

Missouri Parent Teacher Association

CONTACT

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MOPTA Leaders Training Camps *by Catherine Sweeney, VP & Director of Field Service*

Once again Missouri PTA brought leader/officer training to your local area. This year Missouri PTA provided workshops which included last year's offering of President's, Treasurers, Secretary, and Membership. New this year, MOPTA offered Advocacy training and Bylaws training. Local leaders joined us to gain knowledge in the basics as first time leaders or expanding their skills as PTA seasoned leaders. The regions which hosted training camps were Gateway, Three Trails, Pony Express, Heritage and Ozark. Over 280 local leaders attended these training and while the workshops were very helpful, the ability to network with other local leaders allowed them to gain valuable insight as to what other units are doing. Networking is one of the most valuable tools available during all of the training events hosted by Missouri PTA. Missouri PTA wishes to thank all the attendees, presenters and councils which supported these training camps. Please watch for training opportunities available through Missouri PTA.

Front Cover: Photos from Leadership Training Camps in the Gateway, Three Trails (Independence and Lees Summit), Ozark (Springfield), and Pony Express (Park Hill) Regions.

**Cover photo:
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President's Message *by Kim Weber, Missouri PTA President*



Common Core State Standards Level the Playing Field for All Students

The Common Core State Standards clearly define the basic standards of math and English that all students should master at each grade level, regardless of where they live. The political pressure in some states to repeal the Common Core dumfounds me – why would parents, educators and legislators not want to be sure that students in their state are getting the same high quality education as students in other states?

My daughters were fortunate in that they attended school in the same district throughout their years in public education. But this was a choice my husband and I made, forgoing possible job promotions and transfers that would have moved us to other states. Among the goals of the Common Core is to have a consistent standard of education so that no matter where a student resides he or she graduates from high school prepared to handle college-level classes or successfully enter the workforce. If the Common Core State Standards had been in place when my daughters were in school, we would not have had to make the choice to turn down job opportunities as we would have had assurance that they would receive the same quality of education in another state.

Research has shown that high school diplomas are not all equal. Research also shows that as many as 40 percent of college students need some kind of remedial coursework just to bring them up to where they need to be to succeed. Although my daughters received a quality education and achieved good grades in school, we were shocked to find that neither was prepared for advanced-level math courses when they entered college. At great financial expense to my family, we endeavored to provide them with extra courses and other assistance just to bring them both up to the necessary academic level.

The Common Core State Standards were developed by leading educators who recognized that the fragmented systems used throughout the United States were not working. The standards increase rigor in every school and provide nationwide clarity and consistency for what all students need to know once they graduate from high school to excel in their studies and the workplace.

In Missouri, legislators recently reached a “compromise” bill to retain the Common Core for at least two years while a working group develops specific Missouri standards. If Missouri students

were only ever to attend college in Missouri and only ever to work in Missouri – never once leaving the state to pursue their goals – I suppose the state having its own set of standards might make sense.

Both of my daughters are studying to be teachers in college, and I'm proud that each wants to become an elementary school teacher. Both of them support the Common Core because they recognize the value in having not just clearly and consistently defined grade-level expectations but the flexibility the standards provide them in designing their own lesson plans. Contrary to the rumors swirling about the Common Core, the standards do not dictate how teachers should teach. The Common Core are standards – curriculum is decided by individual school boards, and then schools and teachers design their own lesson plans to meet the curriculum expectations, which are based on the standards.

In my role as president of the Missouri PTA, I frequently use my daughters as a sounding board to get the “inside scoop” on what is happening in our classrooms. Time and time again, when the Sunday dinner conversation turns to educational standards, my daughters tell me that they know that our students can rise to the occasion of learning the materials they need to master their work. Given their own experience of having to work extra hard in college because their educational foundation hadn't fully prepared them, my daughters understand how important it is to raise the bar and for there to be clearly defined standards for all students nationwide. I sincerely hope that Missouri does not back away from leveling the playing field and increasing expectations for our children via the Common Core.

Who We Are

PTA Vision:
Making every child's potential a reality

PTA Mission ~ PTA is:

- A powerful voice for all children,
- A relevant resource for families and communities, and
- A strong advocate for the education and wellbeing of every child.

PTA Purposes

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship
- To raise the standards of home life
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teacher may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education



National PTA President:

A parent's praise for Common Core

By Otha Thornton

Picture this: you are a seventh grader whose father is in the military. You and your sister have gotten used to moving every couple of years, based on your father's assignments.

You do your best to fit in at a new school and make friends. But your parents wonder whether the school you left provided you with an education equal to your new one.

As a retired Army officer, I know what it's like to have to research the quality and competitiveness of a state's educational offerings. Now I serve as the president of National PTA (Parent-Teacher Association), and I can definitely say that lack of consistent educational standards and accountability are doing a disservice to our children.

