

CONTACT

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believe

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that Work



Missouri PTA

92nd Annual Convention

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Students at Franklin Elementary excel with the "Passport to Reading" program.

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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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Looking Back



By Kathy Nevans,
Missouri PTA
president (until
October 14th)

Two years ago, in October of 2005, I started my term as President of Missouri PTA.

Even after serving

two years as president elect and shadowing Tina Zubeck in many of her presidential activities, I can honestly say that I never thought I would be as busy as I have been. Because of you, the membership of Missouri PTA, I have been allowed to travel all over this state visiting as many units as I have been invited to as well as representing PTA at numerous meetings and events with our many partners, associations, and sponsors working for all children and their education needs. I truly have enjoyed this experience and have been humbled by the members, partners, and their dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm to all children.

Many people have asked: Will you miss PTA? Yes, I will miss some of the traveling but not the adventures I have had along the way. Yes, I will miss some of the phone calls but not the people on the other end of the line. Yes, I will miss deadlines. OK, let me be honest. I won't miss the deadlines but I will miss the structure it made me have in order to get things done. Yes, I will miss the many, many people I have met but I will always have my memories and my friends I have made along the way. Yes, I

will miss the small forest that has grown in my office from the letters, advertising, materials, and information that has been mailed, forwarded, delivered, or handed to me but not the knowledge it has provided me. Yes, I will miss the hundreds of emails I receive but not the connections they have allowed me to make with our membership and association. I think you get the idea. I will not miss PTA because once serving children gets in your blood, in your mind, and in your heart, I believe you never stop serving children and to me, that means being involved, being in PTA.

I will continue to serve on the Missouri PTA Board of Managers as the immediate past president and will serve as an advisor to the board and as directed by the new administration. I know that your new officers are dedicated individuals who put children first, today, and always. My prayers will be with them and their decisions in the years before them.

My deepest gratitude goes out to the **2005-2007 Missouri PTA Board of Managers** for their determination, attitudes, skills, and passion they have given the past two years. THANK YOU! A very special THANK YOU goes to our Missouri PTA Coordinator of Administrative Services (office manager) Linda Thiele. Linda is a true joy to have around and one of the kindest humans I have ever met. She is willing to help in what ever capacity she can. She is our PTA Office ANGEL. Thank you Linda!

I believe that your new administration will serve you well. My prayers, love, and appreciation will be with **ALL** who serve PTA. Thank you for *believing...*

*A Special Thanks
goes to Kathy Nevans
for outstanding leadership as
the Missouri PTA President
2005 - 2007*

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

Connecting To The Lifeblood Of PTA... You!



By Jan Harp Domene, National PTA president

You are the lifeblood of PTA. Yes, you. The mom who makes sure her child has a healthy breakfast before school. The father who plays catch with his child

in the park. The parents who participate in school events. The PTA president who makes membership a priority.

All of you together make up the millions of members who are the lifeblood of PTA and work tirelessly to make a positive impact on the life of as many children as possible across the country. Our membership gives PTA the force it needs to help every child succeed.

As your new national president, I will see to it that we connect to our membership and I urge you to help strengthen it. We will continue supporting great PTA programs and look at ways to help them positively connect to and affect families everywhere. We will get to know our membership, what they need from us, and provide relevant resources that apply to today's parent.

Millions of other parents and most importantly children, are not benefiting from the force of our lifeblood. We promise to connect to you...and we need you to connect to them. Make the connection with other parents so that they too can help their child and the PTA succeed. Why? Because the facts don't lie. Parent involvement equals student achievement which in turn, leads to

a better world for future generations. As a mother and grandmother, this is as important to me as it is to all of you.

I encourage you to write to me at jdomene@pta.org. Tell me what's important to you, what changes you would like to see, how we can connect with you better, how you are connecting to other parents, and how we can help. Together we can create a more resounding voice nationwide, help all children, and create a better world for them.

