

# News U Trust

APPRECIATING, DEVELOPING, AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL STAFF



## UTRUST MEMBERS RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXTENDED BENEFITS

Some recent changes in unemployment benefits have significantly impacted school systems and in a good way. Extended benefits, giving claimants an opportunity to draw an additional 20 weeks above the normal 26 weeks and creating an additional liability for our members, expired in April. The extended benefits were approved by the federal government but were not funded for reimbursing school systems.

Recently, the State passed the 2011 General Appropriations Act which appropriated non-recurring state funds for the purpose of reimbursing local governments for

extended benefits. In May, the state sent out funds for reimbursement to the local governments to cover the extended benefit claims that were paid from May through December 31, 2011 totaling over \$140,000.

The funds should have been repaid to Utrust --the source of payment for the extended benefit claims. Utrust is not seeking reimbursement but instead will treat the funds already received by school systems to be a dividend to Utrust members for the 2012 year.

### What's In This Issue?



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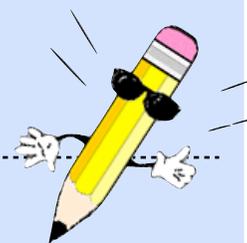
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## KICK THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF RIGHT!

In order for this to be the best year ever for the Employee Appreciation Program, we at Utrust have developed some exciting things to enhance the spreading of appreciation throughout your schools. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with these new features which were each designed to make your life easier, as we work together to make our great state of Tennessee the *Grateful State of Tennessee!!!*

### Line Up Your

**Resources:** This chart will change your life! It is designed to simplify the planning of your appreciation days and to help you make the most of the resources you have available. For more details click [here](#).

### 3 Levels of Packet

**ideas:** Our appreciation day packets are now divided into 3 levels to simplify the planning process. You can choose from ideas in the Rookie, Pro and Expert divisions according to your school and the resources you have available. For more info on the packets click [here](#).



### Brightest Star:

Each packet has an activity designated as the brightest star marking it as the one that can win you \$100 for your A-team. After each appreciation day a winner will be awarded in both the elementary and the middle/high school division. Click [here](#) for more details.

**Phanfare:** A new website that makes it simple to

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upload your pictures and videos. Remember that all entries for any awards must be made through Phanfare. Click [here](#) to login.

**Thursday Tips:** Each Thursday, we will post a Thursday Tip that will help make your EAP easier and more effective. Tips may be in video or text form. They will consist of tutorials, How To's, Easy DIY projects and anything else that can help you have a successful EAP.



The G-Force consists of one to two students in each classroom who will take responsibility for promoting certain activities for each appreciation day. They will work with the A-team in encouraging school wide student involvement. Look for this logo in the packet which notes the activities they've been assigned each time.

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## UTRUST REGIONAL MEETINGS UPDATE

Participants in Utrust Regional Meetings not only picked up valuable information about changes in employment law and the Employee Appreciation Program but each session included an olympic contest and each ended with presentation of gold, silver and bronze medals.

Among the new features to be included in the EAP is three levels in each packet-rookie, pro and expert depending on the level of sophistication that the school coordinator chooses. An explanation of how to learn to use Phanfare, an easy way to share photos and video, and how to make a Smilebox to organize photos and video into a finished product using the Utrust themes was presented.

Utrust legal counsel Dewey Branstetter shared changes in the law and suggested several procedures for containing unemployment compensation claims. He suggested that all boards should be striving to meet the requirements of becoming a Five Star Board to demonstrate excellence in Employee Administration.

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Joy Cooke (Alamo), Bobby Mullins (Crockett County) and Debbie Oswalt (Bells) work on olympic challenges at the regional Utrust meeting in Jackson.



Mary Winchester (Anderson Co.), Angie Cornett (Claiborne Co) and Jennifer Underwood (Sweetwater) wave to their fans and teammates as they win silver, gold and bronze at the Utrust Olympic awards ceremony.



L to R: Roy Pierce (Warren Co.), Lanny Knight (Putnam Co), Teresa Miller (DeKalb Co) and Donna Burris (Troup Co) work on an olympic event at the Utrust Regional Olympics.

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## 2012 WRITING COMPETITION

Pick up your pencil and start writing now  
to win one of 17 cash prizes.



## WRITE AND WIN!

Make plans now for how you will recruit your teachers and students to be involved in the 2012 writing competition. By encouraging your English teachers to incorporate the writing of stories about people who make a difference you can enable students to win cash prizes. Give particular attention to those students who are in the 5th, 8th and 12th grades.

This competition is a win for everyone involved as it provides

positive attention and publicity to your schools, students and teachers as well as offering students and adults the opportunity to win cash prizes.

The deadline for entries is November 30th, 2012. For more details check the [www.tnuct.com](http://www.tnuct.com) site and click on Writing Competition. Remember there is a separate division for students and adults!

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