I support the Common Core Standards. It has been very disappointing to read criticisms from Erick Erickson and a host of others who are reacting to parts of the program instead of looking at its entirety.

The fact is, experts from 48 states were involved in drafting the standards, which were also shaped by more than 11,000 public comments. The standards address only the core competencies of English and math and are in no way meant to encompass all of the subjects we expect schools to teach.

But I strongly disagree with his assessment of the Common Core based not just on my own research but from the feedback National PTA has gotten from millions of parents and teachers.

In fact, recent efforts by our association that reached 3 million parents electronically and included face-to-face conversations with 60,000 more parents indicate that 87 percent of those we spoke with support the Common Core.

National PTA represents millions of children in the United States and at Department of Defense schools abroad, and we are uniquely positioned to interact daily with hundreds of thousands and parents and educators. What we hear from both groups is overwhelming support for the Common Core because students are gaining a more substantive understanding of what they are studying.

There is consistency not just among school districts but throughout states – and students, parents and educators all have confidence that high academic standards extend beyond state borders. Finally, we can have assurance that a high school senior in North Carolina is receiving the same quality education as a senior in Colorado.

The most commonly repeated myth about Common Core is that the standards were developed in secret and forced onto the states. This is completely false. The federal government had no role in developing the standards. Forty-five states adopted the standards in a manner consistent with state laws, which are generally developed by state Boards of Education.

Last December, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development released the results of its 2012 worldwide testing of 15 year-old students in mathematics, science and reading literacy. The United States scored slightly above average in reading, average in science, and below average in math. This is clear proof that whatever "standards" were in place before Common Core were not working.

As a nation, we have very high expectations for our children. We expect that their grade-school and high-school educations will provide them a foundation for success in their lives.

We do our children a disservice not to couple those high expectations with meaningful assessment and accountability measures. The Common Core standards are not a curriculum – they are benchmarks that every state-developed curriculum must meet.

I recently heard from one of our members, a veteran first-grade teacher in Ohio who has taught under both the former method and Common Core.

Her experience with Common Core has been significantly better for her students. As she related, the Common Core standards do not force her to teach in a way that might not be beneficial for young learners. Instead, she has the flexibility to design lesson plans instead of being restricted to pre-planned lessons.

During February, her students wrote about significant African-American historical figures using narrative writing – a high-reaching goal for such young students but one in which their teacher said they excelled. In fact, this teacher said her students are writing better pieces now than they ever have due to the high standards and flexibility of the Common Core.

My children received an excellent education in all of the schools they attended. With Common Core, all parents can be assured that their children will receive similar excellence in their schools. The many critics of Common Core focus on myths that have no basis in reality. To paraphrase what we all learned in kindergarten, if you can't speak the truth, then at least stop spreading misinformation.

Otha Thornton is president of National PTA and a member of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education.

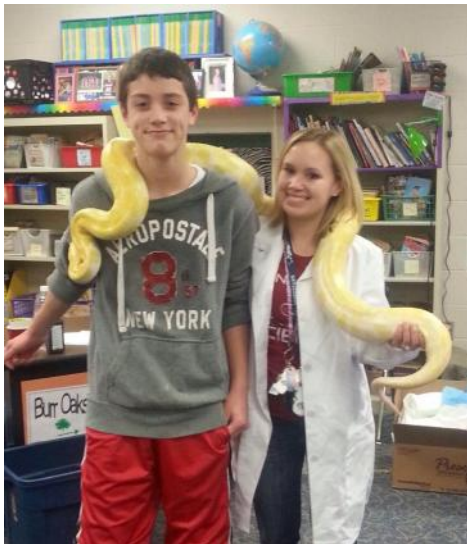
PTA Science Night

By Lisa Smallwood, Three Trails Regional Director

Who doesn't love Science? At Sni-A-Bar Elementary we have to say that Science is one of the favorite subjects and our PTA agrees!! One of our favorite events of the year is our annual PTA Science Night. This event not only involves our students, but we also are very fortunate to be able to utilize different people and organizations from our community. A good portion of the school year leading up to the event is spent planning for this informational, fun and exciting night. We typically need to hold this event in the spring to allow time for all of the planning and science experiments to be complete.

Sni-A-Bar PTA strives for community involvement and this event really promotes a number of different educational people and organizations from around our area. We work together with the high school community service advisor, who gathers student volunteers to help run our "stations". When we have student volunteers operating our science stations, it gives our elementary students' parents the opportunity to actually participate with their child. It proves to be a win-win opportunity. Our high school robotics team is very helpful and proud to bring over their robots and mechanical projects to share with our elementary students. Not only does this provide part of our "stations", but the high school students earn community service hours towards their goal for graduation. Again.... a win-win situation.

