

“Ensuring Every Child’s Future”

A Message From Our President

Membership.....What’s in it for me?

Is that a question you hear as your PTA is running its membership drive?

Illinois PTA provides program information, ideas and materials to you, the local units. Local PTA boards realize from where these items come, but does the everyday member? The average parent and community member never makes the connection to the state or national level of PTA.

So, how do you make PTA relevant for that potential member? Toot your horn, pat yourself on the back, brag a bit...In other words, take every opportunity to highlight the programs, events and opportunities that your PTA has made available to the children in your school.

- Advocacy Issues
- Reflections
- Cultural Arts Programs
- Parent Education Workshops
- Field Trips
- School Fairs
- School Picnics
- School Assemblies
- Recreation Nights

These are just of few of the many possible events/programs you may have provided your PTA community.



So, the next time a potential member asks, “Why should I spend my money to join PTA,” have your list ready. Even one program made available to children through PTA far exceeds the cost of a membership!

“Toot your PTA horn!”

~ Deb



Debra Strauss
 Illinois PTA President

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Support: The Stuff We're Made Of

We often point to all the tangible benefits of membership as reasons to join, and stay with, PTA®. There certainly are quite a few of them: from 501(c)3 status to insurance to the *huge*

number of online and print resources available—*free*—for parents and leaders and anyone else who wants to support the education and health of children. But training, tax exemptions, and Take Your Family to School Week Awards have never been the real reason why people joined PTA. We join because we want to be part of a community, one that accomplishes so much on behalf of our kids.

Everywhere you look these days, you can see a need for stronger communities. We have an economy that is forcing millions of capable workers without jobs to rely on their families, friends, and neighbors just to survive. We have profoundly heartbreaking surges in youth violence that beg someone, anyone, to intervene. We have schools graduating fewer students and dropping more critical classroom and technical learning opportunities. After 113 years of bringing together families, schools, and communities, it's clear that the PTA family has never been needed more in America than right now.

The PTA family works on behalf of every child in our country. You can see it when we go to Capitol Hill to help pass better child nutrition laws and when we go to the White House to work on volunteer initiatives that encourage more people serve their school communities. But we work on a local level, too. In states and counties across the land, PTA is the one promoting parent involvement, helping school boards and parents come together, and the *only* ones with staff motivated not by profit, but by a mission to help *your* children achieve. We are more than a magazine, more than a chat room—we are literally in your hometown whenever you need us. The PTA family is a genuine network of support, made up of real people you've seen with your own eyes and who have helped you with their own hands. Support. That's what family is for, and what makes our communities healthy.

The solution to so many of our problems can be found by people simply engaging one another: not just online, but in homes, schools, cities, and statehouses. That's how we can help our children, and where we'll find the incredible strength we'll need to be successful in our mission. I am proud of your efforts and look forward to engaging everyone in our PTA family. Thank you!

Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor
National PTA President
PTA.org/chucksaylor

2010 National Legislative Conference

Save the Date!

On **March 9-11, 2010**, PTA will hold its annual National Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. This three-day conference will inspire and provide in-depth analysis on PTA's latest federal public policy priorities affecting families, schools and communities through skill building trainings, workshops, panel discussions, guest speakers, and Capitol Hill visits with congressional leaders. Join us and the many PTA child advocates making their voice heard on Capitol Hill.

For more information on SEL or to schedule an awareness presentation, please contact Linda Delimata at ldelimata@leeogle.org.

A Message from *Dr. Chris Koch* Illinois State Board of Education State Superintendent



Parents, teachers and community members often describe the traits they want students to possess when they graduate high school. They include the ability to work as a member of a team, be self-reflective and a good problem solver. They are describing social and emotional learning (SEL).

Social and emotional learning is the process by which children develop the fundamental skills needed to cultivate positive relationships and work effectively. These skills include recognizing and managing emotions, developing compassion for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively. While schools have always established social norms, the notion of intentionally teaching SEL skills is recent.

In 2004, Illinois became the first state in the country to adopt Social and Emotional Learning Standards. These standards describe developmentally appropriate, sequential SEL skills that are to be incorporated into school curricula and instruction. The combination of addressing SEL skills and fostering a safe and caring learning environment school-wide has increased student academic performance and produced better grades and higher graduation rates. SEL has also improved teacher and staff performance and professional satisfaction, and has increased retention rates.

Recognizing that school districts would require training and on-going technical assistance to infuse SEL school-wide and in each classroom, the Illinois State Board of Education in collaboration with the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, designed a professional development plan that affords schools the opportunity to receive ongoing training and coaching. We also recognized that the potential of SEL cannot be reached without the full involvement and support of parents and communities. We have established a network of family advocates to help schools involve parents in the process.

Thirty-nine school districts and 86 schools are in their third year of the SEL Implementation Pilot Project. These school districts and schools should be commended for their ground-breaking work. They have been a tremendous asset to the state as we improve the professional development offered to districts and schools.

DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO SUCCEED?

By: Lillian Ball, Parent Engagement Chair

Each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must recognize that the welfare of our children is intimately linked to the welfare of all other people's children. After all, when one of our children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it. If one of our children is harmed by violence, someone else's child will be responsible for the violent act. The good life for our own children can be secured only if a good life is also secured for all other people's children."

~Lilian Katz (professor, early childhood education)

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) through Section 15(a) of Public Act 93-0495 was called upon to "develop and implement a plan to incorporate social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards."

Every Illinois school district shall develop a policy for incorporating social and emotional development into the district's educational program. The policy shall address teaching and assessing social and emotional skills and protocols for responding to children with social, emotional, or mental health problems, or a combination of such problems, that impact learning ability. Each district must submit this policy to the Illinois State Board of Education by August 31, 2004. --Section 15 (b) of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 (PA 93-0495)

Social and Emotional Learning Standards (SEL) encompasses:

- ◇ development of self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.
- ◇ use of social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
- ◇ demonstration of decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts.

Here's how your PTA can help:

- Invite your school administrator to share what they are doing to achieve the SEL goals.
- Foster a partnership with PTA and the administration to provide programs that help parents at home.
- Together with your administrator select all school assemblies that meet the SEL criteria.

National PTA and Resolutions

By: Rhonda Jenkins, Resolutions Chair

We provide a lot of information to you about the importance of resolutions in the foundation of the Illinois PTA legislative platform. Are you aware that the same is true of National PTA? Listed below is an excerpt from the National PTA website. Also listed are the titles of National PTA resolutions adopted at the 2009 National PTA Convention. Check them out and see if they have any relevance to your local unit! You can find the resolutions in their entirety at the National PTA website: www.pta.org. Search "resolutions" to go directly to them.

Following are the resolutions that were adopted by the voting delegates during the 112th National PTA Convention. These resolutions are national in scope, but they have impact at the local, council and state levels of PTA as well. The power of a resolution is to enable PTA members, leaders, and public policy and program teams to join with others to build partnerships, form coalitions, increase awareness, develop programs, and lobby policy makers.

Next steps:

- *Distribute the National PTA resolutions to your members.*
- *Review the resolutions at the local, council or state level to determine if existing resolutions are in conflict with National PTA. These will need to be either rescinded or amended.*
- *Research the web or organizations to identify current relevant resources.*
- *Contact other organizations, businesses, or agencies to see if there might be new partnerships with which to join forces.*
- *Ask if there are already programs within the state providing resources to help a resolution be more successful.*
- *Work with other people, or groups, who have a shared interest in the intent of the resolution.*

Contact your State PTA, or the National PTA for assistance if needed.

Titles of National PTA 2009 Adopted Resolutions

- ◆ Dangers of Alcoholic Energy Drinks
- ◆ Child Trafficking
- ◆ Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management in Schools
(In 2008, delegates at the Illinois PTA Conventions adopted *Resolution on Children with Food Allergy*)
- ◆ Education on the Dangers of Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke

REMINDER: The deadline for submission of resolutions to be considered at the 2010 Illinois PTA Convention is December 15, 2009.

Rhonda Jenkins
Illinois PTA Resolutions Chairman
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Millstadt, IL 62260
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Membership

by: Colleen Charaska, VP Program Services

By now you have moved onto other things in your PTA Year and think that your membership campaign is far behind you. You have dealt with all kinds of objections to joining PTA and figure that you can give up on those people that have said no.

Most objections to joining PTA fall into the areas of time, impact, and perceived value. Here are some ideas to address these key areas.

Frequently Asked Question About the “Ask”

What can I say to people who object when I ask them to join?

“I don’t have the time!”

“I can certainly understand that. It’s not the amount of time you can contribute that’s most important, but rather your commitment to help PTA make a difference in the lives of children. You don’t have to be a volunteer to be a member. Our members are involved in many activities in addition to PTA. We value their time and strive to use it effectively.” (Give examples of events or projects that might appeal to this person.)

“I don’t have any children in school!”

“You don’t have to have children in school to belong to PTA. Anyone who cares about children belongs in our organization. It is important that we all have a voice in the decision-making process relating to the laws and regulations that affect children. You can have that voice through PTA. Every child needs you. You will make a difference.”

“I don’t agree with a lot of the PTA positions!”

“The only way to avoid disagreement would be to adopt a do-nothing policy. As a grassroots organization, our policies are determined by a democratic process. We welcome your involvement in this effort. It is through members like you that our direction is determined.”

“Not right now—maybe later!”

“If you put off being part of PTA, you may miss out on having your voice heard when it is needed most. Our members are the heart of the organization and by participating in PTA activities determine the course of action we need to take. Please make time to put children first.”

“I just can’t join another organization. I belong to too many already!”