Adopt-A-Classroom

Looking for a new way to work with a teacher and classroom in your district? Adopt-A-Classroom invites the community into the classroom in support of teachers and their students. By adopting a classroom, donors form partnerships with specific classrooms providing financial and moral support. The result is a meaningful contribution to education in which donors experience the impact of their efforts and celebrate in a classroom's success.

PTA's can use Adopt-A-Classroom as a resource to help local classrooms. By signing up to "launch a local program," you will have access to Adopt-A-Classroom informational materials and outreach tools. As you promote the program, you will be able to track the progress and success of your efforts. Check out www.adoptaclassroom.com for more information.

Show Me PTA

Are you looking for a way to promote PTA to superintendents, Board of Education members, and those not connected to a specific local PTA? Show Me PTA is the answer. Show Me PTA was organized in 1997 as a statewide PTA unit for those persons who support the Purposes and Mission of PTA but do not have a local unit to join. We invite all who care about the health and welfare of children and support public education to join Show Me PTA.

Show Me PTA membership is available without regard to race, color, or national

origin. By joining, you are a member of National PTA and Missouri PTA and entitled to all membership benefits and privileges. Members are entitled to attend PTA events sponsored by Missouri PTA including the Missouri PTA convention, at which time the annual meeting of Show Me PTA is held. Annual dues for Show Me PTA for the 2007-2008 membership year are \$8.75. To join, just send your name, address, email, and phone number, along with a check (made payable to Show Me PTA) to Missouri PTA, 2100 I-70 Drive SW, Columbia, MO 65203.

Collaborating With Community



By Mary Oyler, Missouri PTA president (as of October 14th)

Ten years ago PTA introduced the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement. These standards focus on what schools should do to increase parent involvement and are the basis for the parent involvement portion of the No Child Left Behind act. PTA recently introduced the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships focusing on the partnerships between the school, parents, and community. The sixth standard is "Collaborating with Community" – Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expand learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation. PTA can play an important part in achieving this goal.

In the book Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships, the authors talk about "building a broad base of involvement by increasing families' connections to others in the community." By building personal relationships and trust between the school, parents, and the community, everyone can tap into resources during times of need. Because the school and PTA have built relationships in the community with business, government, and places of worship, they are better equipped to help their families.

How do we build these relationships? We reach out to the community not just when we want something but to offer our help

in building a safer environment for our families. We organize food drives, help with community clean-ups, offer programs of interest to the entire community, and invite civic leaders, retired members, and young adults from the community into the schools to mentor or read to our students. We asked members of the community to share their experiences with us – be it to teach a class in gardening or cooking to the students or a class for parents on financial planning. We also ask these same community members to join us in sharing concerns and ideas. By doing this we all learn from each other and become familiar with the needs of the entire community.

PTA can also identify a need for political action in the community and work with other groups to change that need into reality. PTA's grassroots are in advocacy. What better place to practice this advocacy than in our own backyard with all the members of our community? This might be a school levy, a

bond for sidewalks, a new park, or maybe more police and fire protection. When the PTA organizes a strong group of community members including parents, teachers, retired, and young adults as well as school and community leaders, together they have a much louder voice in speaking for the betterment of the community.

When looking at "Collaborating with Community" here are a few suggestions to help start the process:

- Place suggestion boxes around your school and community.
- Ask for time on community access cable TV stations to share your message.
- Plan forums on topics of interest - look at alternate meeting places (churches, community centers, and parks).
- Make personal visits to civic leaders to introduce yourself.
- Visit with school leaders.
- And ASK, ASK, ASK people to be involved!!!

Are You Connected?

Online Membership Data Reporting (OMDR) is a web-based data system that is designed to help you to communicate with members, track membership, and offer more member benefits. The system has been designed to give you a direct pipeline to enter data into a secure system to help you become more efficient and help meet the needs of your members. The OMDR system will help you to GET CONNECTED with your membership and is provided to you at no cost by National PTA!

All PTA units were to begin using the OMDR system on July 1, 2007. The information necessary to get started in the system was mailed to all local unit presidents in the Summer Packet with the Missouri PTA Tool Kit. The information was provided on a blue half sheet of paper inside of the pocket folder. In order to log into the system you will need the Member ID# and Unit ID# that were included on this blue paper.