One of our more messy stations would have to be our "create your own fossil" station. Our high school industrial technology teacher saves us wood shavings, and our local girl scout troop



provide the animal impressions for this station. The girl scout leaders often operate this particular station. Girl scouts is another fantastic organization that volunteer their time to come and help. As we all know, science has multiple facets. The students always enjoy the messy stuff, but we have found that they also are extremely interested in the

animal and astronomy side of science too. In order to provide stations to meet the informational needs in these areas, we invite several additional agencies to participate. Our local conservation department will bring fossils, animal skins, live reptiles, bugs,

etc. to share with the students. We invite students to bring in any "odd" or "exotic" pets that they may have and they join in the animal information room. How exciting it is to include our



students and they are just as excited to share their own information with everyone! The astronomy aspect of science is shared with our students by a local astronomer who brings his professional telescopes to the event. Science night is held in the evening, which works perfect for seeing the rings of Jupiter!

We are fortunate to have a teacher on staff at our elementary who loves science just as much as we do. She puts her heart and soul into this

event and works with a select number of students who join "Science Club". Science Club students stay after school a couple of times a week for several weeks working on a science experiment. This is all voluntary and sponsored by PTA. The students come up with an experiment idea and follow through with the entire process of proving/disproving their theories. PTA provides the materials needed for each experiment and the projects are set up for display during Science Night. Not only do the experiment projects provide extra learning time at school, but they also incorporate at home learning with family. This is another win-win for the students and the community!

PTA Science Night has proven to be a fabulous program at our school. Science is a never ending topic which provides an infinite amount of learning material everywhere you look. It is definitely a program that has continued to grow each year in participants as well as in stations that we are able to accommodate. Do not be afraid to reach out to the community for help! Our most successful events have only been so because of the generosity of people and their time.



Missouri PTA Scholarship Recipients Announced

By Donna Petiford, Immediate Past President & Missouri PTA Scholarship Chair

We are pleased to introduce our 2014 scholarship recipients. These recipients were chosen from a number of applications based on their academic integrity, community service, recommendations from teachers and counselors and their desire, passion and commitment to the teaching profession. Missouri PTA is proud of the accomplishments of these young people and we look forward to their future success as students and as teachers. Congratulations to the class of 2014 and to these outstanding students.



Breanna Barber is a graduate of Bolivar High School in Bolivar, MO. Due to participating in dual enrollment, Breanna graduates high school with 43 college credit hours and she will be able to begin education classes this fall at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar. Breanna has been active in FFA, softball, track, NHS, FCA, Foreign Language Club (FLC), choir, cadet teaching, peer tutoring, church youth ministry and was an honor roll student in high school and at SBU. Breanna looks forward to becoming a Mathematics teacher and to help “prepare children for what is ahead of them and give them the tools to succeed.” Her goal is to “put knowledge in the minds” of her students “and love in their hearts.”



Billy “Blane” Redus is a graduate of Marionville High School in Marionville, MO. He plans to attend Missouri State University this fall to become an Elementary or Special Education teacher. He graduated as Valedictorian of his class and was also active in FBLA, NHS, Science Club, track, basketball, tutoring and was an honor roll student. His passion for teaching is in part due to the many members of his family who are teachers or administrators. “I believe there is no job greater...our future depends on the proper education of the generation to come. I want to be a positive role model to all the students I encounter. I also want the school to be a safe, encouraging place for kids.”



Allison Burkholder is a graduate of Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia, MO. Allison plans to attend Missouri State University this fall to prepare to teach Elementary Education. She wants to be a positive role model for children and instill in them the importance of a good education. In addition to receiving her school’s Citizenship Award, she has been active in NHS, honor roll, golf, soccer, swimming, student council, Key Club, Language Club, cadet teaching, and has participated in ministry services in her community and on a mission trip to Haiti. “To have the opportunity to make a difference in children’s lives and watch them grow everyday would be something I would love waking up to do.”



Ambyr “Abby” Fossey is a graduate of Lee’s Summit North High School in Lee’s Summit, Mo. Abby plans to study Secondary Education with an emphasis in English and French at Rockhurst University. She has been a member of NHS, French Honor Society, A+ Tutoring, French Club and was named her school’s Social Studies Student of the Year. She also participated in volleyball, cadet teaching and was a tutor in French as well as being a mentor in volleyball camps. Abby wants to “encourage” students and “help them realize their full potential.” “I will aspire to spark their imaginations and encourage them to have opinions while respecting those of others.”



Brooke Rhoads was selected as the recipient of the Helen Maupin Foundation Scholarship. Brooke is a graduate of Oak Park High School in Kansas City, Mo. She plans to attend Park University to prepare for teaching Kindergarten. She has been part of NHS, Quill & Scroll, International Honor Society, Thespian Society, theatre, summer school tutor, and journalism and was Editor in Chief of her school’s newspaper. Brooke has a passion “for educating and inspiring others.” Her goal is to “help students by teaching the skills necessary to be an individual, productive member of society and lifelong learners.”

