

# **2008 NSEA Delegate Assembly Report of the Educational Support Professional Committee**

**Linda Hoffman, Neligh-Oakdale Education Association**

We started the fall by pushing ESP membership at the Fall membership drives. Special ESP membership packets were prepared and used. ESP lunch bags were purchased and given, along with RESPECT pins, to all new members.

There was a special ESP track in the Fall Bargaining Conference in Lincoln that was presented by NSEA UniServ Directors Ellen Yates and Jackee Wise. A good group of ESPs attended this conference. With lots of valuable information being presented and meeting new friends.

A Living Wage training was held in Fremont, with 15 ESPs from around the state in attendance. Dan Cuomo of Washington state came to introduce the idea of Living Wage for all school employees. The training was funded by a grant from NEA and planned and presented by Gary Osborn and Marlene Wehrbein.

At our committee meetings this year, ESP membership was one of our main topics. We came to realize that the ESP membership push needs to start at the local level. All the teachers and ESP who are already members need to share with all the ESPs that they work with the reasons they should join.

For every reason that the teachers have joined, ESPs should join. All public school employees need to know that the NSEA is here for them. In order to get the word out to them, we, as members, must share it. We are all in this together, side by side. We need to support and encourage each other.

I would like to encourage each district to have an ESP representative on their board. ESPs have a lot of ideas to add, and they are hard workers.

Teachers can also mentor the ESPs in their local associations and districts.

We have published flyers for ESP membership drives as well as flyers that explain to ESPs what Early Enrollment in April can do for them. Both of the ESP flyers are available at the ESP table at DA.

Some districts grew in ESP numbers this past year, and that is wonderful. We would like to see each district grow in numbers this next year. ESPs are NSEA's greatest untapped membership. There is power and strength in numbers. ESPs can be a big asset to your local associations and to districts.

Five ESPs attended the National ESP Conference this spring. Two ESPs from Chadron; two ESPs from South Sioux City; NEA ESP Director Rebecca Marks, Omaha; and UniServ staff Marlene Wehrbein and Gary Osborn, all attended. The ESP conference is filled with lots of important information that all ESPs can use and it is very helpful in bargaining and starting ESP groups. If you know of any ESPs who could benefit from this conference please forward your suggestions to Jess Wolf for next year's conference.

In the last several years we, by this I mean, teachers, NSEA staff, and ESPs, have all worked hard together to gain the RESPECT that ESPs have long been waiting for. Several ESP groups from around the state are bargaining contracts and negotiating working conditions. This is a big success. By working together we can accomplish so much more. On behalf of all the ESPs from around the state, we want to thank the NSEA for all that is being done for the ESPs in Nebraska. We are TEAM NSEA!

If you have interested ESPs please contact your NSEA UniServ director or myself to get some information for them.