If you have been unable to attend an OMDR training in your area, you may visit www.mopta.org and click on OMDR TRAINING AT YOUR HOME. You will

find a listing of webinar trainings hosted by National PTA. This will allow you to walk through the system step by step with a National PTA representative. You can even ask questions as you go along or you can attend the OMDR workshop during our state convention in Columbia in October.

If you have any questions or need any assistance getting started in the OMDR system, please feel free to contact us. You may contact Missouri PTA office at 1-800-328-7330 or Jennifer Casey (Missouri PTA vice president/director of Membership Services) at 816-224-0907 or jenniferfc@mopta.org. We are here to help you – GET CONNECTED!



Welcome to Our New Units! (Since June 2007)

University Academy Lower School PTA
Summit Point Elementary PTA
High Pointe PTA
Bolivar Intermediate School PTA
Hazelwood North Middle School PTSA
Hazelwood Central Middle School PTA

10 Ways To Increase Your PTA Membership

1. ASK businesses to put PTA publicity on their marquees or reader boards.
2. FEATURE a randomly drawn "mystery" PTA number in each newsletter. Present the owner who identifies their number with a small gift.
3. USE familiar street signs as attention getters. For example: PTA membership "Yields" results (draw a yield sign). "Stop" (draw a stop sign) and consider the benefits of PTA. There's only "One Way" to get all the support you need. "Do Not Pass" this opportunity to be a member of an organization as strong as PTA!
4. STAGE an Election Day bake sale for voters and have a membership display and application to join your PTA prominently displayed.
5. CHECK last year's membership list against this year's. Call or send a reminder note to members who have not renewed their membership.
6. PROVIDE babysitting free or at reduced rates at meetings. Make sure you have responsible sitters and liability insurance in case of accidents.
7. TALK to local dairies, bakeries, groceries, or other stores about the possibility of printing "Join PTA" on cartons or bags.
8. ASK for a few minutes at a local government or service club (Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, American Legion, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) to explain what your PTA, as well as the State and National PTA is accomplishing. Invite their members to join PTA.
9. ARRANGE for a PTA float if your community has a seasonal parade.
10. COUNCILS: Give an award to the media in your community that publishes news about PTA regularly. Make sure to publicize.



Spotlight On...Hazelwood PTA Council

By Debi Spencer, Council president

Hazelwood PTA Council does many things throughout the year to support the 29 PTA/PTSA units and the students of the Hazelwood School District. In the summer we host a "Meet, Greet, and Eat". It is a time for our unit officers to get together and share information. This year there were 76 people in attendance. At two of our membership meetings we present programs that address the needs of our families in the district. In February we host a "Founder's Day Dinner" for 800; at this dinner, we hold a ceremony to celebrate the founders of PTA and the building and district level Teachers of the Year. We combine this evening with a Vendor Fair so the attendees can get great ideas for fundraising for the next school year. The Council hosts "Meet the Candidates" night in March so patrons of the district can meet and ask questions of the people running for open school board positions. April is our "Installation of Officers" night where we share information about each position

and have a ceremony to install new officers of the units. The biggest event that Hazelwood PTA Council supports is the Hazelwood PTA Council Scholarship Weekend. Over the past 27 years this event has raised more than \$2.3 million dollars which been given to graduating seniors in the district. This event has been held on Mother's Day weekend. On Saturday we host a Scholarship Run/Walk. We hold 10k, 5k, and 1 mile races at one of our local high schools and, on the track, we host children's races of ¼ and ½ mile. Last year we added a Health Fair to Run/Walk weekend which was a huge success. On Monday of Scholarship Weekend we rent out Six Flags for students and families of the district and they get the day off school to have a day of fun. Funds are raised with the Run/Walk registration fee and ticket sales to Six Flags. This year's events raised \$99,000 for the scholarship fund.