Missouri PTA scholarship applications are available in December in each high school with at least one PTA unit “in good standing” in its district. Since the 1920’s, our goal in providing scholarship opportunities is to help outstanding students realize their dream of becoming teachers. Each scholarship recipient will receive a stipend of \$500 per year up to a maximum of \$2,000 (subject to continued eligibility).

The Missouri PTA Scholarship Program is funded by scholarship investment income and receives continuing financial support from contributions by local units and councils of the Missouri PTA, as well as individual gifts and memorials. The fund receives additional support from one-half (1/2) the proceeds from each Missouri PTA Distinguished Service Award and all proceeds from the sale of each Missouri PTA 100th anniversary commemorative book Honor, Celebrate, Imagine. Missouri PTA appreciates the support of its member units and councils in helping perpetuate these awards.

Showcasing the Winners

By Susan Rupert, Vice President & Director of Programs



“Believe, Dream, Inspire” was the 2013-2014 Reflections Theme

Missouri PTA holds the Reflections Showcase event each year to honor those students that place at the state level in the six art categories; dance choreography, visual arts, film production, visual arts, literature, and music composition. This year the showcase was held Saturday, April 26th at the Rock Bridge High School Performing Arts Center located in Columbia. Justin Frieda, vocal instructor at Thomas Hart Benton Elementary School provided musical entertainment for the listening pleasure of attendees prior to the showcase. Photography and visual arts entries were on exhibit for viewing. First place artworks in all of the categories were highlighted during the program. Families and guests enjoyed live performances in dance choreography and music composition. Literature winners were invited to the stage to recite their original pieces while film production winners were projected on the “big screen” for all to see. All Missouri PTA Reflections winners were awarded medals or ribbons in recognition of their outstanding achievements. Scholastic Photography demonstrated their support of the arts and Missouri’s children by graciously sponsoring the showcase again this year. This is the third year they have been a sponsor of the event and Missouri PTA greatly appreciates their support. We would also like to say thank you to the Columbia School District and Rock Bridge High School for their wonderful hospitality and allowing us to hold the event at their wonderful facility.

Missouri Students Receive National Honors

Missouri PTA is proud to announce that three entries advanced to the national judging round of Reflections have been selected to receive recognition from National PTA.

Award of Excellence – Grant Pace, High School Visual Arts

Grant is a sophomore at Park Hill South in the Park Hill School District. His artwork entitled “Reverie” is a very detailed drawing done in colored pencil on paper. In his artist statement, Grant describes how “Reverie” relates to this year’s theme. “An outlandish performing arts group once transformed their surroundings into a transcendental dream before my eyes. This inspired me to see the extraordinary in very ordinary aspects of life that I previously overlooked; my newfound perspective expressed in “Reverie”. A mason jar captivated me with the way it refracted light in its shadow. Such simple things synergistically produced pulchritudinous moments that I stopped to admire.

Anyone can lessen the boundary between dreams and reality. There are weirdly wonderful things all around us. We just have to search for them with open eyes, shaping the waking world into an imaginative reverie”.

National PTA awards three Awards of Excellence per Division of Each Arts Area and one Special Artist of Each Arts Area. Grant will receive a \$200 cash award, a silver-plated Reflections medallion and a certificate and letter signed by Otha Thornton, National PTA President. His artwork will also be recognized in the annual PTA Reflections online gallery

Award of Merit – HyunJun Yoo, Middle School Music Composition

“Inspiring Dream” is an original composition written for the piano written by HyunJun Yoo. He is a sixth grader at West Junior High in the Columbia School District. HyunJun describes the entry in his artist statement by saying “I made this piece as a “dream” theme, because dreams are inspiring. I also used some minor chords because they sound spiritual”

Award of Merit – Lydia Cooney, Intermediate Dance Choreography

“With my choreography, I tried to show how big my dream is to become a great dancer. I also shared my beliefs and what inspires me” is how Lydia says her entry, “Believe Dream Inspire” relates to the theme. She picked an instrumental version of the Imagine Dragons’ song “Demons” written by Oliver Chen to dance to. Lydia is a fifth grader at Richardson Elementary in the Lee’s Summit School District.

National PTA awards up to 5 Awards of Merit per division in each arts area. HyunJun and Lydia will each receive a silver-plated Reflections medallion, a certificate and letter signed by the National PTA president, Otha Thornton. They will also be recognized in the annual PTA Reflections online gallery.

Scholastic Photography
... photographing the future!

* See Page 6 for pictures from our Reflections Showcase.



