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MISSOURI PTA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Awarding a Distinguished Service Award is a great way to recognize and honor an extraor.

This award is a wand as a service and honor an extraor. Awarding a Distinguished Service Award is a great way to recognize and honor an extraor person for their service and dedication to PTA. This award is a wonderful way to show gratitud appreciation for a person's devotion to the children and the purposes of PTA.

The Missouri Distinguished Service Award fee is \$25.00, divided equally between the Missouri The Missouri Distinguished Service Awaru ice is \$25,00, uivided equally between the Missouri Scholarship Fund and the Missouri PTA general fund. This award includes a letter of recognition and a large rice. from the state president, a certificate suitable for framing, and a lapel pin.

Please type all the information on the form below. Names should be spelled, as they are to appear the certificate. Allow two weeks for delivery. Name of Unit or Council presenting award

City

Name(s) and address(es) of honoree(s) must be included to process this award.

Date of Presentation

Contact person ro

Address

Phone

# of Au + Shipping an Total enclosed

Make checks pa

If using a Credit Card Infor

Name

Credit Card N

BELIEVE

in the Joy o

Volunteering

## PTA Night at "The K"











#### Saturday, May 5th, 2007–6:10 pm Detroit Tigers vs Kansas City Royals

Hip Hip Hooray! It's time for PTA. Head on out to "The K." Enjoy a night with friends and family from your school-Wear your school colors too!

- ▶ **Parade** around the ballpark with everyone from all the schools PTA's in attendance (minimum of 500 in attendance) Line up in the parking lot behind the scoreboard by 5:15 pm
- ▶ Buck Night \$1 Hot Dog, \$1 Sodas, \$1 Peanuts
- ▶ First Pitch thrown out by PTA President whose school sold the most tickets

All money needs to be turned into you by April 6th, 2007. The money should then be sent in one check made out to the Kansas City Royals by Monday, April 9, 2007–Tickets will then be sent back to you ASAP. Email Jen Hyland at jen.hyland@royals.com with any questions.

#### PTA Night at "The K" Leader Order Form

Detach and mail back to Kansas City Royals Mail Order Department, One Royal Way, KC, MO 64129. Form due back the week of April 9, 2007.

| Name   |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Address  |                                 |
| City   | State Zip                       |
| School   |                                 |
| Phone  |                                 |
| Number of Outfield Plaza Tickets   | X <b>\$10.00</b> (reg \$14) =\$ |
| Parking  | X \$ 7.00 (reg \$9) =\$         |
| A check will be accepted. Checks need to be made out to the Kansas City Royals | Processing Fee \$ 3.00          |
| Check Number   | TOTAL = \$                      |
|  |                                 |

All orders will be returned to you for Distribution.

5/5JH

#### **Departments**

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PLEASE SHARE THIS MAGAZINE.

Information from this magazine may be excerpted for other PTA publications as long as credit is given to Missouri PTA and any byline that may appear with the item must be included.

National PTA Office: 330 North Wabash Ave Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60611-3690

Phone: 312-670-6782 (670-NPTA),

www.pta.org.

MO PTA 800-328-7330

## Missouri PTR President's Message: The Joy of Volunteering



By Kathy Nevans, Missouri PTA president

How do you recognize your volunteers? Is it through a grand party, an afternoon tea, their name in the newspaper, flowers, or chocolate? For me, a note of personal thanks

or a special phone call means a whole lot. But everyone is different as are the reasons why people volunteer. I am positive it is **NOT** the pay or it's NOT because you have nothing else to do. So why do you volunteer? I volunteer because for me it is the right thing to do. Someone needs help. I have some time and some ability (ok, the jury is out on this point at times) but to be honest, it makes me feel good. I love working with the kids at schools. I like the way they look at you as though you are so important when all you did was help them with their reading or writing. I love the way the kids spot me at the store, and say, "Mom, there's the lady who helped me today" or they stand behind their parent and peek to see if I will notice them. I love the way a teenager comes up to me and reminds me of something I did when they were in grade school. I love the way kids feel they can approach me and know that I care for them "just because". Volunteering has given me all these wonderful awesome feelings and memories in my life that

make me know that I have made a difference in the lives of children.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve...you only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." National Volunteer Appreciation week is **April 15-21.** So I ask you again, what will you do for your volunteers? The creativity of PTA members is endless and I would love to hear of some of the ways you intend to celebrate the work of your PTA, the true wealth of your PTA.... the volunteers! Please send me an email (kathyn@mopta.org) and let me know. If I receive enough ideas, we will put them up on the Missouri PTA website to give others ideas on how to honor their volunteers. Thanking and appreciating our volunteers is not just an April event only; it is an every day, every week opportunity.

So for all of you, here is my thank you: Dear P7A Volunteer.

Thank you for what you do for the children of your school and your community. You are special and I want you to know how appreciative I am for you. You are a gift that I thank God for everyday.

My sincerest appreciation. Kathy Nevans



- 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 teachers 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

#### **Who We Are**

The MISSION of PTA:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of the nation

The PURPOSES of PTA:

• To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.

