

Missouri Parent Teacher Association

CONTACT

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Today



*Dads as
Volunteers...
Today*

TOP TEN THINGS TEACHERS WISH PARENTS WOULD DO

Be involved.

Parent involvement helps students learn, improves schools, and helps teachers work with you to help your children succeed.

Provide resources at home for learning.

Utilize your local library and have books and magazines available in your home. Read with your children each day.

Set a good example.

Show your children by your own actions that you believe reading is both enjoyable and useful. Monitor television viewing and the use of videos and game systems.

Encourage students to do their best in school.

Show your children that you believe education is important and that you want them to do their best.

Value education and seek a balance between schoolwork and outside activities.

Emphasize your children's progress in developing the knowledge and skills they need to be successful both in school and in life.

Recognize factors that take a toll on students' classroom performance:

Consider the possible negative effects of long hours at after school jobs or in extracurricular activities. Work with your children to help them maintain a balance between school responsibilities and outside commitments.

View drinking and excessive partying as serious matters.

While most parents are concerned about drug abuse, many fail to recognize that alcohol, over-the-counter drugs, and common substances used as inhalants are more frequently abused than illegal drugs.

Support school rules and goals.

Take care not to undermine school rules, discipline, or goals.

Use pressure positively.

Encourage children to do their best but don't pressure them by setting goals too high or by scheduling too many activities.

Call teachers early if you think there's a problem while there is still time to solve it.

Don't wait for teachers to call you.

Accept your responsibility as parents.

Don't expect the school and teachers to take over your obligations as parents. Teach children self-discipline and respect for others at home – don't rely on teachers and school to teach these basic behaviors and attitudes.

Cover photo:

Chapel Lakes PTA dads make events more fun.

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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.

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Make Every Child's Potential a Reality



By Mary Oyler, Missouri PTA president

What a wonderful state convention we had in Columbia! The workshops were great and learning about Rachel's Challenge was the highlight of many convention attendees.

I hope that each delegate left with a renewed belief in all that needs to be done to help MAKE EVERY CHILD'S POTENTIAL A REALITY.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Kathy Nevans for her dedication to the children of Missouri. She has taught us all to *believe* that we can make a difference and that by *believing* we can help our PTAs reach new heights. Kathy has helped us understand that PTA must reach out and work towards diversity in our membership. Missouri PTA has sparked the fire in the state legislature to help our teens be safer drivers by limiting their cell phone use while driving. We continue our fight against school vouchers and to work towards increasing funding for our public schools. Kathy has represented us at the Education Roundtable meetings as well as the Safe Routes to School Committee and is currently working with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. Plus she has put over 60,000 miles on her car traveling around the state of Missouri visiting with our membership. With Kathy's excellent leadership, Missouri PTA hosted the National PTA convention this past summer in St. Louis and PTA members from across the nation know that Missouri PTA *believes* in children and works tirelessly to achieve the mission of PTA. There is a story about the "dash" in people's lives – I would like to say that Missouri PTA is so glad Kathy shared her "dash" with us during her 2005 – 2007 term as president of Missouri PTA as she taught each of us to *believe* that anything is possible.

As in any organization, change is inevitable and with the close of convention there were changes in Missouri PTA. Our membership has elected an excellent group of new officers.

I have had the pleasure of working closely with some of them in the past and look forward to getting to know each of them a little better as we work to achieve even more for the children of Missouri. As I look to the future of Missouri PTA and glance back over my shoulder, I see many strong Boards that have built a strong path for your new Board of Managers to follow as they continue the work of Missouri PTA.

With this new administration comes a new logo. I want to share a little of the history of our new tag "*TODAY*". The principal of the building I work in sends a bulletin to his staff every day. One day last year, the quote at the top of his bulletin read:

Many things we need can wait.
The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot say "tomorrow". His name is "*TODAY*".

– Gabriela Mistral

When I read this, I knew that this is what PTA is all about! We must remember that each and every child needs us *TODAY*; to speak up for them, to reach out to them, and to help them in any way we possibly can. As I researched the author of this quote, I discovered that Ms. Mistral was born in Chile in 1889; she was a teacher and poet. She saw a need for the children of Mexico and in 1922 started a school for the poor and was then named "Teacher of the Nation" in Chile in 1923. Ms. Mistral's quote is as important in 2007 as it was in the early 1900's – much the same as the message PTA co-founder Alice McLellan Birney brought forth in Washington DC in 1897: "How can the mothers be educated and the nation made to recognize the supreme importance of the child?"

I ask each of you to remember that we can't wait; we must reach out *TODAY* in order to strive to "make every child's potential a reality."

Happy
Thanksgiving

From Your Missouri PTA
Board of Managers
We are so thankful for each of you.

Like the Marine Corps, the PTA Needs a Few Good Men



By Chuck Saylor,
National PTA president
elect

For over 110 years the PTA of today, first formed as the National Congress of Mothers, has faced a challenge not easy to defeat - male involvement. PTA helped defeat the use of child labor, helped add hot lunches in schools, helped secure safer transportation for children; yet male

membership is still a challenge. Why?

In a recent survey most men responded that two of the main reasons that they were not involved in the PTA was that they believed they did not have the time to join and that no one asked. That's right; no one asked.

Facing these results I have two challenges for the PTA leaders and members in Missouri. First, ask men and all family members to join the PTA. In doing so, make sure that they all understand that their membership casts a vote of support within the community for the school and its students. Second, don't ask them to just volunteer; ask them for three simple hours during the school year. That's 180 minutes. Dinner and a movie takes more than 180 minutes of time. Ask for their help with

tutoring, clean-up work, or attending school board meetings on behalf of the school.

My involvement as a PTA volunteer started when my now 23 year old son was in the first grade. When Teresa and I attended a fall carnival at his school, I ended up offering to help serve hot dogs and I have not stopped yet! I am a firm believer that if you get someone involved in your school, two things will happen. They'll leave with a PTA membership card in their pocket and they'll volunteer again!