2014 MISSOURI PTA REFLECTIONS SHOWCASE IN COLUMBIA



Why PTA?

By Virginia Pennington, Southwood Elementary PTA President

For me, the why I joined and came to be involved with PTA was easy....I was encouraged to join when my son was in Kindergarten and it seemed like the right thing to do. I didn't know anything about PTA since I didn't come from a family background with a Mom or a Dad involved in PTA. Since I highly value education and want my children to do well in school; PTA seemed like the organization I should be a part of. For me the real importance of answering the question Why PTA?, lies in why I've chosen to volunteer, chosen to stay in PTA, and chosen to run for President. For me, the answer has a personal observation and then a far more reaching observation.

From a very personal standpoint, I choose to be a volunteer in PTA because I want to set an example for my children of the importance of serving others. Fundamentally, I want my children to begin to think outside of themselves to the service of others and see that modeled by their parents. I want to see a child who has seen the selfless serving of their parents in his school and see the leader they are becoming because of their parents. This is the legacy I want to convey to my children. I also want my kids to know that I care about them and their education. I want to be a strong presence. Please know that as you give your time to volunteer, you are setting a strong example of the importance of serving others and you are showing your children that they are important and their education is important.

From a far more reaching observation, from the first conference I went to after choosing to become membership chair to each state convention I have been privileged to attend, I have come to know more about the strong history and legacy of our PTA and the importance it has today for the welfare of our nation's children.

When the PTA founders came together as the National Congress of Mothers back in 1897, they didn't want to build a discussion group that would talk about reform. They wanted to create an association of advocates who would be a voice for our nation's students. Their original mission statement read, "The National Congress of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color, or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood. Its platform is the universe, its organization – the human race." By creating a roots-to-treetop association, these women, led by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst, brought about real and lasting changes. Among the legacies of those PTA founders, and the generations of volunteer leaders and members that followed, are the establishment of kindergartens, compulsory education, child labor laws, the Public Health Service, the juvenile justice system, hot and healthy lunch programs and mandatory immunizations. Yes, the PTA's history is rich, and I am proud to be a part of this history.

But it doesn't stop there. The PTA mission is as important today as ever. Today's PTA is still a vital, vibrant, and vocal

association. Our challenges today are as daunting as the ones our founders faced back in 1897. Public education is under attack. I am a product of a great public education, and I am proud that PTA continues to advocate for better public education. I am proud that PTA advocates for Family Engagement in Education. In July, the PTA-inspired Family Engagement in Education Act was introduced in both Houses of Congress with sponsors from both parties. The Act would-without adding a penny to the federal budget-help states and schools establish family engagement programs that meet the goals of PTA's National Standards for Family School Partnerships. Family engagement is one of the most cost-effective ways to enhance learning. Studies have shown that every time we move a student's caregivers-mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles- from the "no involvement category" to the "slightly engaged" category, it is equivalent to a \$1,000 increase in per-pupil spending. We as volunteers make a difference and we need to be advocating for this bill to pass.

This year, I took the bold step of enrolling our school and PTA in the newly rejuvenated National PTA School of Excellence. This program is designed to help PTA's strengthen family-school partnerships in three areas: student learning, arts and cultural exploration, and health and safety. National PTA knows that the path to excellence starts with a joint commitment of PTA volunteers and school leaders working together to welcome all families, communicate effectively, support student success, speak up for every child, share power, and collaborate in the community. I am pleased with the progress we have made and will continue to make with the goal we set out under this program. While recognition would be awesome, more importantly, I am grateful to see our parents and teachers/staff working together for our children's success. It is my hope and desire to continue to improve and strengthen the relationships between teachers and parents as well as involve our community partners in working towards the same goal of educating and protecting our children.

Why do I do it? Why in the midst of working a full time job, having children involved in other extracurricular activities, running a Girl Scout Troop, being involved in church, being a wife and a Mom, why take on a position (or positions) in PTA and sacrifice countless hours of time off from work, not to mention the loss of numerous hours of sleep, etc. Why?? **Because I believe in the mission of PTA.** I care about my children; I care about your children; and I care about the welfare & education of all children. I know many have that same passion, so I challenge you to spread the word by telling your story. Great things are in store as we join together as the Southwood PTA (yes, the Parent-Teacher Association) and advocate for our children and their future.

We Resolve – new National PTA resolutions

By Dorothy Gardner, Missouri PTA President-Elect

Holding true to our roots, PTA came together this convention as advocates to pass two resolutions that will establish and widen our collective voice on matters that affect children's lives.

