

CTA Profile: John Haschak

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We're featuring stories from CTA members about how they're saving for retirement. Find out what mistakes people have made, what's working for them, and what things they wish other people would have told them along their retirement savings journey.



For the first story in our series, we thought it would be fitting to speak to the first person to enroll in the CTA Retirement Savings Plan, **John Haschak**.

John lives in the town of Willits, located in Mendocino County. He's been a teacher for 28 years working with 3–5th grade students. He's a CTA chapter president, and has been involved with the CTA budget committee.

Here's John's story.

When did you decide that you needed to have a retirement savings plan?

One day, I saw a flyer on the fridge in the teacher's lounge about a retirement plan, so I called the guy. He came over to my house and spoke to me and my wife, who is also a teacher, and he sold us a bunch of things we thought we needed, including an annuity. We thought we were doing the right thing.

Soon after that, I started attending the CTA investing courses and looking at the information on ctainvest.org. It was then that I realized I didn't need any of the stuff I had been sold. And that the fees I was paying were really high. I kept trying to get the fees down, but I couldn't.

Knowing what I know now, I waited too long to start. I should have started earlier, but at least started.

How did you hear about the CTA retirement plan?

Because of my involvement on the budget committee, I started to hear about the plan CTA was developing for members, and I knew they were building a great plan.

It is low cost and reliable, and it offers a hands-off approach to investing, which is what I want. When they first launched the plan, I jumped to get started. I was the first person to enroll in the CTA Retirement Savings Plan.

And now when I talk to teachers about their investments and how they are saving, I tell them to ask about fees. No one has a clue about fees because the people leaving the flyers in the teacher's lounge don't talk about fees and how much they eat away at your savings.

How has anything changed for you as a result of being in the CTA retirement plan?

I feel secure knowing I'm in the right investment doing the right thing. I check my plan twice a year. The fees are low, the investments are growing, and because I am in a target date fund I don't really have to do anything.

The target date fund is a good product for people who don't want to look at their investments every day, and I think most people don't want to be that involved. It gives me peace of mind to be in the CTA plan.

This is an excellent product for teachers, and CTA is providing a real benefit to members.