Remember "the ask". Ask families to join. Ask members to give three hours - simple, to the point, and it costs less than a burger and fries.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve you as a representative of all PTAs and wish everyone in Missouri the very best.

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 well-being of every child.

PTA Values

- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.
- **Accountability:** We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.
- **Respect:** We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.
- **Inclusivity:** We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.
- **Integrity:** We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.

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

Meet Chuck Saylor

Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor is the PTA's first-ever male national president elect. He was elected in June 2007 to the two year term and has been a PTA member for almost 20 years.

Saylor says that his motivation for getting involved with the PTA came from his desire to help his child's school. "As a child, my parents were both very involved in PTA," he said. "When our oldest son Matthew was in the first grade, Teresa and I wanted to support his school so we volunteered. We have not slowed down since." Matthew is now 23 years old and the Saylor's have three other children; Jennifer Canova (20), Tyler (11), and William (9). Tyler and William attend Taylors Elementary where Teresa is a PTA officer. The Saylor's are also the proud grandparents of Bethany Canova, Jennifer's daughter.

"This family commitment has evolved into what I would call a 'service to families'", Saylor explained. "My motivation is to get parents and family members involved in the educational system showing them that even a little time spent in the school as a volunteer is a valuable investment. I truly believe that a child will succeed if a parent is involved."

Saylor has been in the construction industry for more than 15 years and is currently a marketing executive for the Construction Management Division of

M.B. Kahn Construction, a national top 10 school contractor. Saylor currently serves as a trustee for the School District of Greenville County (SC), serving two years as chairman and is a board member for Greenville Technical College.

National/State/Local PTA Positions/Activities

- National secretary-treasurer
- Immediate past president, South Carolina PTA
- Past vice president and treasurer, South Carolina PTA
- Past district president, District 1 PTA
- Board member, District 1 PTA
- Former board member, Northeast Council PTA
- Past president, Woodland Elementary PTA

Professional/Volunteer Positions/Activities (Non-PTA)

- Former president/current board member, Roper Mountain Science Center
- Executive board member, Blue Ridge Council/Boy Scouts of America
- Board member, Greenville Family Partnership (National Red Ribbon)
- Member/deacon, Hampton Heights Baptist Church

PTA Expertise

- Parent involvement and advocacy
- School finance/funding issues
- PTA resources

Working With the Media

You can't control the media. While you can send them materials and ideas, they will decide whether and how it will be used. You can increase your chances of success by knowing what types of stories will interest different media representatives. Before contacting the media, you should determine what they consider newsworthy and how they present a story.

Determine what reporter or editor should be notified about a PTA event. A general meeting may be listed in the community calendar section or on a community bulletin

board but it will not be considered news. However, if your PTA is addressing an issue of vital interest to the community, such as education funding or curriculum changes, a media outlet may send a reporter or ask for an interview.

Look for photo opportunities. Ask your local newspaper to send a photographer or send photographs to your local paper immediately after the event. Include photo captions that describe what is happening and identify participants. Be sure your

photos show action and activity instead of people smiling and shaking hands. Build relationships. Position yourself as an information source. Be creative in nourishing the relationship even when there isn't breaking news.

For more specific tips about working with the media and how to write press releases, please see the National PTA Annual Resources or checkout www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1117228553875.html.

Quick Reference Guides

Based on feedback from PTA leaders, the PTA Quick-Reference Guides have replaced the Annual Resources for PTAs. The 2007-2008 PTA President's Quick-Reference Guide was mailed in April and the other guides were included in the 2007 PTA Back-to-School Kit. If you did not receive the guides, please contact (800) 307-4PTA (4782) or go to www.pta.org/local_leadership_resources.html to download the PDFs for the Quick Reference Guides for PTA Presidents, Membership, Money Matters, and Programs. These resources are free for your use as a local leader.

Parliamentary Procedure and Amendments

When you access the tip sheet that National PTA created for local leaders at www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_11172299065765.html, you will learn about the specific steps in processing a motion, amending motions, and much more. For example, the process of counting a vote is spelled out in a clear and concise step-by-step order. National PTA can also provide the resource "Parliamentary Procedure – Tip Sheet for PTA Leaders" by Rollie Cox.

www.mopta.org



Finances

Managing the finances of a PTA is crucial to everything else you do. Not only is it essential for reasons relating to the funding of programs or events but there are federal requirements all not-for-profit organizations must follow

or risk losing their tax exempt status. National PTA has gathered several resources relating to basic financial management to help you effectively run your PTA and fulfill your goals while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Abiding by federal guidelines is also extremely important to maintain tax exempt status and ensure your PTA is financially sound. To find basic information on maintaining your 501(C)(3) status and other financial resources, go to www.pta.org/local_leadership_program_1117228420828.html.

Check Out These Websites!

Dads & Daughters (www.dadsanddaughters.org) is a national non-profit organization of fathers with daughters which supports efforts to counteract media messages that value girls for their appearance rather than who they are.

Dads at a Distance (www.daads.com) is for fathers who have to be away a lot for their jobs or because of divorce.

Fathering Magazine (www.fatheringmag.com) contains articles on topics such as the joy of fathering, fathers and sons, second wives-second families, and custody and divorce.

National Center for Fathering (www.fathers.com) inspires

and equips men to be better fathers.

Responsible Single Fathers (www.singlecustodialfathers.org) has as its mission to let society know that single fathers, including non-custodial fathers, are responsible and focused on the best interests of their children.



Daniel Young Watch D.O.G.S.

The Daniel Young Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) program promotes father/grandfather/male relative presence in the school. So who are the Watch D.O.G.S.? They are fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, uncles, and other father figures who volunteer to serve at least one day each year in a variety of school activities as assigned by the school principal or other administrator.