Inclusive Schools Build Stronger Communities is a resolution whose roots were planted by student's disappointment and frustration that their fellow students with special needs were not able to participate in the same graduation ceremony. While all children are susceptible to bullying, those with special needs are statically more likely to be on the adverse end of bullying. Studies have revealed that 60% of students with disabilities report being bullied regularly, compared to 25% of all children. By striving to create an environment that actively works to include all children, every child, including those with special needs, will have the foundation they need to reach their own potential. This resolution urges collaborative efforts between PTAs and experts in education to provide education on special needs children, research

programs that excel at being inclusive, and work with all involved in the school community to create an inclusive environment.

Effects of Media and the Development of the Female Self-Esteem resolution focuses on the adverse effects media exposure can have on girls self worth. This resolution strives to promote education for parents on the impact of media on self-esteem, limit the amount of non-academic media exposure in schools, encourage the development of educational materials on self-esteem and body image in health curricula, and conduct assemblies or group assemblies that support the self-esteem development. There was quite a bit of discussion on why boys had been predominantly left out of the resolution. Many wanted to send the resolution back to committee to make it more reflective of both boys and girls. Numerous delegates pointed to personal stories of boys who also suffer from self-esteem issues due to media exposure. Those in favor of the resolution felt this oversight could be fixed with and updated or amended resolution at the next convention. With time running out, the majority of the delegates decided it would be better to have a limited voice on the position than none.

A Book - A Gift

By Dorothy Gardner, Missouri PTA President-Elect

PTA participated in a special project this convention that directly touched the lives of 1000 children. Children's Bookstore agreed to team up with PTA to place a book in the hands of children in Austin. Do you remember that awesome feeling going to the school book fair and after much thought and contemplation picking out you own book. For many children this is a dream but not a reality. Convention registrants each received a card denoting the age and sex of the child for whom to select a book to be donated. We all visited Children's Bookstore's booth in the exhibit hall and browsed through the books to find something special for the child on our card. After selecting our books we placed our card in the book and the donation was complete. This was a great way to keep in focus why we do what we do. It's not just about our own children but all children. Children's Bookstore is an online book fair company. You can find out more information about this company at www.childrensbookstore.com



Members from the Missouri PTA Board of Managers making their donations. Left to right: Meagan Gardner, Student Representative; Steven Cook, Student Involvement Chair & Sonia Taylor Smith, Gateway Regional Director

Family Reading Experience

By Dorothy Gardner, Missouri PTA President-Elect

Have you checked out the awesome Family Ready Experience program developed by PTA? If not this might be just the family engagement program your unit has been looking for. The Family Reading Experience is a fun-filled, literacy-focused, family engagement program intended for families with children in grades K-5. Personally, since my own children are 16 and 20, I had never had the opportunity to see this program in action prior to this past national convention. It was a blast! And since my youngest, Meagan, was also at convention for the Youth Summit we were able to play as a family. However, she didn't need much help from me. Separated into groups, we traversed the tables in the workshop playing games available in the Family Reading Experience such as Rhyme Bingo, Storytelling (our favorite), Create a Match, Punctuation Toss, and Definition Expedition. Our theme 'Under the Sea' made us giggle, down right laugh, and engage in deep thought as we tried to come up with Sea theme words for Rhyme Bingo.

All the resources your PTA needs to make this program a reality are available free of charge because you are a PTA. Yep those dues create wonderful resources. Everything from promotional templates to the actual games can be found at <http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3563&navItemNumber=3668>.

Check it out. This program is a great way to not only bring families together and promote literacy but also highlight the wonderful things that makes you PTA.

WANTED

IDEAS & EXAMPLES OF
HOW YOUR PTSA STUDENTS
ARE INVOLVED!!!!

REWARD

*INFORMATION & FRIENDSHIPS
THAT LAST A LIFETIME!!!*

Meet the new Student Involvement Chair

Let me introduce myself. My name is Steven Cook and I am the new Student Involvement Chair for Missouri PTA. I am a parent to a wonderful 6th grader, who happens to be one of two Student Representatives for Missouri PTA. I am a 1st grade teacher, teaching for 17 years in the state of Missouri. I am a PTA unit treasurer, former president and vice president. I am a council vice-president. Last, but not least, *I am PTA!*

I would like to first say **THANK YOU** for all your wonderful support and give my wish for a continued successful PTA year. We are in need of your assistance as we reflect on the 2013-2014 school year, as well as plan for a successful 2014-2015 school year.

What we need are **ideas and examples of how your PTSA students are involved**. It can be from the smallest aspect to a grander scale. We value our kiddos and would love to know what they are up to in their units or districts. These ideas will be shared with the Missouri PTA Board of Managers, as well as other units throughout the state.

Our two student representatives for Missouri PTA, Myranda and Meagan, are vigorously coming up with ideas for our 99th annual PTA State Convention on October 17-19, 2014 at the Doubletree Hotel in Chesterfield, MO. We would love your ideas for our student workshops and would enjoy hearing from all PTSA student members. See you at the State Convention!!!!