# Teacher Appreciation Week — Renewing a Partnership



By Anna Weselak, National PTA president

Teachers are very special people and PTA has long promoted the partnership of parents and teachers. One of PTA's premier events of the year is Teacher Appreciation Week when we

celebrate the contributions of these dedicated women and men.

PTAs across the country recognize Teacher Appreciation Week this year from **May 6–12**, making it the perfect time to emphasize the importance of parent-teacher partnerships. Plan events to show appreciation for the contributions teachers and school staff make to children's lives.

Try a few new ideas this year. Ask students to draw pictures or write thank-you notes to their teachers and add in thank-you notes from parents, too. Consider putting flowers in the teachers' lounge. Stock the staff lounge with gourmet coffee and teas or plan a special teachers-only breakfast served by parents and students. For more ideas, go to PTA's Great Idea Bank at www.pta.org.

Teacher Appreciation Week is a wonderful time to honor teachers and renew the partnership between parents and teachers that help students achieve success.

#### PTA Parent College Prep

If you have a high school student in your house, it is likely that the subject of college has come up more than once. Even if your children are much younger, it is never too early to start thinking ahead. As a parent, you may find the idea of sending your child to college overwhelming, but The PTA Parent is here to help!

#### Financing College

The government expects parents to contribute to the cost of college. This means that parents need to develop a plan and invest their money wisely so that sufficient funds will be available when it's time to pay for college.

Investing early helps parents maximize their financial gains. But it is never too late to start saving. Below are several investment vehicles that parents might want to consider and discuss with a financial adviser. (Keep in mind that plan availability and restrictions can vary by state.):

- •529 college savings plans Federal income taxes are not applied to deposits or qualified withdrawals. Allowed annual investment in the account is considerably higher than for many of the other plans, and relatives may contribute.
- Prepaid tuition plans Under this type of plan, credit hours or semesters are purchased at today's prices and are then

- redeemed in the future, regardless of cost increases. These plans are usually limited to tuition and fees. Typically, the beneficiary has to live in the state of the plan in which they are enrolled.
- •Roth IRA Assets grow tax-deferred; after five years, funds can be withdrawn tax-free for individuals who are at least 591/2 years old and spent any way the contributor desires. There are limitations on how much can be invested annually.
- •Education IRA (Coverdell Education Savings Accounts) - Assets grow taxdeferred. The funds may be used towards qualified expenses (such as tuition, fees, books, etc.) in elementary, secondary, or higher education. An additional benefit is that corporations and other entities are allowed to make contributions.
- •Uniform Gifts/Transfer to Minors Act
  Accounts These accounts allow parents
  or relatives to transfer or gift assets to a
  minor--even real estate or art. When the
  child becomes a legal adult, he or she has
  full control over the account. Withdrawals
  from the account may be used for any
  purpose.

For more information about preparing your child for life after high school visit PTA Goes to Work at www.pta.org.

#### **Building Successful Partnerships**

Building Successful Partnerships (BSP) is the name of National PTA's parent involvement program. It is based upon the National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement.

- National PTA trainers deliver this program all over the country each year, upon request of state PTAs.
- The program's purpose is to increase

awareness of the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement.

• As a result of the sessions, the trainees become "presenters," giving presentations

- on this topic
- Over 800 presenters have been trained to deliver Building Successful Partnerships since 2000.

To request information about Building Successful Partnerships training, contact Customer Service (info@pta.org).

To order the Building Successful Partnerships book or a copy of the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs published by National Education Service, visit www.solution-tree.com.

In 2005, Building Successful Partnerships training sessions and materials are made possible with the help of a grant from MetLife Foundation.



### Volunteering with a Passion



Typically volunteers are most effective when they are working in an area where they have passion. Meet Trina VerSteeg. At age six, she was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Did you know that over 300,000 kids in the state of Missouri are affected with JRA? Because Trina knows firsthand the effects of this disease, she wants to "give back" while helping others with the same ailment. Trina is proud to organize and host a 5K in the spring to raise funds for JRA Foundation. The JRA 5K is a charity race, which raises funds for juvenile rheumatoid arthritis research and public awareness. Runners and walkers of all ages are encouraged to participate. This year's event will be the fourth annual and it will be held on Saturday, April 7th at Sequiota Park in Springfield. The entry fee is \$12 for early registration and \$15 the day of the race. All proceeds go directly to the JRA Foundation. Starting time is 8:00 a.m. Trina would encourage families to come and join in this worthwhile event. For more information, contact Trina Versteeg at 417-894-2008 or trversteeg@yahoo.com.



SPONSORED BY

Missouri Regional Poison Center and SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center

May 6 - May 12, 2007

This bike ride on the Katy Trail across Missouri will be held to promote poison prevention awareness.

For more information contact Ivy Tominack at 866-612-5719

#### **National Drop Everything and Read Day**

#### What is National D.E.A.R. Day?

D.E.A.R. stands for Drop Everything and Read. National D.E.A.R. Day is a special reading celebration to remind and encourage families to make reading together on a daily basis a family priority.

#### Who Is Leading the National D.E.A.R. Day Celebration?

Parent Teacher Association (PTA); The National Education Association (NEA); HarperCollins Children's Books; the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association; Reading Rockets; First Book; the Newspaper Association of America Foundation (NAAF); and Ramona Quimby.