The male role model is essential in the society our children find themselves growing up in. The collaborative partner is the National Watch D.O.G.S. program. As part of the National Center for Fathering, they have encouraged nearly 500 schools nationwide to participate in the program. The goals of the National Watch D.O.G.S. and the goals of Daniel Young Watch D.O.G.S. are the same – they believe



that parent involvement is absolutely essential in the school lives of children. The fact that dads typically aren't volunteers makes this program that much more important. Children need to see their dads and the dads of their friends at school. The ultimate goal is to get a positive male role model in the lives of children. The program ensures that all children have a "dad" for a day.

The results have been incredible. Daniel Young's teachers and staff report that the children behave differently when they know that a Watch D.O.G.S. dad will be in their class that day. One teacher reports that the children respond with excitement and enthusiasm to the men. The added safety that these children feel when a dad is there has doubled. They have almost 100 days involved and very few school days where a dad is not present at school.

Dads who volunteer for Watch D.O.G.S. are also volunteering in other capacities at the school as well. They are more willing to attend other functions at school with their children now that the "fear of volunteering at school" is wiped away. At the end of their day, the dads are asked to answer a quick



questionnaire. They have found that many of the dads are taking a day off from work with no pay or using a personal or sick day in order to come to school and work with the children. They all report that it wasn't what they expected, but much more. They are forming bonds with children in all grade levels and the respect that they receive at home from the pride of their own child has increased their confidence in their ability to influence the lives of children. Dads are also helping more with homework.

For more information about the National Watch D.O.G.S. program, please visit www.fathers.com/watchdogs, email watchdogs@father.com, or call 1-888-540-3647.

Involved Dads=Happy Kids

According to Extension Educator Debbie McClellan in the Fall 2001 issue of Family Life magazine, when fathers are actively involved with children, everyone benefits. Children have better relationships with other children and perform better. Fathers feel better about themselves and their lives, too.

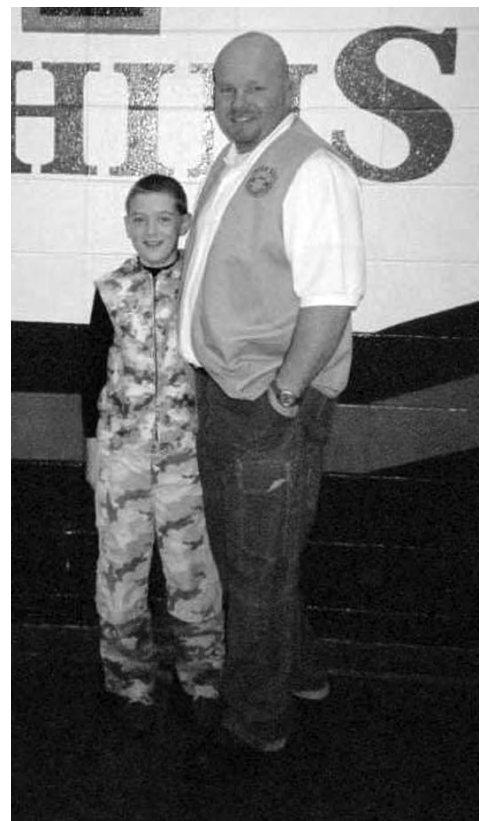
Although mothers have usually taken the lead in their children's school activities, now is the time for men to join in. It takes moms and dads working together to a difference for all children.

A child might offer the following advice to encourage dad's involvement:

- Don't just play with me after dinner; make my dentist appointment and check my backpack before we leave for school.
- If you want to know why I act like I do, learn more about kids by reading, taking a workshop, or visiting with other parents.

- Remember that the small, daily rituals, and routines that I share with you are as important as occasional "big deal" events.
- Get to know my teacher.
- Stop and visit me. See how I play with the other kids and the things I do while I'm at school.
- Volunteer to help. I would be so proud if my dad helped build the new sandbox.
- Talk to me about my day when you pick me up. Recognize if I'm too tired to talk and let me know that's okay, we can catch up later.

Older kids and young adults also need dad's involvement, even when they act like they don't care. Take the time to ask questions about their day, their classes, and their friends. Dad, you can make a real difference. So, will you?



Superstar Unit: Chapel Lakes Elementary PTA

Fathers are a valuable resource for our PTA's and finding ways to get them involved and active is an ongoing challenge for most units. For the first time in PTA's history, the current National PTA president elect is a man, which creates an even greater incentive to get "dads" interested in becoming PTA members and an integral part of their children's academic life. Like many units, Chapel Lakes Elementary PTA has looked at different ways to get fathers involved and through their efforts, they have increased the male presence in both membership and activities.

While Chapel Lakes is one of the smaller elementary schools within the Blue Springs school district (Three Trails region), it is big on PTA. For the last two years the school has achieved its 100% membership goal and is well on its way to a third successful year. Getting dads to join has been a large part of this success. CLE has always been known to have great parent involvement but, by developing activities that involve dads, men now represent approximately 40% of the total membership. Although the majority of volunteers are still mothers, creating "fun" activities and events has increased father participation.



One of the most successful events for getting men to volunteer has been the annual event of "Muffins for Mom". A dedicated effort has been made to have all the volunteer positions held by dads or granddads so "mom" can enjoy the morning snack with their child. A comparable event "Donuts with Dad" is also held with a great turnout; around 95-98% of the students have a male visitor attend. Within the first month of school, the PTA holds a "Back to School"

dance with a fun theme and there is always a plan to get dads involved. They've had the "Village People", "Saturday Night Fever" dancers, and even several "Elvis" performers put on a show - all with male volunteers. Of course for the children, these are always the highlights of the night. Last year, a new event called "Trunk or Treat" was implemented and dads were highly encouraged to come and participate. Each spring, the PTA holds a huge school carnival which requires many, many volunteers and the dads step up. They've dressed up as characters, sat in the dunk tanks, worked the inflatables and sports games, and have been a huge help with the set up and tear downs as well as the heavy lifting.

