



## Growing the family

Janet Baum, President  
Billings Classified Employees Association

**M**embership is at the heart of our organization. Without members, what would we be?

MEA-MFT classified units across the state have problems with high turnover, low wages, and few benefits. Education support professionals do not sign individual contracts like certified employees, so it is always a struggle to keep track of who has been hired for what position.

Recruiting new members is always an ongoing process. This year, MEA-MFT's ESP presidents helped organize two new classified units in Wolf Point and Hardin. The show of support from ESP members who called and visited people in these new locals made the difference.

Personal contact by members is a great tool when organizing. There are often many questions that need to be answered. Who can answer them better than a current member?

It was personal contact with new employees that proved to work for the Billings Classified Employees Association when we had our big membership drive in 2000-2001. We recruited over 100 new members during that school year. That re-

cruitment effort affected the governance of the MEA-MFT by creating a new District 29 for the BCEA unit, giving us our own seat on the MEA-MFT Board of Directors.

What an accomplishment! We saw an opportunity, set a goal, and made it happen. But it couldn't have happened without someone making a personal call to each and every non-member in our unit.

With over 16,000 members in the MEA-MFT encompassing teachers, classified employees, state and county employees, higher education, Head Start, and health care, we are an organization that can make a difference.

It is exciting to think that so many people from so many walks of life can come together to make this great organization what it is today. We work hard for the good of all our members, and we do make a difference in their lives.

The voice of MEA-MFT is one that people notice. The more members we have, the stronger we are, the louder that voice can be, and people will know that we have something of value to say. So many good people working together can't be wrong. ■



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