#### When is National D.E.A.R. Day?

The National D.E.A.R. Day partners are marking the birthday of beloved author Beverly Cleary as the official event date, **April 12th**. Ramona Quimby is the program's spokesperson.

#### Why is National D.E.A.R. Day celebrated on Beverly Cleary's birthday?

Beverly Cleary receives thousands of letters a year from young readers, many who have participated in D.E.A.R. at school. Their interest in and enthusiasm for this special reading activity inspired Mrs. Cleary to give the same experience to Ramona Quimby, who gets to enjoy D.E.A.R. time with the rest of her class in Ramona Quimby, age 8.

#### How Can I Participate?

Schools, libraries, bookstores, and other organizations are being asked to host Drop Everything and Read events on **April 12**. You can attend an event in your community or participate right in your own home by reading for 30 minutes!

For more information, please access www. dropeverythingandread.com.



#### Spotlight On...Raytown Education eXpress

A Partnership Between the Raytown C-2 School District and the Raytown PTA Council

By Patricia Hudgens, Raytown PTA Council president

After several months of planning, the Raytown Education eXpress (REX) made its debut on Saturday, January 27, 2007. REX is a resource bus that features computer stations where parents can work on PowerParent, books for students and parents, as well as providing a variety of other activities and information sources. It is a converted school bus that was going to be retired by the Raytown school district. It was completely gutted and stripped of seats and aisle materials. Book shelves, cabinets, carpet, hardware, and technology power outlets were installed. A complete renovation from a yellow school bus to an outfitted and inspired education outreach on wheels was born!

**REX** will travel throughout the Raytown School District. It will be on the move to site visits at schools, apartment complexes, community centers, PTA carnivals, and activities. It is definitely an "outreach on wheels".

REX is the result of a district committee, which began in the spring of 2006. The idea originated from a vision of outreach from Dr. Dale Houck, Raytown C-2 superintendent. Michelle Hofmann-Cain, Director of Extended Learning became the key component with organizing and developing the format with members of the Raytown C-2 administration.

"I've come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that's as unique as a fingerprint - and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you."

- Oprah Winfrey

Getting the word out to parents and community members was a high initiative of the committee. Administration and PTA members made the commitment to this great outreach adventure as their partnership.

All levels of education will be showcased throughout this community outreach project. Preschoolers and their parents may check out books and game resources from the "Success by Six" program. Elementary students and parents will find helpful information regarding strategies to increase reading skills. Middle and high school students and parents may review the program of studies, curriculum, and Missouri Assessment Program information, ACT information, scholarship information, and much more. Math activities for all levels will be available. Information on District assistance programs as well as information about the Raytown Emergency Assistance Program (clothing, food, etc.) will be available. District administration, building personnel, and PTA volunteers will be available at each site visit. This outreach will be important for parents who may not have the ability to go to the school building during the day to meet and learn more about their student's school. It will be important for the community to witness their tax dollars at work. REX is an avenue to take the Raytown C-2 school district to parents and community.

**REX** is the product of many of the district's resources. **REX** displays the original artwork of a Raytown South High School freshman who began his efforts on the project as an 8th grader at Raytown South Middle School. The artwork features an inspirational message and mascots from each

of the Raytown Quality Schools buildings.

Last spring, all C-2 students had a chance to submit names for the bus. Both high school Student Councils narrowed down the lists of submissions, and the one name which appeared on both lists was from a Blue Ridge Elementary student. It was Raytown Education Express which soon became named "REX". At Round-Up Days this fall, Raytown High School Key Club members and Raytown South High School National Honor Society members volunteered to spread the word about REX. Display boards represented the many ideas that would go into developing the Raytown Education eXpress.

HCCW students and their instructor are responsible for building cabinetry for the bus and students in Technical Drawing II classes designed the layout for the interior. Interior Design students at Raytown High School, along with their instructor, created the ambience with carpet, tile, paint colors, and accessories. A Westridge Elementary teacher also donated materials and time in the construction phases for the **REX**.

The school district committee has secured resources for the bus including book donations and materials for all levels of the outreach. The Raytown PTA Council and its units work at scheduling volunteers and PTA resources. PTA membership opportunities, PTA promotion, and PTA visibility will be some of the benefits. The outreach of the Raytown School District and Raytown PTA Council together has once again become a high priority to the success of all students of the Raytown School District.



#### Super Star Unit – Clever PTA



Renee Springer, president of the Clever PTA is very excited about their unit! You can see it on her face and hear it in her voice

as she talks about it. Clever PTA, in its second year, has been very successful with a starting year membership of 60 to 198 currently!

Previous to the creation of PTA at Clever, there was a PTC. (Rumor has it that there had been a PTA years before.) Renee was vice-president of the PTC and learned that the president would be moving. She was asked to serve as president for the next year. Renee decided that it was time for a change. She

knew that she would be more comfortable with a organization that had bylaws, checks and balances, and support from regional and state organizations. So she contacted Missouri PTA for more information.