Developing new and fun opportunities for fathers to participate in has become a bonus for the Chapel Lakes PTA. While many times dad is "volunteered" for an activity, once he is there, most find it extremely enjoyable and get the chance to meet and socialize with other fathers. The biggest benefit to men volunteering or attending an event is the delight of their children seeing dad involved in their life. Recruiting fathers has helped CLE create a well-rounded and successful unit. Take a page out of Chapel Lake's playbook and see what your PTA can do to draw in and utilize this largely untapped resource and become a POWER unit!

POWER in Membership...Join PTA!



Three For Me

Three for Me is a PTA program designed to effectively involve parents and families in support of children and their education. Three for Me helps schools, PTAs, parent groups, and other volunteer based organizations reach volunteer hours never thought possible. Parents are encouraged to volunteer three hours during a school year. Checkout the Three for Me website at www.three4me.com and you will find:

- creative ways to connect all families to their child's school and education,
- ideas to strengthen home-school-community partnerships, and
- resources to motivate parents.

You will also find specific tips on how involve dads at various stages of their child's life.

Dads make a difference.

Research shows that the more involved

dads are, the better the child does in school. When dad is involved, whether he lives in the home or not:

1. Children learn more.
2. Perform better in school.
3. Exhibit healthier behavior.
4. Fewer behavioral problems.
5. Higher level of sociability.
6. Boosts children's confidence.
7. Children enjoy school more.

Building successful partnerships with dads.

The time to build long-lasting teacher/parent relationships is when the children are in pre-K through middle school. Getting dads involved should be an ongoing process and not a one time a year event. The best way to get dads involved is to plan father events and activities throughout the year such as a derby race, Dad and Me night, a reading program with dads, a pancake breakfast, or

donuts for dad. And remember, the best way to get dads to attend is simple: Ask! Don't send a general flyer either; send home material that asks dad to attend.

Changing the education culture in the home.

It is so vital to get dads involved not only at the school but in the home. Most of the time when the words "school" and "homework" are included in conversation, it's equated to mom. We need to change that culture in the home to include dad. Helping with homework, reading a book with their children, speaking of the importance of good grades and good behavior, setting standards, voicing expectations, and teaching manners; these are just a few ways for dad to get involved in the home that will impact their children and families in positive ways.

We're Proud of Our Great...

Rob Fridge



Rob and his family moved to Nixa four years ago and they have been PTA members ever since. He has served as the Nixa PTA Council president for two years and currently serves as the vice

president of the Council. He is a member of the Nixa High School PTSA where he son attends classes. He joined the Missouri PTA Board of Managers this past summer as an Ozark regional director. His favorite PTA moment was during the week after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. The Council officers were discussing how they could help and they decided to put together a 5k Fun

Run benefit. In just a few weeks, they had teams of people planning routes, getting permits, finding sponsors, making flyers, and designing t-shirts – a model of PTA members, families, and community working together toward a goal. When it was all done, Nixa enjoyed its largest Fun Run with over 500 parents, kids, and dogs walking and running through the streets to help families hundreds of miles away. The best part of all, according to Rob, was sending two very large checks to the presidents of two PTA's in New Orleans to help them get "back on their feet". He believes that the best thing about serving on the Missouri PTA Board of Managers is being able to take his experiences to PTAs in his area who are struggling, just as he did when he first took over a unit as president. He had some wonderful help from the regional director and he can now return that favor over and over again. His words of encouragement to other PTA dads are

"Come help me! I was the first male officer to ever serve at our school. A couple of years later twenty percent of all Nixa's PTAs are led by dads. I ask my son every year if he minds me being so involved in his school...and his answer has always been 'thanks, dad...don't stop.'" Although being a PTA officer is never something he aspired to, he thinks that most men simply want to help out where they can and, if they see a need, they try to fix it. Rob will keep helping out where he can until people quit asking for help.

Dave Werner



Dave Werner is definitely a "Super Dad" on the local and state PTA levels. He has been involved in PTA for eight years and has served the past four years as a regional director for the Meramec

region. He believes that the best thing about serving on the Missouri PTA Board of Managers is being able to help kids all over the state and the units in his area. He is affiliated with the ShowMe PTA and several other local units. He volunteered at the 2007 National PTA Convention in St. Louis and considers it one of his most favorite PTA moments as he got the chance to talk to share ideas with people from all over the country. Dave would encourage other dads to get involved because he believes that there is "nothing better". Dave is well known and liked by the other Board of Managers because he is always ready with a joke and smile.

Mark Kempf



Mark Kempf is probably the most recognizable PTA dad in Blue Springs! He has been involved in PTA since his oldest child was in kindergarten more than 20 years ago. Mark has been actively involved at the local unit and council level

including unit president, secretary, council website chairman – just to name a few. He is currently affiliated with the ShowMe PTA and the Blue Springs PTA Council. He also shares his technology talents and love of children with Missouri PTA as one of our Board of Managers for the last eight years,

servicing as both Information Technology chair and Multimedia chair. When asked about the most rewarding part of PTA, Mark's response is "doing something good for kids and having fun at the same time". His favorite PTA moment is when Missouri PTA's parliamentarian Dr. Leonard Young's cell phone went off immediately following his speech to the membership about turning off all pagers and cell phones. He believes that volunteering is very important and that, "if you want to do it, stick with it and don't get discouraged. Even a little bit of help can be a lot of help and of course SMILE and have fun, too. Mark doesn't see himself as "super"; to quote Joe Walsh, "I'm just an ordinary average guy". He believes that if your motivation was to be "super", you probably wouldn't last or do very well either. Mark and his wife Delane have three children and one new grandson! Thanks Mark, for all you do and for believing in all children!

