Larry Abrams, “Enabling Equity: How Every Student and Teacher Can Have a Library of Their Own”**

Learn about one of the largest children’s book banks in the U.S. and how to get involved helping children in need throughout the state. Learn how to help teachers build their own classroom libraries at no cost. His oft repeated quote is “To Literacy!” Larry Abrams is a retired English teacher who started the nonprofit BookSmiles. Aided by an army of teachers, he has upcycled and distributed 1.5 million children’s books to those in most need since 2017.

**Dr. Terri Evans, “AI-Powered Education: Empowering Educators to Transform Learning”**

Explore how Artificial Intelligence is being used to improve education. Leverage AI tools and techniques to personalize learning, adapt assessments, create content, and automate administrative tasks. Identify concerns and use resources to address concerns. As an active educator she develops learning modules and designs interactive educational experiences for diverse learners. In her role as the Computer Science Chair, she achieves learning outcomes using technology tools and techniques.

**Dawn Flanders, ED. S “Decoding Digital Dialogue: Navigating Current Student Trends on Social Media for Educators and Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams.”**

Educators face the crucial task of understanding and addressing contemporary challenges from cyberbullying to potential threats. This workshop dives deep into the proactive realm of prevention by examining the role of social media apps in shaping student behavior. Participants will gain insights into deciphering baseline behaviors and recognizing crucial indicators that might be early warnings of potential threats. The workshop is designed to equip educators to understand the diverse tools available for effectively uncovering and addressing these challenges. Dawn a retired Police Officer from the Franklin Township Police Department. As an active educator, she is an Adjunct Professor at both Raritan Valley Community College and Middlesex College.

**Linda Hyland, “Line Dancing Class”**

Spend time with your sisters and a highly qualified instructor dancing with easy-to-follow steps, emphasis on movement and fun. Enjoy dancing to familiar popular music, the songs of the ‘60’s, country western, and contemporary music. Music equipment is provided and music selections will be played for your enjoyment. Linda is a retired elementary teacher who taught in Long Hill Township for twenty-six years. With dance training since the age of four, Linda currently instructs line dancing classes seven times a week in Piscataway, Long Hill, Green Brook, Chatham, and Bridgewater.

**Wilhelmina Bryant, Book Facilitator- Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver**

Winner of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize, Winner of the Women Prize for Fiction

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, it is the story of a boy born to a teenage mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father’s good looks and copper colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. A brilliant novel which enthralls, compels, and captures the heart as it evokes a young hero’s unforgettable journey to maturity.

**DKGNJ State Convention Afternoon Programs, 2:30-3:45, April 13, 2024**  
**Cathy Fortunato, EEC/Program Planning Committee Chair**

**Dr. Pamela Albert Devine, “Motion is Lotion – Simple Stretches to Keep You and Your Joints Healthy!”** *(No special clothing or equipment needed for this workshop or to do these at home!)*

In this workshop you will learn to stretch anytime, anywhere. Stretching helps you improve your range of motion and decrease your risk of injury. You will learn ways to “Keep it Simple,” how to “fit” movement into your busy day, and how movement is good not only for your body, but also for your mind! Dr. Pamela Devine is a retired administrator, beekeeper, gardener, and nature lover who believes in alternate ways to improve and maintain one’s health and achieve personal wellness.

**Spook Handy, “Remembering Pete Seeger – And His Use of Music as a Tool of Education”**

Folk Music can be a powerful tool for educating children of all ages. And one man who had a broad impact doing so was Pete Seeger. Pete used music to educate people about our common history, landscape, values, and struggles – and to build and strengthen our communities. Spook Handy performed alongside Pete more than 50 times in the last ten years of Pete’s life. In this workshop, Spook will share songs and stories he learned directly from him. Spook is a nationally touring folk musician. Learn more at [www.spookhandy.com](http://www.spookhandy.com)

**Tracey E. Holland, “How to Create Successful Outdoor Learning Spaces”**

Outdoor learning environments have become a necessary element of successful next generation learning environments. We have seen firsthand the benefits of integrating the outdoors into the learning environment options to create a holistic, healthy, and stimulating environment for students and teachers. Research has shown that outdoor learning can have substantial benefits, including reducing stress, promoting wellness, and improving focus and academic achievement. This workshop will include recommendations for starting an outdoor learning environment at your school, obtaining grants, resourcing a space, and developing a culture that appreciates, understands, and respects nature and the environment.

**Presider: Jane Murphy, Presenters: Carol Bastian, Diana Gross, and Jennifer Laster.**

**Panel “Teaching Overseas”**

This workshop will introduce attendees to a variety of ways to experience teaching overseas. Jane Murphy will share her experiences teaching for the Department of Defense in Germany.

Carol Bastian will share her experiences teaching overseas in three countries: Japan, South Africa, and China. She taught a multiage class in a private international school in southern Japan, she taught math concepts to students on a wine estate in South Africa, and finally, she taught science to bilingual talented and gifted students in China.

Diana Gross will share her experience of traveling with a backpack of mobile technology to bring digital teaching and learning workshops to remote areas. After traveling and working for a year, Diana was named a *National Geographic* 'Traveler of the Year' for her "globe spanning goal of digitally connecting faculty and students by bringing technology education to underserved communities" and eventually began working with UNESCO in Myanmar. Diana will share lessons learned about collaborating with local organizations and governments on sustainable innovation projects.

Jennifer Laster will share her experiences teaching in Peru (Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms) and Guyana (Limited Resources Teacher Training, LRTT). She will also share with workshop attendees' resources for organizations that they can apply for to teach internationally.

**Lisa Hirkaler, Book Facilitator- The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray**

A fascinating novel about Belle da Costa Greene, who, as a Black American woman, chooses to pass as white to live her life as J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, creating his amazing collection of artwork and literature. Lisa will provide some information about the reconstruction and the years they reference in terms of Black Americans at that time. Images of the current state of the library in New York City will be shown.