Ozark regional director Charla Bennett was assigned to work with Clever on their unit's organization. She is very proud of their success; she believes that they have been especially successful in "increasing parent involvement outside of the classroom". Charla shares that the Clever PTA officers are "great to work with" and she believes that the unit will continue to do great things for kids.

Renee compliments Missouri PTA for their excellent and "motivating" training

opportunities, including State Convention and Leadership Conference. She and her officers have been diligent in their attendance.

A major portion of their unit's success is attributed to great relationships with elementary principal Bernard and superintendent Richard Henson. Renee shares that the middle school and high school principals have also been supportive. She believes that they are truly "in it" for the children. In addition, at the elementary level, Clever PTA has 100% faculty membership. What a great team!

Clever PTA and Renee Springer, keep up the great work!

#### **What Makes A Great Volunteer**

"I appreciate volunteers who are there when they scheduled and are on time. When they are not able to come, they call dependable!. Also, I am grateful for ones who are willing to do anything and are flexible." Jaclyn – kindergarten teacher

"In my opinion, the best volunteers are those who are self-motivated, dependable, honest, positive and upbeat, and persevere in spite of difficulty."

Jason – HS vocal music instructor

"A good volunteer needs to be reliable and not to interrupt your class, such as visit with their child or let them misbehave. They also need to be reliable by letting you know when they are free and they notify you well in advance if unable to come."

Janet – second grade teacher

"The best volunteer always knows what you need before you do. They never question why or tell you they have a better plan; they just help you and do as you ask."

Julie – HS art teacher

"I love my volunteer this year. She comes every Thursday at the same time. If she can't come, she always calls me to reschedule. It's nice to know that I can count on her to be reliable. She always comes with a smile and asks if she has questions about something. She's very organized. I love my volunteer!" Sarah – third grade teacher

"The best volunteers are the ones that really brighten your day. A volunteer should be able to do what you want--that means listen to what you are saying, so the job is done correctly. My best volunteers learn my routine. They do the job without bothering me. They are very organized. We should also be very respectful of them. They are here to help us and we should appreciate their help. They should be friendly, but not too talkative. They should keep 'what happens in the classroom in the classroom'. Trust is very important." *Janice – HS FACS teacher* 

The best volunteers:

- 1. Are concerned about the students' well-being.
- 2. Contact you beforehand so you know when they are coming.
- 3. Offer assistance with whatever task needs to be done.
- Are decisive, making decisions without asking you every second what to do next but also know WHEN they should ask questions.
- 5. Don't offer unsolicited information to the students without clearing it through the teacher first.
- 6. Are competent in the job that has been assigned to them.

Jody – HS business teacher

The BEST volunteers are dependable, interact with all students--not just their child, maintain confidentiality, are willing to do even the most trivial tasks, and SMILE lots!

Marti – elementary computer teacher

Great volunteers show:

- 1. Dependability being there when they say they will
- 2. Enthusiam willingness to do any task needed
- 3. True interest in students
- 4. Discretion and confidentiality

Dianne and Deb – HS library/media specialists

The best kind of volunteer is one who has a great, positive attitude, especially around the students. Great volunteers are those that ask you if you need any help, instead of you begging for the help. They are dependable and reliable.

Karla – second grade teacher

Qualities of the Best Volunteers:

Proactive, dedicated, committed, ability to follow through with directions, kind hearted, genuine, good spirited, love to help others, yearn to make others' lives better *Marilyn – assistant principal* 

The BEST volunteers for school or for any task are giving, kind-hearted people willing to take their cherished time to help such as those willing to serve as a PTA officer, willing to stand at a copy machine and run of hundreds of copies, then staple them together, and deliver to the teacher, with a statement of "What else can I do now?" These are the type of people that are volunteers because of the love and devotion to their child; they also have love and devotion for their school and community.

Janice – third grade teacher

## How'd They Do That? The Written Word, the Illustrated Word: Incorporating the Arts into the Curriculum Grant - A Parent's Perspective

By Julie Chatman

As I reflect on the implementation of the matching National PTA Reflections Grant, I want to share with you how it came about and empower you to also make a difference with your children's education.

As a University of Missouri Masters of Art Education student and future art teacher, I can see the benefits of an arts education and what a difference it can make on many levels of a child's education. I am concerned with the lack of art instruction currently in the schools. I have seen this firsthand as a parent of a child in the gifted program who, due to scheduling problems, has not had any art classes for the last three years of elementary school. As a former PTSA president, I still read the national PTA emails where I ran across the National Matching Arts Grant to incorporate the arts into our school curriculum. I knew this was something that our school could pull together and actually do. Because of the vested interest of all the parents and members of the Ridgeway PTSA, I knew they would be supportive and match the funding if we were to be awarded this grant. I took the initiative to make a magnanimous (altruistic) change for all the students to benefit from this project. I had the idea to make use of our local resourcesthe University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archeology and to incorporate the arts into the classroom in a cross-curriculum venue incorporating art with reading and writing.

These young learners will make connections to these real works of art and



provided
even more
opportunities
to make
connections
to their
real world
and create
meaning

in their artwork, reading, and writing curriculums. I wanted every child in the school to benefit from this opportunity and that is why we structured our plan to incorporate the learning for all and to give extra support and resources for the 4th and 5th graders.