Hazelwood school district is very proud of all the events they sponsor for the PTA/PTSA units and families in the Hazelwood school district. Hazelwood school district new logo is "We're on the Move"; our PTA Council is definitely part of that move.

PTA Great Idea Bank

Submit and trade great ideas for increasing membership, implementing programs, fundraising, and more! This online tool (http://www.pta.org/local_leadership_program_1157578195781.html) was created in response to requests from PTA members like you. It connects you to members across the nation by allowing you to search for and share innovative ideas for parent involvement. Check out the PTA Great Idea Bank now!

You can deposit and withdraw ideas from the PTA Great Idea Bank. PTAs from across the country are submitting their great ideas – you can tap into these any time and contact fellow volunteers to discuss projects.

Make your school year more creative and successful by connecting to a nation of PTA's great ideas.



Superstar Unit: Benton High School PTSA

PTSA's have the unique mission of finding a place within a system that typically offers booster clubs and a variety of other associations, without creating the feeling they are "competing" for members or money. On top of this, they also face the challenge of how best to serve parents and involve students. By implementing some new ideas and bringing in fresh energy, the Benton High School PTSA was able to do all of the above and double their membership in 2006-2007 while being a visible presence throughout the school year.

Benton High School PTSA is located in the St. Joseph school district of the Pony Express region with a school enrollment of approximately 1,000 students. Brad Weil, unit president (2005-2007) credits the team effort of a dedicated core group of volunteers and especially their membership chairs Carla Ewart and Linda Peters with their outstanding success last year. Building upon the knowledge and experience gained during his first year as president in 2005-2006, Brad made an effort to bring in additional volunteers with fresh ideas. They also met with the booster club

organizers prior to school starting and coordinated activities and times. Keeping these communication lines open fostered a feeling of cooperation between the two organizations.

Their success started with the implementation of their membership campaign at student enrollment in August. A flyer went out in enrollment packets about PTSA membership, what the PTSA did, and what it offered to its members. Incentives were offered with a membership purchase including free admission into 2 dances held during the year and entry into drawings for free activity passes. One student pass and one family pass were awarded. If winners had already bought a pass, they were given the cash equivalent.

Utilizing the "S" in PTSA is important for this unit. They found that using students to staff the membership signup table at enrollment was extremely productive. Enrolling students were more likely to approach the table seeing either friends or other students there. Student members serve on the board and staff all events this unit offers. The students gain an asset from this using the volunteer

hours towards qualifying for the A+ program. Benton PTSA also offered three scholarships worth \$400 each to graduating PTSA members, hoping to add one in the upcoming year.

Working with a supportive administration and faculty, the Benton unit was able to partner with the school to offer other benefits. All incoming freshmen were given a school t-shirt with the option of selecting their preference from ten different colors. These were printed onsite by the t-shirt company and also offered for sale to the other grade levels. At a fall school bonfire, the PTSA offered a free hot dog & drink to the first 500 attendees, increasing attendance at this yearly event. Working with the local McDonalds, they had a fundraiser to receive a percentage of sales for one night. To promote this, they offered a free pizza party to the homeroom class. Way to go, Benton High School PTSA!

Dedication · Achievement · Recognition

Think your PTA works hard? Prove it! The PTA Unit Achievement Award recognizes and celebrates the great things local PTAs are doing all the time. There's no fee to participate and the application process is easy! To apply, fill out the application form on the national PTA website (www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1157664409109.html) and mail or fax it to the PTA national office. The form is simple and the requirements are easy to fulfill but the recognition for running a successful PTA is important to your PTA members and to the entire school community. The PTA national office will send a customized certificate, suitable for framing that recognizes your PTA for its efforts.

To qualify, your PTA must meet all four of the following requirements:

- Obtained a 5 percent net increase in membership or a minimum of one

member per student in the unit's school(s).

- Conducted at least one program or project that provided an opportunity for parents to be involved in the school. (Post your program ideas on the PTA Great Idea Bank.)
- Conducted at least one program or project that increased awareness among parents about issues that affect student achievement or school success. (Post your program ideas on the PTA Great Idea Bank.)
- Participated in the state PTA's convention or another state-sponsored event.