Feel free to email me at steven@mopta.org with your ideas and comments.

I Believe in the Power of Stories

by Jamie Manker, Missouri Teacher of the Year

I am a history teacher, because I believe in the power of a good story. Through history, a product of many individual stories that lead to great and often unforeseen consequences, I teach my students the lessons of human spirit, human struggle, and ultimately human success. And because history is complex, full of chapters about almost-villains and almost-heroes, it pushes students to reach beyond generalizations, oversimplifications and easy answers in order to understand those who came before us. My students strive to make sense of history's complexity by using source documents to trace cause and effect, support claims with evidence, draw comparisons, and analyze multiple points of view. These are the same skills emphasized by the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted by the state of Missouri in 2010 and are now being implemented statewide.

Like every teacher, I face challenges that make teaching more difficult. The Common Core State Standards are not one of those challenges. In fact, the standards are helping me become a more effective teacher.

A story about one of my challenges — a former student who was unprepared to succeed — helps explain my support for the Common Core. This sophomore student enrolled in my Advanced Placement world history course well before the Common Core was created. Early in the semester, he wanted to drop the course, arguing that he was in over his head. I convinced him otherwise and began working with him whenever we could find time outside of the class. He became what I considered my teaching success story, living up to every district-level expectation in my high-performing high school. Then he went to college — and dropped out. In actuality, my class had not prepared him for his future.

Since then, the Common Core has given me clear direction as to the educational needs of today's students, because these new

standards are the result of unprecedented cooperation between business leaders, college instructors and classroom teachers. These standards are also unique because for the first time, 45 states have agreed upon a common set of goals, crafted through a collaborative process. This commonality means Missouri students who meet these standards will leave their classrooms prepared for college or a career not only in Missouri, but anywhere in the nation.

Would the Common Core have guaranteed the success of my student had it been in place years earlier? I can't know for sure — choosing to leave college is rarely due to a single factor. But I do know this student's failure forced me to realize that my goals were not reflective of the modern workforce, and changed my teaching. Today, much of my classroom practice is based on the Common Core. Now, instead of telling students they are incorrect and providing them with the answer, I give them the tools to find answers on their own. More than ever before, I am confident that my students are prepared for college and careers when they leave my class.

Teachers believe in these new common goals. We are writing local curricula and choosing resources to support the skills identified in the standards, because we believe these standards reflect true learning. I urge my fellow Missourians to direct your efforts, energy and resources to support the work teachers are already doing in schools across the state. The Common Core State Standards are guiding teachers to ensure Missouri's young people can write their own stories, chart their own paths, and create their own histories.

Jamie Manker, a social studies teacher and department chair at Rockwood Summit High School in Fenton, is the Missouri Teacher of the Year.

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Just Between Friends

Effective **June 30, 2014**, National PTA will not continue its contract agreement with JBF. State and local PTA offices may continue their relationship with JBF to provide membership database solutions to their members. Should you have questions you may contact:

Just Between Friends

Manor Oak One, Suite 600, 1910 Cochran Road Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Phone: [412-561-0500](tel:412-561-0500)

Email: https://www.justbetweenfriends.com/php/contact_us

2014-2015 Membership Theme

T.N.T. TODAY, NOT TOMORROW

By Rebecca Cahill, VP & Director of Membership Services

MEMBERSHIP IS THE FOUNDATION OF PTA
TODAY is the day to be a voice for our children
TODAY is the day to advocate for their well-being
TODAY is the day to join PTA...

- **Have you set a date to meet with your Membership Committee**

Today is the day! Recruit a committee and assign responsibilities. One person cannot do everything, so assign volunteers according to their talents, and no one will be overwhelmed. Be sure that you have talked with your unit President and the Principal of the school to enlist support and gain permission to be present at school functions.

- **Have you set a goal for membership?**

Set a goal **Today!** In order to have a successful membership drive, you will need to have a plan of how to get there. Challenge yourself to increase your membership by 5%. Be sure to include diverse demographics in setting your goals. In addition to an increase in members, set a goal to get 20 more male members, or 30 more student members, or 10 business members from the community.

- **Is your budget in place?**

Talk to your PTA board **Today** and communicate your goals and the budget you anticipate needing for the entire 2014/2015 school year. Remember that membership is year-round, and your incentives and drives should include year-round activities and participation.

- **Are your officers and chairpersons members?**

Ask your PTA board, officers and chairpersons to join **Today!** Each of these persons needs to be a member of the PTA, so make sure they are the first to join!

- **Are you planning membership incentives?**

If the answer is, "No", then plan incentives **Today!** Arrange for a local business to help provide membership incentives just for joining your PTA, such as coupons or discounts. Give away a bookmark, pencil, token or other item inscribed with your PTA's name on it when a member joins. Pass out school friendly information with a PTA membership: such as a map of the school, important dates to remember, and how to sign up for your principal's email and/or school closing/weather alerts.