Well we did earn the grant, one of three awarded in the nation in 2006. We launched the grant right after school started this year with a former Ridgeway alumnus, Dar Hosta (dararts.com), now a children's book artist, writer, and self publisher of children's books on a national level. She spent the day with the Ridgeway family of students, teachers, and a few parents - including her own. She gave an all school presentation in the morning, followed by working with each class to show them what was involved in writing, editing, designing, and illustrating a children's book. Each class had the opportunity to brainstorm a storyline and start writing a book with her that they followed up with their teachers. In addition, this project will be incorporated into one of her future books.

The teachers worked with their students in writing, editing, and illustrating their own books and self publishing their favorite stories within the classroom. I provided the teachers with a kit on simple handmade bookmaking options complete with samples and written instructions. Next, each unit (K-1, 2-3 and 4-5 grades) had their field trip to the MU Museum of Art and Archeology to view "The Art of the Book: Illustration and Design, 1650 to Present" exhibit (maa. missouri.edu/exhibitions.html) where they were exposed to illustrated books produced in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Students also explored the twentieth-century phenomenon of "artists' books," which function primarily as aesthetic objects. Each class rotated their field trip time on campus with the Art Museum, the Museum of Anthropology, and



learning about the visual communication handed down through generations of artifacts including a tour of the Columbia Missourian newspaper press production and the digital

Missourian.

After the field trips, the fourth and fifth graders worked with the art teacher Debi Carrow to make handmade paper for their individual hand-made books and create cover illustrations to

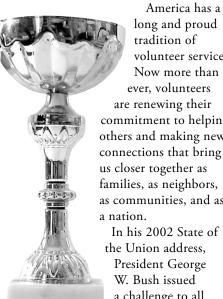
My Sister's Chicken

supplement the books they had written in their classes. The majority of the grant money was used to purchase art supplies and resources.

The culminating activity was a December 14 presentation and reception of the Unit C-fourth and fifth grade students, families and guests, where they rotated through the Art Museum and the students acted as docents for the exhibit they saw on their field trip, watched a PowerPoint of their semester long educational experience and viewed, read, and experienced all of their handmade books in the cast gallery. This story can be found at columbiamissourian.com/news/story.php? ID=23344.

I encourage each of you to take advantage of your local resources and ask for assistance in writing a grant for your school. There are many resources out there that are available to you. You can make a difference!

#### The President's Volunteer Service Award Program



long and proud volunteer service. Now more than ever, volunteers are renewing their commitment to helping others and making new connections that bring families, as neighbors, as communities, and as

In his 2002 State of President George a challenge to all Americans to make time to help their

neighbors, communities, and nation through service. He called on each person to dedicate at least 4,000 hours - or two years - to service over the course of their lives. He created the USA Freedom Corps to help all Americans answer his call to service and help foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility.

In 2003, President Bush created the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to find ways to recognize the valuable contributions volunteers are making in our nation. The Council brings together leaders from the worlds of business, entertainment, sports, education, government, nonprofits, and the media.

The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation created the President's Volunteer Service Award program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and

example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service.

Recognizing and honoring volunteers sets a standard for service to others. It encourages a sustained commitment to civic participation and inspires others to make volunteering a central part of their lives. The President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard - measured by the number of hours served over a 12-month period or cumulative hours earned over the course of

To date, the President's Council has partnered with more than 70 Leadership Organizations and more than 14,000 Certifying Organizations to bestow more than 400,000 awards to the nation's deserving volunteers, including 10,850 in Missouri since 2004. For more information, contact the PVSA at www. presidentialserviceawards.gov/tg/pvsainfo/ dspAboutAwards.cfm.

#### The Benefits of Volunteering & **Parent Involvement**

By Barb Gilmore, Missouri PTA parent involvement/education chair

As the school year starts winding down, all of us that actively volunteer throughout the year for PTA committees, classroom duties, field trips, activities - and the list goes on breath a sigh of relief. By the end of the year, face it...we are all a little winded.

This is the perfect time to remind ourselves that volunteering really counts, for ourselves and our kids, and we need to strengthen our resolve to sign up for next year. Don't start the mantra "let someone else do it next year."

Remember that adults in our schools perform hundreds of hours of service and save millions of dollars each year in schools across the country. Parents, kids, schools, and communities are the ones who benefit from your time of involvement.

Research findings show that the children whose parents volunteer inside the school environment do better academically and

Students gain knowledge and different skills from volunteers - knowledge and skills that many times the teacher doesn't have time

to teach. By interacting with adult volunteers, they become better communicators with adults. Students also start to appreciate the talents and contributions by the adults they interact with on a regular basis.

Parents feel more welcomed and valued within the school confines and gain confidence in their ability to interact with students, and are positive role models. It is tremendously helpful to volunteer because it gives an insight into understanding the teacher's role and the responsibilities of the classroom. It's easier to stay "in tune" with your child's curriculum.

Teachers and administrators gain a much greater appreciation for parents' talents, which in turn broaden their students' learning. By volunteering, you also help teachers learn how to use volunteers effectively in their classroom. Because you're there, they have more time to devote to other issues that concern their students.