“I know that there are many good organizations to belong to, and it is difficult to support them all. But I think PTA is very special. Let me tell you a little about what we are doing. I find it helps to have information when I’m making a choice (Talk about the value of PTA) Remember, PTA works to prevent problems and, of course, to address those concerns that affect us right now. We really need people like you in PTA.”

“Your organization doesn’t do anything!”

“I cannot speak for what may have happened in previous years, but let me bring you up-to-date on what we are doing now (List current activities, programs, accomplishments, etc.) As you see, we are a very active group, doing many things that benefit all our children. On a state and national level, we have been instrumental in many initiatives from which all children have benefited. We have a long history of accomplishments. (Have a list of accomplishments at the state and national levels available for reference.) We need time, funds and good will from people like you to keep it happening. There is so much for us to do but we need people like you. Join us and help us do even more.”

PTA Membership

People have all kinds of reasons why not to join; you have all the reasons why they should.

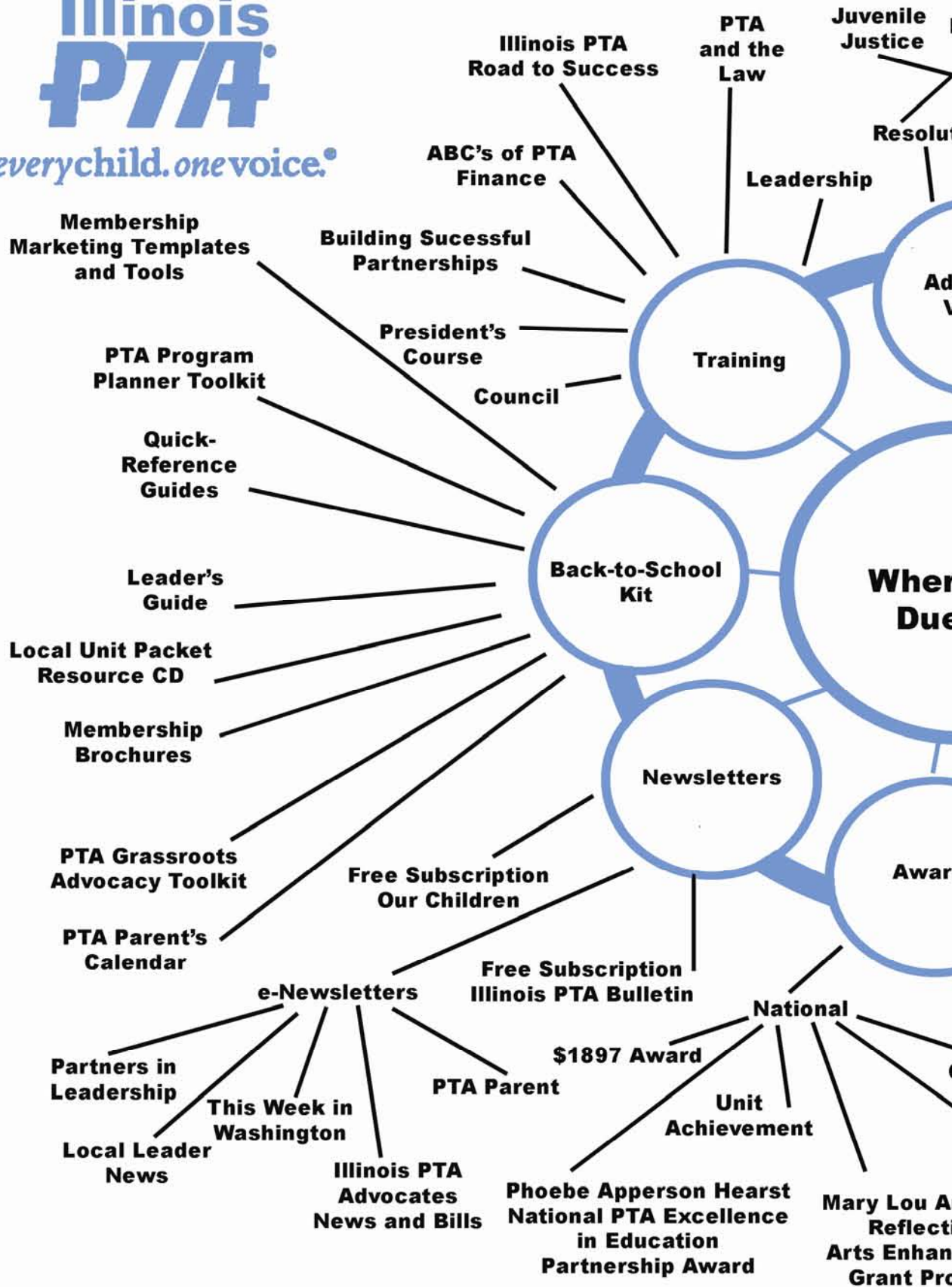


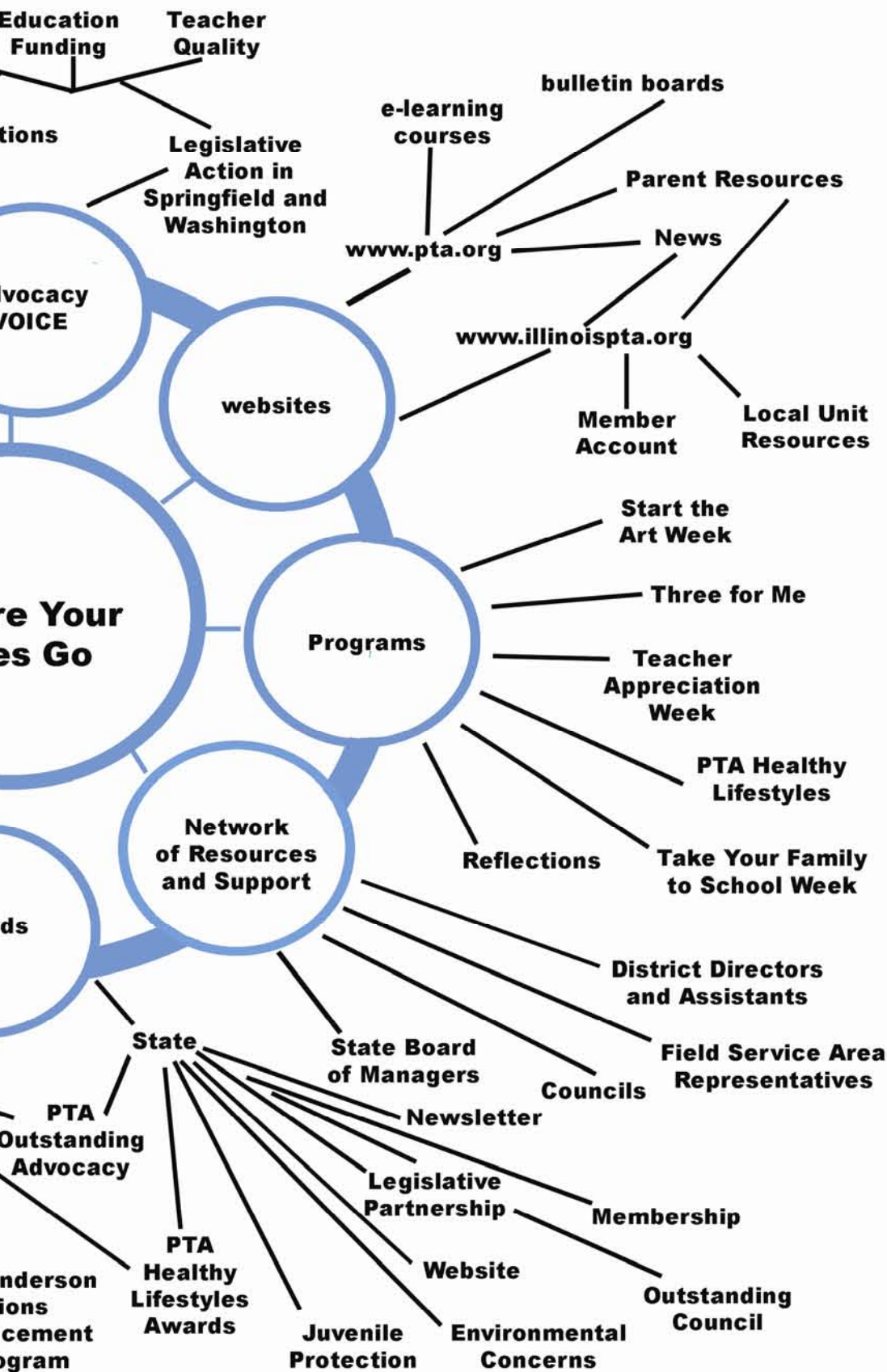
THIS IS PTA.

This is **NO ORDINARY** parent group, this **PTA**® of ours.
 This is a national movement to represent all **CHILDREN**.
 This is millions of members speaking with one voice for children, **EDUCATION**, and families. This is how the school **COMMUNITY** comes together before school, in school, after school with programs to help every **SCHOOL** partner with **FAMILIES**, to help every child achieve their **POTENTIAL**. This is school spirit. This is an **EXTRAORDINARY** group of moms, dads, teachers, principals, aunts, uncles, grandparents, caregivers, businesspeople, advocates. **THIS IS ALL OF THE ABOVE, ALL AT THE SAME TIME. THIS IS PTA.**