Direct all questions to the PTA national office at (800) 307-4PTA (4782) or info@pta.org.



Passport to Reading

Franklin Elementary's "Passport to Reading" program is an innovative approach developed by parents, teachers, librarians, and school administrators to encourage children to read and raise money for a wide range of PTA-sponsored activities for the school. They unveiled their program by telling parents and community that Franklin Elementary students wouldn't be knocking on doors selling, candy, candles, or magazines. Instead they would read and raise money from people who want them to read more. The program challenges kids to read and asks people to make donations

based on the amount of time each student spends reading. Students record their reading journey and track donations in special "Passport to Reading" booklets. A family member or the student's guardian verifies each student's reading minutes. During the course of the four-week campaign, students practice DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time and gather for Franklin Read-Ins in local businesses. The students even staged their own Reading Revolution, taking over their school building on a Friday night and setting up reading tents to boost their reading time and have fun doing it.



Their lead collaborative partner is the Rotary Club of Liberty. They have supported the "Passport to Reading" idea from the beginning and sought ways to be more involved, hosting the first Read-In at the Rotary Plaza Park on the historic square in Liberty. They also helped open the door for other businesses in the community to support the program by sponsoring Read-Ins at their businesses or by donating items and coupons to be used as door

prizes at Read-Ins and awarded to the top readers.

Instead of holding a school assembly with outside sales reps telling kids to sell, sell, sell, they held a pep rally where cheerleaders from Liberty Junior High School held up signs and lead cheers to READ...MORE...BOOKS! The Blue Jay and Cardinal mascots from Liberty High School and William Jewell College were on hand. Franklin students depicted characters from some of their favorite books.

An important guiding philosophy of the program was to include all students. So, in addition to honoring the top readers, the Franklin PTA rewarded every child in the school, regardless of how much they read during the "Passport to Reading" program with a new Scholastic book to reward their reading efforts.

The goal of the program was for each student to read 600 minutes during the course of the program – that's 30 minutes per day for 20 days or 150 minutes per week. At the conclusion of the program, it was announced that Franklin students read a total of 148,656 minutes. What an accomplishment!



Note: We are proud to announce that Franklin Elementary PTA and their "Passport to Reading" program are Missouri's 2006-2007 recipient of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Excellence in Education Partnership award.

Partnering

By Cindy Brinkley, AT&T Missouri president

Editor's note: Thanks to Missouri Chamber of Commerce's Karen Buschmann of the Missouri for giving me a lead about AT&T/SBC, who received their "2006 Education Supporter of the Year" award.

Education is a springboard to a successful life. At AT&T, we believe that, with support and access to resources, every child can achieve academic success. That's why AT&T places such an emphasis on supporting education initiatives. In 2006, AT&T provided more than \$21.8 million to support education initiatives across the nation. Like so many other Missouri employers, we not only see this as an investment in our future workforce but as our moral imperative. Businesses are an important part of the foundation on which a community is built. That puts business leaders in a position of great influence; but with that power comes a serious responsibility to use that influence wisely. As president of one of the largest companies in Missouri, I take that responsibility seriously and believe there is no more important issue than the education of our children.

For that reason, AT&T is actively involved in education partnerships across Missouri (www.att.com/gen/corporate-citizenship?pid=7742). For example, AT&T is involved in bringing the Internet to 1,100 classrooms in 180 elementary and secondary schools throughout the state, giving \$1.5 million to a program that sends members of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra to classrooms, and offering grants to school districts to help buy technology for their classrooms. We also run mentoring and tutoring programs that pair AT&T employees with students. In addition to our own education activities, AT&T also is partnered with Missouri's business leaders, educators, and policymakers to build the METS (math, engineering, technology and science) Coalition, an organization charged by Governor Matt Blunt with finding ways to improve Missouri students' performance in these areas. The organization, lead by AT&T Missouri's Vice President Debra Hollingsworth, is working to implement statewide reforms and increase public awareness of the importance of METS-related fields (www.missourimets.com).

