

Submitted to the ERA Board, Dec. 14, 2023, by Kim Hachiya, secretary
(Approved as submitted/corrected Dec. 14, 2023)

The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association met for a regular lunch meeting Nov. 16, 2023, at the Nebraska East Union. Approximately 65 members attended.

Association President-elect Larry Dlugosh called the group to order at 11:45 a.m.

A moment of silence was held to recognize the following members of the university community who had died since the previous meeting:

Robert Florrell, Extension

Jeffery John Gottula, Conservation and Survey

Dieter Karch, Modern Languages and Literatures

Billy Maxwell, Husker Athletics

Clarice Orr, College of Engineering Communication

Joan Reist, School of Music

Norma Wiegert, University Housing

Kenneth Dill, spouse of Dora Dill who is a former ERA Board Member

A donation to the ERA scholarship will be made in honor of their service.

Earl Hawkey urged members to consider a year-end donation to the Scholarship fund to fully endow it at \$60,000.

Jane Zatechka and Jim Griesen announced the association is resuming the holiday party tradition. It will begin at 9:30 a.m. Dec. 6 at the Community Room at Cornhusker Bank, 84th and O location. Email invitations and notices will be sent; RSVPs encouraged to help with planning.

Larry introduced Susan Sarver, who is director of workforce planning and development for the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Susan said her job is “to make sure that early childhood educators can do their jobs.”

The institute works to elevate the stature of the early childhood workforce (folks who work with children from birth to age 3), and to educate others about this important professional work.

She said that in Nebraska, almost 114,000 children are in need of childcare for various reasons. Currently there are about 225 pre-K programs in Nebraska; many public schools run these programs but many others are private or community-based. But the lack of affordable early childcare, and care for older children before and after school, is a critical statewide issue. Early childhood educators are, she said, truly “brain builders.” A recent focus on the cumulative damaging effects of “adverse childhood experiences: means that early childhood teachers are critical to ameliorating or neutralizing these effects.

She noted that early childhood care is a workforce development issue because lack of childcare is cited as a reason why people cannot take jobs, regardless of the jobs' locations or the potential workers' desires to work.

Susan noted there appears to be a disconnect between politicians (and voters) saying they value children and who believe childcare is important and their actual policies and votes toward solving this issue. She noted that pre-school educator pay is barely above the poverty level.

"This is a problem that you can actually solve by throwing money at it," she said.

Larry thanked Susan and noted we will donate to the Scholarship fund in her honor. He announced the next meeting is Dec. 12 at the Cornhusker Hotel; hosted by UNL Chancellor Bennett, the UNL Alumni Association and the NU Foundation.