So, as the year winds down, wind yourself up, take a deep breath, and pat yourself on the back on a job well done - and look forward to next year!

#### Do You Know Someone Who Deserves an **Award?**

Awarding a Distinguished Service Award is a great way to recognize and honor an extraordinary person for their service and dedication to PTA. This award is a wonderful way to show gratitude and appreciation for a person's devotion to the children and the purposes of PTA.

The Missouri Distinguished Service Award fee is \$25.00, divided equally between the Missouri PTA Scholarship Fund and the Missouri PTA general fund. This award includes a letter of recognition from the state president, a certificate suitable for framing, and a lapel pin.

For more information, go to www.mopta.org/resources.htm and look under Individual Awards.

## HB 609 Provides Hope to Help Teen Drivers

By Scott Jennings, Missouri PTA resolutions

At the Missouri State PTA Convention last year in October, delegates passed two resolutions pertaining to teen driver safety. The first, Driver's Educations and Safety, requested mandatory driver's education in all Missouri high schools. The second, Teen Drivers & Cell Phones, asked for a prohibition against teen drivers using their cell phones while driving.

At least one Missouri state representative, Judy Baker from Columbia, agrees with the intent of our resolutions. Baker has introduced legislation, House Bill 609, which "requires every school district to offer a driver's education course available to students 15 years of age or older and prohibits cell phone use by temporary permit or intermediate license holders."

The statement above is part of the bill's summary, which can be found on the state

House of Representatives website. It parallels the intent of the resolutions that was passed at our convention.

But it isn't just Representative Baker that feels this is an important issue. Eleven of her house colleagues, including the Speaker of the House Rod Jetton, have signed on as

co-sponsors of the bill. And these eleven represent bi-partisan support.

Missouri PTA members need to carefully watch the progress of House Bill 609 and contact their representatives and senators to encourage support of this legislation. It provides hope for Missouri's teen drivers to become safer and cut down on the leading cause of teen deaths – motor vehicle accidents.

The Missouri PTA legislative team and



President Kathy Nevans has already visited the Capitol and discussed our resolutions with many of our state officials. We've been contacted by Representative Baker about potentially offering testimony in favor of this important bill when needed. We're eager and ready to help it move through the process.

We need to continue to support this bill and several others which will help all Missouri children, students, and schools throughout the legislative session. We'll do our best to keep you informed through the Missouri PTA website (www.mopta. org), this magazine, and other forms of communication.

The Missouri PTA resolutions process is important and the impact it has had on the development of House Bill 609 and others proves that importance. Thanks to all members for your support and continued support.

## 10 Ways To Increase Your PTA Membership

- PROVIDE your members with copies of your PTA budget so they can see how your funds are spent to benefit their children. Consider showing how it breaks down in \$ spent per child.
- 2. CREATE your own TV and radio spots about your PTA. Some high schools will help you as a class project.
- SUBMIT articles to the local newspaper promoting PTA membership for everyone. Be sure to include a person or place where memberships can be obtained.
- 4. APPROACH community businesses to join PTA. You may establish a "special" membership just for businesses. Remind them with a smile that the PTA <u>is</u> their community and their customers.
- 5. HANG a banner with a catchy phrase and your PTA name outside school or in a prominent place on a building in your community that is highly visible. Consider investing in a weatherproof banner that can be displayed year after year.

- 6. KEEP members involved. Mail or email a letter to all members addressed to them by name. Welcome them to the \_\_\_\_\_\_ PTA, reminding them of the next meeting. Include a survey asking what hours they could assist the PTA and their areas of interest or expertise.
- CREATE t-shirts, bumper stickers or other items printed with your membership slogan or PTA name.
- 8. DEVELOP an email list of your PTA members and use to remind them of upcoming meetings or other functions. This is a great volunteer activity to do from home.
- PROVIDE a quiet homework room for children of members during meetings.
- COUNCILS: Ask a well-known personality in your town to be an Honorary Membership Chairman and then publicize this.

#### **Did You Know...?**

Missouri PTA provides training to all of its Board of Managers on the organization of a new unit? Do you know someone who needs more information about this? Just ask them to call 1-800-392-7330 for more information.

#### **Welcome!**

Missouri PTA applauds these units who've joined us since the 2006 convention:

Bailey Alternative High School PTSA Creekmoor Elementary PTA Center Council Hazelwood West Middle School PTSA Shull Elementary PTA

#### Health & Safety - 4 Questions

- Did your unit promote a health and/or safety program, activity, or project for your school and community this year?
- Do you know of an exceptional student who made an outstanding contribution to the success of a safety program involving home, school, and/or community? Or do you know of a student who made a brave or heroic effort which contributed to the safety of another person or persons?
- Could your unit use an extra amount of money for your budget next year?
- Is your unit "in good standing" with Missouri PTA?

If you can answer "yes" to these questions, then your unit can qualify for a Missouri PTA Health and Safety Education Grant or a student could be eligible for the Missouri PTA Student Safety Award. The hard work and success of our units and students deserves recognition. Why not celebrate

these achievements at the next Missouri PTA Convention? It doesn't take long to complete the application. Applications and requirements for each award are listed in your 2006-2007 Tool Kit under the Grants & Awards section. The postmark deadline for submission is **April 15, 2007**.