Dr. Leonard Young

Serving as Missouri PTA's parliamentarian, Len is an important part of the PTA team. Please check out his interview on page 12 of this issue.

MoPTA Board “Super Dads”!

Scott D. Jennings



In his twelfth year of involvement in PTA (starting when his now-senior son was in kindergarten), Scott is affiliated with the Hickman Mills High School PTSA plus

several other units in the school district that he has been asked to join, including the Hickman Mills Council of PTAs where he serves as secretary. He is also the School Board Representative for the Council. His first involvement with PTA was when he was in the fifth grade and his mother was on the school PTA executive board. She volunteered Scott to be the emcee for the PTA-sponsored school talent show. He had to impersonate Ed Sullivan for the “really big shoe” that they were putting on. He loved it and got hooked on speaking and performing in front of people. Then, when his son started going to kindergarten, his wife and he decided that they were going to be involved like their parents were. He started attending the meetings and they needed a treasurer for the

next year. He had been a treasurer before for bowling leagues that he had participated in so he volunteered. He’s served on a local PTA unit in some capacity every since. Also, it sparked a greater interest in being involved with him and he decided to start going to the school board meetings in the district and eventually decided to run for the school board. He is in his sixth year as a school board member in the Hickman Mills School District. His favorite PTA moment is when he was the PTA president at his son’s school. He was at the school and a kindergarten student who he didn’t know pointed at him and said, “are you the PTA man?” He said “yes” and the child said thanks for helping his school. Scott didn’t know him and doesn’t even remember his name but it made a big impression on him as to why he was there. He believes that the best thing about serving on the PTA is the relationships you develop with the students, staff, and parents while knowing that what you do is making a difference for kids who don’t have parents who have the time or interest in being involved. Scott would like other dads to know that “no place in the PTA mission or purposes does is say that PTA is just for mothers. The ‘P’ stands for ‘parent’ and dads need to understand that and need to get involved.” He believes that children and youth need to see male role models doing positive things and our schools are a great place to start. One of his favorite sayings is that “kids learn from example; the problem is that they can’t always tell a good example from a bad example”. Scott has been a good example and has challenged other dads to do their part as well. He tries to make an effort to be there, not only for his child but for other children. He hopes that being involved in PTA has made him a better husband as well as a dad. He truly believes that PTA is a family affair for his wife and him. It has been a great way to spend time with each other not in front of a television. Scott even shares that “I truly believe it has made my 23-year marriage stronger because of what we do together as volunteers.”

Steven Bishop



While not a member of the Missouri PTA Board of Managers, Steve is an integral part of the PTA team. Among other responsibilities with the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA), he serves as the graphics/layout editor for Missouri PTA’s CONTACT magazine and other publications. His professionalism and creativity are amazing and his work is greatly appreciated. Steve is a relatively new dad but he is already a “Super Dad” to his one year old daughter Rebekah. Thanks, Steve for your outstanding work for Missouri PTA!

Please take time to thank all of our great Missouri PTA unit/council “Super Dads” for their contribution to our children’s lives. Check out some more great “Super Dads” on the next three pages

Your Nominations for...

Richard Eiken

According to several others, Richard is one of those dads who is always there when he is needed. He is helpful without really having to be asked to help. He always has a positive attitude and he sets a great example for the kids in the school. He is a leader but has never been the top leader. He is a role model that many, many dads could emulate if they would chose to get more involved in PTA.

In his sixth year of involvement with PTA, he is affiliated with the Wm. H. Johnson Elementary PTA and he serves on the Hickman Mills Council of PTA as historian. His involvement started with school supply sales at school "with active, friendly people." His favorite PTA moment is seeing the looks on children's faces the days after the Art Show at Johnson. Richard believes that

the best thing about serving on the PTA is "knowing that I can make a difference for all the children at my school, not just my own." His words of encouragement include admonishment to get involved. He went on a field trip with some classes and was reminded that we all have a part in what our child learns. He also believes that how they act in public reflects what we have taught them. He shares that you just might learn something you did not know. He notes that, while ads on TV are trying to get the children to exercise more, "it works better if we take time out of our day to exercise (walk, run, bike, gym, etc) with our kids. Walking with your kids on a trail or in a local park can give you time to connect with you kids and just see how their day has gone." Thanks, Richard for your time and energy.

Mike Prestwich



For the past five years, Mike Prestwich has stayed in the background helping man booths at the fall and spring fundraisers and helping his wife with the school spiritwear. He currently serves as the Century PTA of Nixa president. His favorite PTA moment is "just knowing that what we do as members of the PTA makes a difference in our children's school experience and watching the children learn in the best possible environment." The best thing about

serving on the PTA is seeing that volunteering helps the children gain the best possible experience and learning opportunities at school. He says that it is great to be able to help the children and they always teach you something that you didn't know. Mike's words of encouragement are to "get involved when you can! You don't have to volunteer a lot of time but every little bit counts in making a difference in your child's life and the lives of other children. It can be reading to your child, making time to visit the classroom, or becoming more fully involved in the PTA. Don't wait to be asked – make your own opportunities and become involved!"

Tony Manasseri



"Many dads feel that school is for kids and moms," says Tony Manasseri, president of Mathews Elementary PTA and Nixa "Super Dad". Tony is all about changing that attitude

and he started with himself. When Tony's son entered kindergarten, he joined the local PTA like all good parents but before the year was over, Tony had become treasurer, then vice president, and finally elected as president of his local unit! Teachers, parents, and kids all love "Mr. Tony" as he shares his belief that if HE makes school a priority in his life, then his kids (and maybe other dads) will make school and helping others a priority in their lives. In addition to serving on several important committees throughout the Nixa school district, Tony has begun pilot programs like "Eagle Eyes" and he champions good health and fitness throughout the school system. In a world of "kids and moms," Tony Manasseri daily shows his kids and other fathers that dads can make a huge difference in their schools. We are proud of you, "Mr. Tony!"

them flawlessly. What a joy to watch! Wally believes that the best thing about serving on the PTA is "the work we do for your children. But I believe it is equally important to support or faculty and staff, whether it's by buying school supplies, providing goodies throughout the year, reminding the administration of their value to us and our children, or a myriad of other ways. If their spirits are soaring and their heads are held high, so will our children's." He believes that dads should "seize this opportunity to take an active part in the life of your child. They will be grown and gone too quickly." He also shares that "a 'super dad' should give the 'super mom' every opportunity to be connected to her children. She will love him for it!" What a great idea, "super dad" Wally Pfeffer!