PTA.ORG

(800) 307-4PTA • membership@PTA.org





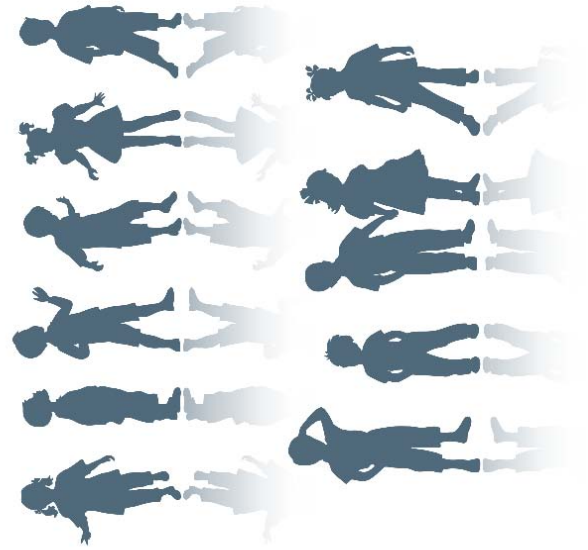
The Value of PTA



every child. one voice.®

ILLINOIS PTA CONVENTION

March 12—14, 2010



Ensuring Every Child's Future by Engaging Each Child's Community

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*Child Advocacy, Parent Education, Legislative Action,
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- 1 Be a powerful voice for all children
- 2 Provide relevant resources for your families and community
- 3 Become strong advocates for the education and well-being of every child

Safe Haven for Education

By: *Matthew Rodriguez, Juvenile Protection and Safety Chair*

I am honored to be your new Juvenile Protection and Safety Committee chair. I am VERY passionate about this subject so I will try my best not to flood you guys with too much information.

The first subject I want to address is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) kids. The Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health office had an excellent training session on this topic that helped me understand the issues facing these children, issues that no child should have to face in school.

The national study, which the group says is the most comprehensive report ever on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students nationwide, found that 86.2 percent of those students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1 percent physically harassed and 22.1 percent physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation

Dropout levels are higher among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students because of more frequent truancy. Almost 32 percent of those students missed a class because of feeling unsafe, compared with only 5.5 percent of heterosexual students nationwide, the study said.

The Chicago School Board will vote whether to approve the School for Social Justice Pride Campus on November 19th. What that means is, kids that identify themselves LGBTQ feel **so** unsafe in our Chicago public schools that a separate school will be built to have them feel safe enough to get an education.

The school will not be exclusively for LGBTQ kids but it will be a “safe haven” for those kids to be able to get a good education and stop worrying about their protection being threatened on a daily basis. This is a very controversial subject as many parents who have different beliefs fight against having such a place.

School officials said the standards and curriculum for the school would be in line with other schools in the district. The school would also offer counseling for students, though because of federal laws, officials cannot ask students about their sexual orientation. The curriculum would not rely on, but would incorporate lessons about, sexual identity in history and literature classes, officials said.

Some of the stories we heard in the meeting were appalling. Teacher’s personal beliefs and convictions are being used to embarrass and frankly harass children that are LGBTQ. Trying to convince the children that they “really aren’t that way and to snap out of it”. The list goes on and on. I am being told the teachers were breaking the law and it happens every day in our schools.

I am sure we can **ALL** agree on one thing. **EVERY CHILD** deserves to have a good education in a safe environment no matter what their sexual orientation may be, or what they believe.

I can go on for many more hours so I will pause here and keep working hard for our children to **ALL** have the right to a safe learning environment.

Thank you for listening



2009 Fall Packets were sent to all registered units

Included along with much legislative materials were:

- ⊗ 2009-2010 Illinois PTA Yearbook
- ⊗ 2010 Illinois PTA Awards Packet
- ⊗ Newest Tax Exempt Letter

Please share this information with your PTA board members and membership as you see fit.

If you are looking for this information, please contact your president.

What Are Your Plans to Celebrate Founders Day?

FEBRUARY 17, 2010

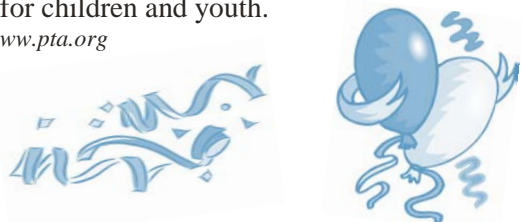
Founders Day is a reminder of the substantial role that PTA has played locally, regionally, and nationally in supporting parent involvement and working on behalf of all children and families. It's a time to reflect and take pride in our many accomplishments, and to renew our commitment to be a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education.

PTA's founders Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, and the founder of Georgia's Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Sloan Butler, were women of imagination and courage. They understood the power of individual action, worked beyond the accepted barriers of their day, and took action to literally change the world.

They had a simple idea—to improve the lives and futures of all of our children. As much as other conditions in America may have changed, that idea has not. PTAs keep it alive.

Today, PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation. Our members represent the ethnic diversity of our nation, and they come from the ranks of traditional families, single-parent households, blended families, grandparents, and other caring adults. Together, we continue to serve as the conscience of the country for children and youth.