## Share Your Great Ideas

Do you have an idea for legislation that would benefit our children? A great place to start is in the resolutions process. For more information on how to write a resolution, access www.pta.org/resources.htm or contact Missouri PTA resolutions chair Scott Jennings at scottj@mopta.org. The deadline for resolution submission is **May 1, 2007**.

#### Mark Your Calendar

APRIL

Optimist Month

- 1 Outstanding Membership Campaign Award application deadline
- 2 International Children's Book Day
- 12 National Drop Everything and Read Day
- **Health & Safety Grant** application deadline **Student Safety Grant** application deadline Students Make a Difference Day Award deadline **Council Membership Award** deadline **Unit Membership Award** deadline 100% Faculty Award deadline Blue Seal Award deadline Gold Seal Award deadline **Outstanding Unit/Council** Newsletter Award deadline **Outstanding Unit/Council** Website Award deadline
- 19 High Five Day
- 26 Take Our Daughters and Sons to

- Work Day 27 Arbor Day
- 27-28 Missouri PTA Leadership Conference (Clarion Hotel – Kansas City)

#### MAY

Family Wellness Month

- 1 Resolutions submission deadline
- 1 May Day
- 2 Robert's Rules of Order Day
- 7-13 Teacher Appreciation Week
  - 13 Mothers Day
  - 15 International Day of Families
  - 28 Memorial Day

#### LOOKING AHEAD

JUNE - JULY

June 28 – July 1 National PTA Annual Convention (St. Louis)

#### **OCTOBER**

12 – 14 Missouri PTA Annual Convention (Columbia)

### Reflections Showcase 2007

"My Favorite Place"

Saturday, April 28th

9:45am

Clarion Hotel – Kansas City



Don't miss out on the excitement! Join Missouri PTA in celebrating our state's best young artists. All winning Reflections entries will be displayed at the Student Showcase during the Missouri PTA Leadership Conference in Kansas City on April 28th. All winning students and their families are encouraged to attend. Invitations outlining the details were mailed in mid March; all winning students will be recognized on stage. The Student Showcase will be an experience the winning children will remember forever. All students will be able to check out their entries after the Showcase.

#### Communications

#### **Awards**

Has your PTA/PTSA worked hard this year making a newsletter to send out to all of the school or your members? Were you able to set up a web site for your PTA/PTSA to get your information out? Did you know Missouri PTA has an award to honor those hard-working communication committees or chairs? Well, we do and the deadline to enter is April 15, 2007. The application is on our web site (www.mopta.org), the Winter Packet, or in the 2006-2007 Tool Kit. So gather those extra copies of your newsletter and submit your application today. For more information or if you have a question, contact Kim Weber, VP/Director of Communications at kimw@mopta.org. We would love to show off your great web site or newsletter.

## STUDENT CHALKBOARD What is a Volunteer?

By Amanda Weber, Anne Hawkins Gentry Middle School (Columbia) seventh grader and proud PTSA

"A Volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens, citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization."— author unknown

Volunteering. What does that word mean to students? For some, it might mean you'll volunteer to wash the dishes or pick up your room, especially if allowance is coming up. For some, it might mean you'll volunteer to keep quiet and or sit still, volunteering to say or do nothing. But for others, it might mean volunteering to erase the chalkboard after class when a teachers asks or signing up to work a time slot at the school chili supper on the PTSA sign-up sheet. For me it was just that, volunteering to help Mrs. Almony, my second grade teacher during recess one day. My rationale at the time was "it's not that nice outside anyway, so I'll just stay inside the classroom and do this for her." Like most volunteers, once someone asks you,

they ask you again. Mrs. Almony did and I came to enjoy helping her and doing things for my classroom and fellow students. That was several years ago and while I don't always raise my hand to volunteer in the classroom or school now, I have come to think of my self as a volunteer. I volunteer to go with my mother to the PTSA meetings because I like to know what is happening in my school and what the PTSA is going to do. I like sitting with other volunteers, parents, staff, administrators, and teachers deciding how many stations to have at the Multicultural Day or what time to start Spring Fling. While it wasn't totally fun selling t-shirts at the Back to School night, I figure the good outweighs the not-so-good in volunteering iobs.

There are many ways a student can volunteer all year round. Besides volunteering at your school or school events or at home for your parents, there are volunteer needs in your community that you can fulfill while hopefully enjoying at the same time. Last summer I joined Youth in Action, a national organization with local chapters all thoughout Missouri. When I first signed up, I thought I would be all by myself, but on the first day of volunteering, there were a lot of students from my school there as well. Just like the t-shirt sales, it wasn't always the most fun thing I could have been doing on a hot summer day. But watching the faces of the elderly as we read to them or on the younger faces as we painted a picture on their face, the good won out over the bad. I came to look forward to my volunteer assignments knowing that even at the age 13 I was helping someone who needed help and that I could do

it. That is a really cool feeling that I encourage every student to have and experience. By doing so you're giving yourself the chance to feel a sense of pride, accomplishment and responsibility that you won't experience any other way.