Wally Pfeffer

Serving as both president of Fairview Elementary School PTA and vice president of the Smithton Middle School PTSA, Wally Pfeffer is actively involved. He has served eight years as a PTA member and four years as an officer. He remembers well his first involvement with PTA: "At our first school meeting at Fairview, we were asked to join the PTA and we did! As for being an officer, my daughter Hillary brought home a flyer asking for volunteer leaders and she asked me why I couldn't be president. I applied, was accepted, "and the rest is history!" His favorite PTA moments were at the Fairview Fever Festival and the Smithton Back-to-School Night. He watched with wonderment as the PTA volunteers conducted these events without his having to do anything except applaud their efforts. They accepted their assignments willingly and performed

MoPTA “Super Dad”!

Dr. Hew McElroy

As a parent, Dr. McElroy has always held membership in his children's school PTAs but historically used a busy dental career as an excuse to avoid closer involvement. In recent years, he realized the need to get more deeply involved. Dr. McElroy is a member

Jeff Piper



Actively involved in PTA for the past three years, Jeff Piper is a member of Coldwater Elementary PTA

(Hazelwood school district). He started his involvement with PTA by helping out with the BEAR-B-QUE and then birthdays (along with Vince McGraw). His favorite PTA moment is the Character Carnival Coldwater holds at the end of the school year. His wife and he remade all the posters that named and described the games for this event. They also made up a new “Teacher’s Game” that the students just loved. This year he helped think of a motto for their school’s PTA unit. He believes that the best thing about serving on the PTA is “being involved and knowing you had a part in helping your child’s school be a better place.” Jeff would encourage other dads by saying, “Don’t be afraid to step up and get involved. The years go so fast. Work will always be there but let your kids know that they are still a value to you. Support them when they are young and they just might support you when you are old!” A truly remarkable “Super Dad”, he manages his older son’s Fall Ball baseball team, is coach for his youngest son’s two baseball teams and he works long hours for his family. His wife, a stay-at-home mom, says that “he is always there to listen and he tries so hard to be at everything he can at school, even for our two oldest children (one is in college and the other is married). He still finds time to do the dishes if they are in the sink! Things get crazy and hard at times but Jeff is definitely there when you need him.” We are so proud of you, Jeff!

of the West Junior High School (Columbia Public Schools) PTSA. His son Tim is he and his wife’s third child. He attends West, a great school with a wonderful principal (Dr. Sandra Logan) and an outstanding faculty. Dr. McElroy served as vice president of the West Junior High School PTSA last year and is the president this year. When asked about what event started his involvement, he says that “my family learned directly of the dangers and heartaches that stem from the premature challenges that our children are exposed to too early in all areas of their lives, including our schools, all schools everywhere. Our schools represent the one arena where we as parents can unite to fight for our children. I wanted to make a difference and to encourage other parents, especially dads, to get more involved. The one unwavering constant over the progression of change that we have seen since the 1960s, when students’ major transgressions were running in the hall and chewing gum, is our children’s desire to have us in their lives. We can, by personal involvement, combat the onslaught of the unhealthy influences to which our children today are exposed.” When asked about his favorite PTA moment, he originally thought that it was when he was elected president but then he realized that it was truly his first PTSA meeting of the year when he witnessed

the enthusiasm, capability, and commitment exhibited by the officers and committee leaders of his PTSA Board. He thought it was inspiring! His words to other dads are: “I ask that they take to heart what I have said. Studies have shown what we instinctively know that a father’s involvement in a child’s life is instrumental. Moms and dads alike are challenged today like never before. We need to work to stay current with societal threats and stay ever vigilant in providing our children with the tools that will allow them to survive and thrive as principled, viable, and good human beings. We need to work harder than ever to teach our children right versus wrong, good versus evil, sensibility versus ignorance, and integrity versus weakness, while encouraging the self esteem that will help them make the correct choices in life.” He is a DIY guy, who has practically rebuilt his house. He collects and trades antique china and enjoys writing. He is an Eagle Scout. He serves his church and community well. When he was referred to as a “Super Dad”, he chuckled. He said that “none of us really envision ourselves as a ‘super mom’ or a ‘super dad’. To paraphrase the adage, some of us are born to greatness; others merely have children thrust upon us. With God’s help, we will rise to the occasion and be there for our children.”

Juan L. Williamson



President of the Burke Elementary School PTA (Hickman Mills school district) for a second year, Juan Williamson has

been involved in PTA for four years. His involvement began with the School Carnival. When asked about his favorite PTA moment, he shares that he has “enjoyed the entire PTA experience”. He believes that the “best things about serving on the PTA is having the opportunity to build strong partnerships with the fathers of our students and our teachers.” His words of encouragement to other dads are that “involvement requires action not just your presence”. He encourages you to “look into your son’s or daughter’s eyes and tell them you

love them!” He recently spoke that the school’s Back to School Night and said that PTA is more than a fundraiser and that it doesn’t just stand for mothers. He encouraged dads to get involved in PTA. He understands the value of parents and teachers working together to make the school a better place for all students. He also encouraged the parents in the audience to get involved in the school if they could but to at least get involved by helping their own child be all that they can be. He is very enthusiastic and passionate about his role. He believes in being consistently accessible to his children. He wakes up at 6:00 every morning to text message words of encouragement and love to his sixteen-year-old son in Jackson, Tennessee. What an amazing “super dad”!