Source: www.pta.org



So celebrate our past, present and future! Get your entire community involved and remind everyone why we are here to stay. Visit www.pta.org for more ideas of how other PTAs celebrate this phenomenal day.

Handling Fundraising Receipts and Expenditures

By: Barb Miralgio, Treasurer

When a PTA is planning a fund-raising activity that will involve large amounts of money, specific procedures should be followed to safeguard the handling of the funds.

- ◆ The chair of the fund-raising project should see that the treasurer receives the proceeds immediately after the end of the activity – daily if the project takes place over several days. At no time, should the funds be handled by only one person before the money is counted.
- ◆ The treasurer and, at least, one other person should count the monies received together.
- ◆ Both should sign a statement verifying the amount. This document may be a Deposit Voucher or a commercially-available carbon-set receipt. Both the treasurer and the chair of the fundraiser should receive a copy of that document.
- ◆ The funds should be deposited in the PTA bank account as soon as possible, but preferably on the same day. Contact your bank about using a locked night depository bag for this purpose.
- ◆ NEVER deposit any PTA funds in a personal bank account, the school bank account, or leave the money in the school building or in someone's home.
- ◆ All checks should be marked "For Deposit Only to the _____ PTA, Account # _____" and signed by the treasurer with his or her title. A stamp with this information for the treasurer to use may be ordered through the bank.
- ◆ Duplicate deposit slips should be prepared so that the treasurer will have a copy to retain for their records. Note: the treasurer may want to attach both the copy of the deposit slip and the bank deposit receipt to the Deposit Voucher as proof of deposit.
- ◆ The treasurer should be given itemized bills, sales slips, etc. to authorize payment for any expenditures along with a completed Disbursement or Check Voucher.
- ◆ Expenses for the fund-raising activity should be paid by PTA check ONLY and never paid with cash from the activity.

The fund-raising chair or treasurer should complete a detailed report of all receipts, expenditures and the profit from the project within a few days after the conclusion of the activity. That report should be presented to the board/executive committee and the membership at the meeting following the activity

DELEGATE, DELEGATE... DANCE TO THE MUSIC!

Submitted by: Brenda Diehl, Leadership Chair

Delegating responsibility is a vital part of becoming a good leader and managing your time wisely. You owe it to yourself and to the PTA to involve as many people as possible. Ask yourself frequently, “what am I doing that someone else can do as well as or better than I?”

The dictionary definition of delegate includes the word entrust. When you delegate, you entrust the job to someone else. You entrust them to take on the responsibility to do the job.

Be specific about the job or assignment...make sure they know what they are expected to do. Give them a specific time-line. And most importantly, give them the authority or permission to get it done!

Key elements of delegation:

- Carefully assess members’ skills.
- Match skills with available jobs.
- Give people authority to do the job.
- Be specific about the task.
- Decide when it should be done.
- Let those to whom you have delegated responsibility...make decisions.

Trust them to do the job.

Delegation is not only an essential part of developing new leaders; it is an essential part of time management.

Giving people the responsibility for tasks of increasing importance will help them develop the ability to assume other leadership roles.

Maybe if you delegate some of the PTA tasks...you will have some time to dance to the music!

Adapted from Delegation: Entrusting a Job to Someone Else National PTA

Prevent Flu—Starting Today!!!

By: Phyllis Pelt, Health Chairman

Fact # 1 - Flu germs enter our bodies through our nostrils, mouth and throat.

Fact #2 – H1N1 flu is classified as a global epidemic. Proliferation of H1N1 is a major issue that we can address.

Fact #3 - There are things you can do before you get sick and WORK to PREVENT proliferation, aggravation of symptoms as well as development of secondary infection.

As we enter the height of the flu season, here are a few gentle reminders to continue to keep our families healthy.

1. Frequent hand-washing with soap, or waterless soap solutions, warm water is nice but 20-30 seconds of friction/rubbing soap solution on the hands with water of any temperature is critical.
2. Keep your hands off of your face unless you are eating or bathing.
3. Gargle twice a day with warm salt water (or Listerine)

FACT: H1N1 takes 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat/ nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Gargling works to prevent proliferation.
4. Blow your nose hard once a day and swab both nostrils with q-tips dipped in warm salt and water as this helps to lower the viral population in the nose.
5. Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C (citrus fruits) If you supplement with Vitamin C tablets, make sure that it also has Zinc to boost absorption.
6. Drink plenty of warm liquids (tea, coffee, apple cider, etc) *Drinking warm liquids has the same effect as gargling, but in the reverse direction. These liquids wash off proliferating viruses from the throat into the stomach where they cannot survive, proliferate or do any harm. Children under 18 should be drinking decaffeinated products.
7. Remember: You can do this. Be intentional about staying well – Share this information with family, loved ones and others. Yes, it does take work to stay well and to stay alive.