- **Are you ready for "The Question?"**

"What is PTA and why should I join?" If you can't answer right now, then plan your answer **Today!** List 3 things your PTA unit accomplished *last* year and list 3 things your PTA unit plans to accomplish *this* year. Tell them that PTA has been a voice for *ALL* children for over 100 years; that we care about the children in our school, our state, *and* our nation, and that by joining PTA, they are supporting the efforts to ensure our children are safe, healthy and have opportunities for a quality education.

- **What are you doing at Back to School Night, or the first day of school?**

Plan **Today** for how you are going to kick off your membership drive! Recruit volunteers to help you at the membership table, to welcome parents and students to classrooms and help with directions, and to be a smiling, welcoming face to the school. Plan a "First Day Coffee" off-campus for parents to get together and take the opportunity to promote PTA.

- **How are you going to be visible?**

Be visible in your community and at your school. Ask businesses **Today** if they would be willing to display posters promoting PTA. In return, create methods of recognizing those community partners thanking them for their support of PTA. Make all events, PTA membership events. Be visible on bulletin boards, in school newsletters and on signs thanking teachers, administrators and school board members for being members of PTA.

- **Did you pass out PTA Membership Cards to everyone who joined PTA?**

Membership cards are your PTA member's official access to all the benefits and discounts provided once you join PTA. In addition to all of the online resources, information and trainings available, once the PTA card is activated, members enjoy discounts at Staples, Hertz, Sharp, AARP, eTrak, ifocus, MetLife Auto & Home and RSC. Make the PTA card a tangible benefit at PTA events by offering discounts or free items for showing their PTA cards upon entry. Pass out membership cards **Today!**

- **Did you mail your dues to the state office?**

Remember that if **Today** is the 1st of the month, your dues should be mailed in! No one is officially a member of PTA until their dues are mailed in. Work closely with your Treasurer to fill out the Dues Remittance Form and send in an accurate membership count every month. If you need more membership cards, request them on the Dues Remittance Form.

- **Did you recognize volunteers, your unit's accomplishments, and say "Thank You"?**

Volunteers work hard for our children and deserve recognition. Support from administration, teachers and staff is vital to a successful PTA. When your unit has met membership goals and received awards in recognition of those accomplishments, proudly display them. Say, "Thank You" **Today** for everyone's involvement and work with PTA.



Make **TODAY** the day that
PTA is *My* PTA,
Your PTA, *Our* PTA.

The time for PTA is **T.N.T.**
TODAY, NOT TOMORROW

Reflections 2014-2015

"The world would be a better place if ..." will be the theme for next school year's Reflections program. The Reflections tool kit will be available soon and will have details about the program. Two of the biggest changes will affect how local units will advance their top three entries to the state round of judging and the deadline for this submission. Missouri will be participating in a trial with National PTA that will allow our units to electronically submit their entries. **The deadline to the state office for submissions will be December 10, 2014 at 4 p.m.** Units will need to move their local deadlines to an earlier date in order to meet this deadline.

Remember your unit must be considered in good standing in order to advance entries for the state round of judging. With the new deadline, it will be especially important to meet those December 1st deadlines. It is also vital to provide the office with the contact information of the local Reflections chair as well as the unit president. We will be communicating a lot of the updates/details by email this year. If you would be interested in volunteering on the state level and helping with the state Reflections program please contact Susan Rupert, VP & Director of Programs, at susanr@mopta.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

July:

UV Safety Month
Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month
4 Independence Day—BE SAFE!!!
PTA Office Closed

August:

National Immunization Awareness Month
Children's Eye Health & Safety Month
3 International Friendship Day
13 International Left-Hander's Day

September:

National School Success Month
1 Labor Day-PTA Office Closed
1 Membership Dues
11 Patriot Day



Back to School Kit

Remember, you must register your unit at the link provided to get your materials. The Back to School kit is full with valuable tools, templates, and materials that truly will make your position and job a lot easier. Please take time today to set up your delivery to receive your kit that works for your schedule, but do SCHEDULE it as soon as possible.

PTA.org/OfficialKit

Child Advocacy Day

Missouri PTA was proud to once again participate in the Child Advocacy Day, April 1, 2014 at the state capital.



Pictured from left to right:

Kim Weber, Missouri PTA President

Dorothy Gardner, Missouri PTA President-Elect

Carrie Windes, Springfield Council PTA

Donna Petiford, Immediate Past President Missouri PTA

Dot Atkinson, Springfield Council PTA

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MO PTA Scholarship Chair: Donna Petiford dpetiford@mopta.org



**MISSOURI PTA
2014
CONVENTION**

**OCTOBER
17-19, 2014
CHESTERFIELD**