Mark Unruh



As Spring Valley Elementary PTA president and treasurer of the Raytown PTA Council, Mark Unruh is a model “super dad”. Involved in PTA for the past eight years, he started with fundraising. His favorite PTA moments involved running the carnivals. He also enjoys getting involved with the kids and staff. Mark believes that children need to see dads involved as much as moms; his words are inspiring: “I wanted to make a difference and I think I did.” Way to go, Mark!

Len Kellogg

In his seventh year of involvement with PTA, Len Kellogg serves as the treasurer of the Smithton Middle School PTSA in Columbia. He began attending meetings to help influence the school district to allocate more funds from a pending bond issue for their elementary school. His favorite

PTSA moment is “having a part in the PTSA securing funding for a new Media Center addition to our elementary school – Ridgeway Elementary in Columbia”. Getting to know fellow like-minded parents, teachers, and school administrators to better understand their concerns and work together to solve school problems is the best thing about his serving with PTSA. His words of encouragement are thought provoking. “Though you may think you are busy in your job or vocation, you can make the time to add your expertise to the activities at your child’s school. Your contribution can be as varied as building games for a fundraiser, serving on a technology committee, serving as treasurer or serving on any of the other committees of your local PTSA.” Although he wouldn’t call himself a “super dad”, he says he’s “just a parent who chose to be involved in the school that my children attend.” We disagree. Thanks to “super dad” Len Kellogg!

Vince McGraw

Involved in PTA for the past five years, Vince is currently affiliated with Coldwater Elementary PTA (Hazelwood school district). His first involvement began with the BEAR-B-QUE. His favorite PTA moment is feeding the students, parents, and grandparents that came to school that day. He says that the best thing about serving on the PTA is “getting to know the other families and staff members”. His words of encouragement are simple but important – GET INVOLVED! This “Super Dad” is currently teaching his girls to be “pro” golfers. Way to go, Vince!

Thanks For Your Generous Gifts!

Building Fund

- Chouteau Elementary PTA
- Summit Lakes Middle High PTA

Founders Gift

- Summit Lakes Middle High PTA

Scholarship Fund

- Center of Differentiated Education PTSA
- North Kansas City High PTA
- Chouteau Elementary PTA
- Summit Lakes Middle High PTA

as of 8/31/07

Bren Abbott

Bren Abbott has been involved in PTA since 1999 when his oldest child first stepped through the kindergarten doors. Today he is actively involved in both the Shoal Creek Elementary PTA and South Valley Middle School PTA. “Nothing is more important in today’s society than educating your child,” he stated when asked if there was any particular activity or event that initiated his PTA involvement. Being part of the PTA allows him to see other parents who are also involved and excited about their kid’s

Mark Your Calendar

NOVEMBER

National Adoption Month

- 1 National Family Literacy Day
- 8 National Parents as Teachers Day
- 12 Veterans Day (observed)
- 12–18 Children’s Book Week
- 18–24 National Family Week
- 19–25 Better Conversation Week
- 20 Universal Children’s Day

DECEMBER

National Stress Free Holidays Month

- 2 Special Education Day
- 2–8 National Handwashing Awareness Week
- 5 Special Kids Day
- 10–16 Human Rights Week
- 22 Abilities Day
- 31 Make Up Your Mind Day

JANUARY

National Get Organized Month

- 4 Trivia Day
- 15 Humanitarian Day
- 17 Customer Service Day
- 21–27 Hunt for Happiness Week
- 22–26 No Name Calling Week

Looking Ahead

APRIL

- 25–26 Leadership Conference (location: TBA)

JUNE

- 21–23 National PTA Convention (San Diego, CA)

education. To this day, classroom parties still bring back fond childhood memories. Halloween is his favorite class party and he loves to see the children’s faces and be a part of their excitement. Not only is PTA involvement something that Bren feels should be done but it is also a very important rewarding experience. Bren, who works as an attorney, also serves on the Liberty District School Board. Everyone in Liberty truly believes that Bren Abbott is a “Super Dad”. Thank you, Bren for all you do!

STUDENT CHALKBOARD

My "Super Dad"

By Amanda Weber, eighth grader at Jefferson Junior High School in Columbia

When I first heard this term, I of course thought of my own dad and wondered if he is a "Super Dad" or not? Since I wasn't sure what a "Super Dad" was, I went to the dictionary for the definition. Of course "Super Dad" was not a listing, but if you look at the word "super", it is defined as: very large or powerful, exhibiting the characteristics of its type to an extreme or excessive degree, higher in quantity, quality, or degree. Okay, that really summed that word up for me. Then I looked at the word "dad" which referred me to "father" and since I have one of those, I figured I knew enough to understand that definition. Also, since

my own father reminds me everyday who and what he is, I am comfortable with my knowledge of that word.

So now I am back to putting it all together - "Super Dad" and what I define it as. Maybe it is the guy who comes to the school performance, concert, or game a little late, rushed, and flustered that he "hit every stoplight wrong" to make it to his saved seat in perfect time to hear the line spoken, song sang, or shot made by his child. Maybe it is the "Super Dad" who picks up the children from school when mom is busy volunteering and asks "Can we stop for fast food for dinner on the way home?" Maybe my dad or your dad isn't always at the PTA meetings or volunteering at the school or the fall festival, but maybe he is always working to support the ones that are.

My "Super Dad" cooks meals on Sunday afternoon so that my mother and my sister and I have quality, nutritional meals ready to eat through the week when we don't have time between PTA, dance, and extracurricular activities. He is the "Super Dad" that wants his daughters to call him every day when we get home from school so

he can hear how our day was and what happened. He is the "Super Dad" that takes vacation time every year to stay home to take us to school when mom is at State PTA Convention.