Adapted from communication from Dr. Vinay, Head of Nuclear Medicine Department and Thyroid clinic at Riddhivinayak Cardiac and Critical Centre, Malad (10/09-Pelt).

Environmental Issues

By: Terry Christenson, Environmental Chairman

Keeping up to date with what's happening in our environment benefits all of us. Illinois PTA wants to ensure that you get the most current facts to assist your family and school in knowing how to protect our environment. Here are some interesting facts to know:

A Success Story-The Chicago City Council recently unanimously passed an Air Ordinance that includes a three minute idling limit aimed at reducing pollution from diesel trucks and buses.

Drivers who idle such vehicles longer than three minutes will face a \$250 fine. Chicago Police, city parking and traffic enforcement officials, and the Commissioner of the Environment have the authority to enforce this limit. Passage of the ordinance means Chicago now has the strongest idling prohibitions in the Midwest. The Illinois Champaign to clean up diesel pollution was instrumental in passing this ordinance.

Why Buy from your Local Businesses? You can decrease your impact on the environment by shopping in your local community at traditional retail stores. Did you know that it is greener to make your purchases at your local businesses rather than with e-tailers on the internet? The environmental impact from the use of packing materials (brown boxes, packing peanuts, packaging tape, styrofoam, etc.) along with the transportation (carbon emissions) of delivering the goods to your door is greater than if you are able to purchase that same item at a local business. By making these local purchases during your errand runs, you can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, energy consumption and landfills while taking fewer steps to get the products in your hand. Buying your goods locally, not only benefits the environment, but benefits your local community by enhancing local economy as well. Keeping your money within your local community helps ensure local businesses will continue to keep their doors open, keep your fellow community members employed and generate the tax dollars to fund essential public services such as education, police, fire, transportation and health care.

Looking for a great green holiday gift? Why not consider giving someone a stainless steel water bottle? Did you know that 95% of plastic bottles never get recycled? This means they end up in our landfills, roadsides and waterways. It's also important to note that the tops on plastic water bottles are not recyclable. These plastic water bottles also can leach chemicals into the water that we end up drinking. Stainless steel water bottles are chemical free. They can be reused over and over and only need to be purchased once. You and your family will enjoy better health and a happier planet with steel bottles that don't crush when they're in your gym bag or back pack either.

Looking for Educational, Fun, and Safe "Green" websites for your kids to enjoy?

Log on to: www.healthy-kids-go-green.com and www.kids-going-green.com.

Both websites have educational, creative, fun and safety activities for you and your kids to enjoy.



Did you know???

Items that are mailed to you on a CD are also available on the Illinois PTA web site at www.ilpta.org. Click on "About Illinois PTA" and then "InFORMation" to find all the information from the CD.

Also, one copy of any form from the Illinois PTA web site or included in a mailing can be obtained free of charge simply by calling the Illinois PTA office at 800-877-9617.

What is sexting?

Sexting, a combination of the words "sex" and "texting," is the act of sending nude or semi-nude photos or explicit messages to another person through a cell phone or computer.

A study of 1,280 teens commissioned this year by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Cosmogirl.com found that one in five teens has sent a nude or semi-nude photo of themselves to someone else through a phone or computer, while two in five teens have received a photo from someone else.

"I think the universal reaction has been surprise at its prevalence," National Campaign spokesman Bill Albert said. "When I was growing up, people had written diaries, and it wasn't going anywhere. Needless to say, things can now go from private to global in a nanosecond."

And while sending a flirtatious picture or two might seem relatively harmless, the potential consequences aren't. Sending or possessing explicit pictures of teens is illegal, and being caught with the racy shots can result in child pornography charges, even if the person caught is also a minor and long-term consequences.

The humiliation that can come from sexting is the least of Rich Guerry's worries. The former IT and juvenile safety worker now heads the New Jersey-based Institute for Responsible Online and Cell-Phone Communication, traveling to schools nationwide to talk to teens about how to stay safe online.

"Digital technology has bridged our borders, and it's a wonderful thing, but for every positive, there's a negative," Guerry said.

Sexting poses a danger that other teen experimentation, like sneaking a beer or a cigarette, simply can't, Guerry said. Because the Internet is impossible to regulate, once something's out there, it's there forever.

"You can't go to a kid afterwards and say, 'Hey, don't post pictures' in the same way you can yell at them for smoking," Guerry said. "It's like walking down the street holding a sign near the Sears Tower that has your full name, social security number and an unflattering photo, except you can't take the sign down."

That message isn't lost on law enforcement officials in Cook and Will counties, who have both ramped up their efforts to get information out to schools, parents and kids about sexting.

"The parents need someone who can explain the computer geekness to the average citizen, and we also educate kids as to why this silly thing is serious," said Kathleen Muldoon, deputy chief of sex crimes for the Cook County State's Attorney.