I encourage you as a parent to keep asking your son or daughter to volunteer with you at school, church, or in your community. I encourage you as teacher, to keep asking your students to volunteer to help with a school project or extra work helping the classroom and school. I encourage you as a student to step up to volunteer to help someone else

who needs your help as a volunteer. Check out your local city or county volunteer offices for their needs and your church or civic organizations for volunteer activities. If all else fails, just ask a PTA leader; they'll hook you up as a volunteer. They will hook you up as a volunteer because they already know how awesome it is.

"Getters generally don't get happiness; givers get it. You simply give to others a bit of yourself--a thoughtful act, a helpful idea, a word of appreciation, a lift over a rough spot, a sense of understanding, a timely suggestion. You take something out of your mind, garnished in kindness out of your heart, and put it into the other fellow's mind and heart." - Charles H. Burr

#### Do You Know...Allison Thiele?

Allison Thiele has been on the Missouri PTA Board of Managers for about two and a half years. She serves as one of two Student Youth Representatives. Her membership in PTA began in sixth grade with the Smithton Middle School PTSA but her involvement began much earlier through the work of her mom Linda Thiele. (Linda currently serves as Missouri PTA's office manager).

Allison says that she initially joined PTSA because her mom wanted her to get involved and she wanted to support PTA with more memberships. She also started volunteering because of her mother. She began tagging along after her as she worked on different projects. Although Allison started her

"volunteer career" when her mom did, she now volunteers with separate organizations she deems necessary and helpful. Allison believes that students should join PTSA because they will be in contact with other leaders in their community. She personally has made many connections with people through PTA.

While she has had leadership training as a Missouri PTA Board of Managers member, she considers life to be the best teacher. Allison has received many awards but the most recent one is one she considers to be more of a privilege. That was when she was selected to be a voting delegate at the National PTA Convention in St. Louis at the end of June 2007.

As well as being a senior at Hickman High School in Columbia, she is co-president of the Biology Club. Last year she was the treasurer of the Health Sciences Club. She has



played the violin since third grade and participated in the high school's orchestra as well as participating in the Missouri Symphony Society Youth Orchestra (an auditioned ensemble). Periodically she joins three other string musicians to play for local audiences. She is in the National Spanish Honor Society and TRIREME, an all-girls club for seniors whose focus is on community support. This year the club's primary work has been in support of breast cancer awareness.

Allison's hobbies include horseback riding, cross-stitching, experimenting with new recipes, and raising chickens. Her future plans include attending the University of Missouri in Columbia to pursue a bachelor's degree in radiology.

"My hero/role model is my mom because she does so much for other people without expecting much in return," shares Allison. "I can only hope to be as good a person when I grow up."

#### **The Bottom Line**



By Peggy Preston, Missouri PTA CONTACT editor

Those who know me today would never guess that, as a young girl I was painfully shy in public including school, church, grocery store, etc. To be honest, at

home I was the "real me" - not so quiet. There was only one thing that I did loudly in public and that was singing! I have always loved to sing. In fact, I heard songs in my head all the time (still do) and made up lyrics to them. Well, one of my favorite songs was "Count Your Blessings". I loved the line "name them one by one". As a child, I was very blessed with a loving family, wonderful friends, and great teachers. As an adult, I am even more blessed. I have the most wonderful husband of all - he is a great balance for my hyper and scattered self and he really truly is my "better half". I have great parents who have always supported and encouraged me and still make me laugh. My three younger sisters and their families are priceless to me. Also, I am the proud aunt of 20 incredible nieces and nephews and eight great nieces and nephews!

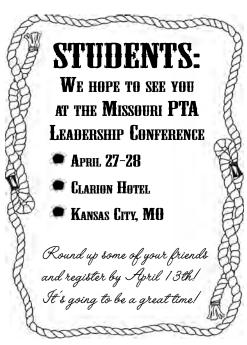
Wait a minute. Isn't this issue about volunteering? What does being thankful have to do with volunteering? Well, absolutely

everything! When you are as blessed as I have been, you feel the need to "give back". Whether it's through PTA (a really GREAT way to "give back"), your church, or to your community, you can share yourself and your "attitude of gratitude" with others. I encourage you to find a place to volunteer where you can use your special gifts and talents. There are opportunities everywhere.

One of the most unique opportunities that my husband and I have had to "give back" is through the "adoption" of a campus house full of college girls at MSU. Originally, we became acquainted with one of the girls from the house through our church four years ago and, each year since, we've made it a point to support and encourage these girls who live in "The Peapod". It might be snacks during finals week, computer repair, attending their soccer games, or taking the whole group out for an early Christmas dinner. We are here for those girls as someone older to listen to them and help when they need it. It has been an incredible experience for us...and their parents have been very appreciative as well.

The best thing about volunteering is that the focus is on what you can do for others. Sometimes we just need a break from our "it's all about me" mentality. (I know I do.) Go ahead...share your "attitude of gratitude". Thanks so much for volunteering.

As always, you can reach me at peggyp@ mopta.org or 417-725-1778. I would love to hear from you.



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