Is my "Super Dad" a volunteer in my school and in the PTA? Maybe not the way most volunteers are defined as or counted as, but he is a volunteer and supporter of PTA and the great work PTA does by supporting and doing more for us at home, when we can't do it for ourselves. To me, my dad and men like my dad are all defined as a "Super Dad". Now, would you please save a seat at the end of the row for me because my dad is on his way.

Better Grades for Kids

Children are more likely to get mostly A's and less likely to repeat a grade or be expelled if fathers are highly involved in their schools, according to a recent study by the U.S. Department of Education titled "Fathers Involved in Their Children's School." These findings hold whether the fathers live with their children or whether mothers also are active. Involvement is defined as participation in school meetings, a teacher conference, a class meeting, or volunteering.

High involvement is participation in three or four activities.

The study, based on interviews with parents and guardians of almost 17,000 students in early 1996, found that in two-parent households where both were highly involved:

- 51 percent of the children got mostly A's;
- 48 percent did so when only the father was highly involved;

- 44 percent did when just the mother was highly involved;
- 27 percent got mostly A's if neither parent was very involved.
- 31 percent of children with highly involved fathers got mostly A's even when the father was a non-custodial parent.

For a free copy of the study, call the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN.

10 Ways to Increase Your PTA Membership

1. USE big, bold graphics to attract attention. A big checkmark might highlight the line, "Check the things PTA is doing for you this year!" Use smaller checks to make each point.
2. FIND out what your members are thinking by pasting a penny to the top of your member survey. Offer them "A penny for your thoughts".
3. NEVER let a meeting go by without making an appeal for membership. Have a membership table at all PTA and school functions.
4. "EVERYONE will be a star for 15 minutes" according to one saying. Consider profiling a different PTA member in each issue of the PTA newsletter or ask the school newspaper to do so.
5. TRY this headline on your next recruiting letter. "More than 6 million people can't be wrong!" Go on to tell that the PTA is the seventh largest association in America.
6. DEMONSTRATE how much of a bargain PTA is. Compare membership fees to those of other local associations. Or figure out how much your fees are each day. For instance, if membership fees are \$5, that comes to only a little over a penny per day.
7. SPONSOR academic events, spelling bees, math competitions, etc., and admit spectators with their PTA membership card.
8. HAVE a prize drawing at each PTA meeting for anyone bringing two additional people to the meeting. First timers may like what they see and wish to join!
9. PROMOTE an art fair and decorate the school with children's artwork. This will draw a crowd and provide a great opportunity for membership promotion.
10. COUNCILS: Provide local units with a "traveling" membership exhibit illustrating what PTA does – local, council, state, and national.

Do You Know... Dr. Leonard (Len) Young?



Dr. Leonard (Len) Young currently serves as an advisor to the Missouri PTA Board of Managers as the parliamentarian. He has been with Missouri PTA since 1994. Len's sister Jan Bowerman,

then a Three Trails regional director, asked him to speak at a regional meeting. There he met Sue Ramaker who was then president of Missouri PTA. She was the person who invited Len to work with the Board of Managers.

Dr. Young believes that the most rewarding part of his involvement with Missouri PTA is knowing, through helping the Board of Managers and the Convention conduct business properly, that he is contributing to the welfare of Missouri's children. His background is in education, serving as a teacher and a secondary school principal. His doctorate is in Educational Administration from the University of

Missouri and he is proud to be able to help the children of Missouri.

Dr. Young has been elected to almost every office in the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) and served as its national president from 1999 – 2001. He is a professional registered parliamentarian which is a certification obtained by passing the national registration examination offered by the National Association of Parliamentarians. His parliamentary role model was a colleague named Cecil Ettinger from whom he learned the basics of parliamentary procedure and who mentored him for many years to become a Professional Registered Parliamentarian.

Len enjoys traveling – especially the time he has spent in Russia and the Ukraine. Len's wife Peggy and he have been married for almost 36 years. They have two children - Brian and Amy who are both married and live in Independence, Missouri. On August 12, 2006 they were blessed with their first grandson Aiden, who is the light of their lives. If you don't believe me, just ask to see one of his pictures. He always has plenty with him!

The Bottom Line

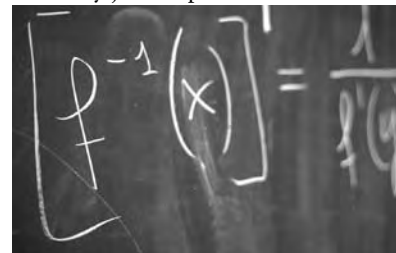


By Peggy Preston,
Missouri PTA
CONTACT editor

My parents were both very involved in my education, always expecting me to do my best work. They both taught me many important lessons and skills. My father's most memorable lesson was that of long division, which he presented to me a few weeks before we'd be covering it in class at school. He first told me that he knew how smart I was and that it would be fun for me to already know how to do this before the rest of the class. He cautioned me to just sit quietly (not a problem at all since I was really, really shy at that age) and listen as the teacher showed the class the steps. Then, when she asked for a volunteer to try, I could shyly slip my hand up and do the problem. I was a "star" – the only one who knew how to do long division.

My dad knew my strengths and he knew how to play them up.

The sad thing is that not every kid has a dad. That's why it's so important for all dads to volunteer and step up to be the "dad" for every kid in a class or at an activity. By the way, grandfathers are really just "experienced dads". There is definitely a special place for them with our kids as well. Don't hold back; our kids need YOU, dad.



(Note: I've enjoyed serving as your CONTACT editor for the past 13 issues. Please keep reading CONTACT magazine for helpful resources and features about our wonderful units and councils and their successes. I wish the very best to the new editor.)

How May We Help You?

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The listing of the 2007-2009 Board of Managers will appear in the January issue. In the meantime, please feel free to contact these officers with your questions.

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