Since 1996, AT&T, the AT&T Foundation, and AT&T employees nationwide have provided more than \$383 million in grants to support new classroom technology, after school programs, teacher training, and many other educational endeavors. Because of our size, we have the unique opportunity to be involved in a broad array of programs, but involvement in education partnerships isn't limited to just large corporations. AT&T is a supporter of another program called Show-Me Scholars (www.showmescholars.com), a locally driven initiative that gives even the smallest employer the opportunity to make a difference in our education system. This program brings volunteers from the business community into eighth grade classrooms to explain the real world benefits of taking tougher classes in high school. Students receive mentoring support and incentives throughout high school to help them complete the more rigorous courses including algebra, physics, and chemistry. The program, led by the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, taps into its local chamber of commerce network and is projected to be



in a quarter of Missouri's school districts by 2010.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that Missouri's employer community stands ready to partner with parents and teachers to improve our children's education experience – whether that partnership is in a local classroom or on a statewide level. Businesses can provide valuable energy and resources to schools in many ways, but some communities may be losing out on this opportunity because they simply don't know how to channel that support. I encourage all Parent Teacher Associations to contact the businesses in their communities to find ways to partner together on education initiatives. We are all stakeholders in our children's education, and working together I know we can make a difference.

Share Your Story

Missouri PTA units do incredible things for kids as they work closely with parents, families, children, staff, and administration. We want to hear your story. What has made your unit so successful in promoting parent involvement?

The application deadline for the Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award is **February 28, 2008**. The goal of this award is to recognize a local PTA whose collaborative efforts with parents, families, educators, and community members promote parent/family involvement in ongoing programs that encourage student success. Any local PTA in good standing with the state PTA and National PTA is eligible to apply. Local PTAs may submit applications to their state PTA and the state PTA may submit one application for national consideration. The national winner will receive two expense-

paid trips, one for the PTA president or designee and one for a representative of the collaborative group, to the annual National PTA Convention in San Diego. They will also participate in convention activities as requested, be featured in National PTA publications, and receive \$2,000 for a PTA program promoting parent involvement. There will be four honorable mention recipients and they will receive \$500 each. The national winner and four honorable mentions will each receive a commemorative award. All applicants for the award will receive a certificate of participation. The sponsor for this award is William Randolph Hearst Foundations. You can download the application at http://www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1116958628468.html; go ahead and "blow your own horn" about your local PTA unit.

Can You Make a Difference?



By Cheryl McCann, Liberty Schools parent and local PTA leader

Note: The city of Liberty has received a \$240,000 grant from the Missouri Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Division as part of its Safe Routes to Schools program. The new grant will fund sidewalks and pedestrian bridges along Pine, Shrader and Gallatin streets.

Every child deserves a safe trip to school each day...either by bus, parent transport, or a reasonable walking/biking path. When the Liberty School district decided to enforce no bussing of children who live within one mile rule, this put some parents who had received a bus for safety reasons in a bad spot. We were told that we either needed to let our children walk to school or provide our own source of transportation but that no exceptions would be made. As you can imagine, we as parents did not want to have our children walking these routes so the amount of cars traveling these roads increased as we were all trying to take out kids to school. This uniform enforcement of the rules was fine with me because I understood their reasoning until about two weeks into the school year of 2005-2006 when an exception was made for some children who lived about three blocks away from me. After calling Assistant Superintendent Director Mike Brewer, I was informed that they were still not going to make any exceptions for those children walking behind the school and over the railroad tracks. That is what started the ball rolling. I contacted the city Director

of Public Works Steve Hanson asking for him to approach the City Council about funding a sidewalk on Shrader and Pine Streets to give the kids a safe walk to school. He informed me that there was no money in the budget for that project.