It never crossed any of these kids minds that sharing photos might land them in jail, Will County's Glasgow is quick to point out that it could. The state's attorney's office tries to be lenient with first-time offenders, he said, but a particularly egregious situation could mean a lifetime sex offender label for a teen.

"That means your economic viability is zero for the rest of your life," Glasgow said. "We're reasonable, but you could do something that wouldn't allow us to be reasonable. The best thing to do is not to do it at all."

Tips for parents

You may not know Facebook from the phone book, but that doesn't mean you can't help keep your kids safe. Here's a guide for what you need to know.

1. **Talk to your kids about Internet safety.** Make sure they know that nothing on their computers or cell phones is truly private or anonymous and that colleges and businesses often check out profiles of their potential students or employees.
2. **Know who your kids are communicating with and what they're posting.** Check out their Facebook, Myspace and other public profiles from time to time. Consider limitations on electronic communication.
3. **Set expectations** for acceptable and unacceptable online behavior.
4. **Start early.** Many parents might think these are issues for high-schoolers, but some kids start sending photos as early as middle school.

Source: The National Campaign for Teenage and Unplanned Pregnancy

Sexting continued

Tips for teens

Thinking about forwarding a sexy photo? Here are some things to consider before you hit "send."

- ⊗ Don't assume anything you send or post will stay private.
- ⊗ Don't give into anything that makes you uncomfortable.
- ⊗ Consider the recipient's reaction before forwarding a photo.
- ⊗ Nothing is really anonymous. Even if you send a photo to someone online who only knows your user name or e-mail address, there's still a chance they could track you down.
- ⊗ Know the legal consequences. In Illinois, you can be prosecuted for child pornography for possessing a photo of a minor, even if you're just a teen yourself.

Source: *National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*

Resources:

- ⊗ The Institute for Responsible Online and Cell Phone Communication's "Sexting is Stupid" program, <http://www.sextingisstupid.com/>
- ⊗ National Campaign to Prevent Teenage and Unplanned Pregnancy's Sex and Tech survey, www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech

Source: Adapted from 09.27.09 Southtown Star

Our Children



The newest edition of National PTA's magazine, *Our Children*, is all about how families can become advocates for their children at school and communicate better with teachers and school staff. The October/November includes articles on proper nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and an interview with Arkansas Sen. Blanche Lincoln. See:

http://pta.org/pta_magazine.asp
for featured articles.

Watch for the 2010 Census

By: Audrey McAdams, District 28 Legislation Consultant

Every ten years the U.S. constitution requires a headcount of everyone residing in the United States. The next Census questionnaire will be mailed to every household in March 2010. The questions ask you to provide information that is accurate for your household as of April 1, 2010. The ten questions will ask you to provide information that is accurate for your household at that time. You will answer questions for each person living at the same address. They will ask for each person's name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and how long they have lived at the address. All your responses are protected by law. None of the responses will ever be shared with any other agencies. If you do not answer the questionnaire, a Census worker will come to your home. These people will be identified by a Census badge.

The Census information is of vital importance. Census counts directly affect how more than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and much more. That's more than \$3 trillion over a 10-year period of time. This information is important to our local community for planning decisions, such as where to provide services for the elderly, where to build new roads and schools, or where to locate job training centers.

Look for the schools to be including education on the Census for all the students enrolled.

Lillian E. Glover Scholarships

In 2010, Illinois PTA will be awarding 10 scholarships to graduating seniors who will be entering into an university or college's education program. Two scholarships will be awarded to each of the five field service areas of Illinois, one at \$2500 and one at \$1500.

Scholarship applications are on the website www.illinoispta.org and should be in your local high school guidance office.

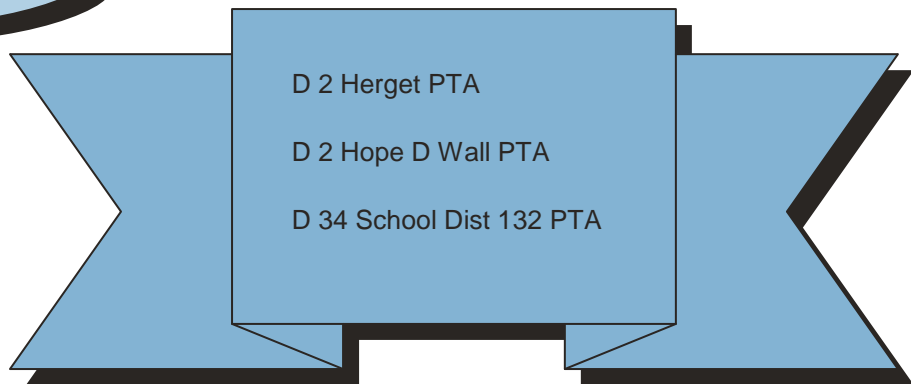
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