Let me first describe the area for you so that you know what I was actually asking for. The City of Liberty is founded around an inexhaustible spring that is at the end of my street. This spring creates creeks all along this area. There are two around the school, one on Pine Street, and one on Shrader Street. These springs and the lack of curbs and sidewalks have created a dangerous situation when walking. The road literally falls off into the creek over time and the runoff of the area into these creeks creates ditches along side the road. The kids eventually have to walk in these because the road erosion has caused the streets to become narrow. In addition to narrow roads, creeks, and ditches, there is a set of three railroad tracks right behind the school with no lights, signals, crossing arms, or paint on the road to announce the presence of a train. These tracks are used approximately twice a day for car changes only. However, it is still a safety concern when the kids are walking on the tracks to keep from walking in the ditches to get to and from school.

My quest for a solution to this problem had now begun. I contacted the Missouri Department of Transportation to ask them to review the railroad tracks and monitor how many cars, trains, and pedestrians are crossing them each day. After many attempts, railroad safety specialist Bruce Chin from the Missouri Department of Transportation called to set up an appointment at the tracks to review the situation. Between Mr. Hanson, Mr. Brewer, Mr. Chin, and me, we had quite a meeting on the corner of Pine and Shrader Streets that day. They all heard my concern and all said that there was no money in the budget but that if I could find a way to pay for it, they would find a way to help us out. And I am happy to say that we all kept our promises made that day.

I researched grants for safe walking conditions to school. I found the Safe Routes to School Grant and sent the information to Mr. Hanson and the City of Liberty. He contacted Mr. Brewer and other school district officials and had another city

employee Brian Hess fill out the paperwork and send it in.

I do not know how difficult the application was or how long it takes to get approved but I do know that there was quite a bit of research done by both the city and the school district to help me out on this. I am so very thankful that they took the time to do it. This will better Franklin Elementary, our neighborhood, the City of Liberty, and all who come in contact with the area for years to come. It also brings to light that if you work with city and school officials to solve problems and put as much effort into the projects as you are expecting them to put into them, they are interested in progress and willing to help you solve the problems that exist.

As far as my PTA role at the time, I was the co-chair of our award-winning "Passport to Reading" fundraiser in 2005-2006. In 2006-2007 I served as the PTA president as well as co-chair of the fundraiser. This school year I continue to serve as the co-chair of the "Passport to Reading" fundraiser and look forward to "supervising" the construction of the sidewalk.

Project design will start later this year with construction anticipated for 2008. My daughter, who'll be in fifth grade, won't get to use the sidewalks to go to school but my son Phillip will; he's in first grade. It's not just for my kids, though. It's for the whole community. I am hopeful that others will see the benefit of working with local officials to better the community. You hear people griping about problems from time to time. But aren't we part of our city? Aren't we responsible for helping better our community?

According to Dr. Phil Wright, superintendent of the Liberty public schools, "Cheryl McCann is a perfect illustration of the 'can do' attitude our great parents have in the Liberty Public School District. Our LPS PTA is so active and supportive to help each and every building be the best. Cheryl is an outstanding representation of that attitude and is such a kind and caring person. We are so proud of her and this project. Student safety is Priority One in our district and Cheryl is leading the charge. The great schools we have in Liberty are a direct result of the hard work and dedication of people like Cheryl and our wonderful PTA members."

Protecting Our Children

By Will Kraus, state representative (district 48)

Even though school is back in session and children are back in their routine, you as a parent must still remain vigilant to remember to keep an eye out for anything or anyone that might want to harm your sons and daughters. One step you can take is to check your neighborhood for registered sex offenders.

In 2005 Missouri passed a version of Jessica's Law. This statute, named for Jessica Lunsford who was raped and murdered by

a previously convicted sex offender, was designed to protect our children from known sex offenders by making their whereabouts known to the community.

Last year the Missouri Highway patrol launched a program to inform citizens of sexual predators that could be living in their neighborhood. Missouri already had a database of registered sex offenders and their addresses and now this information has been made available to the public.

Those were both great steps forward in

protecting our children and I plan to file legislation to expand the 500 foot provision of the Jessica's Law statute to include public parks and to prohibit registered sex offenders from coaching children under the age of 18.

To help keep your children safe the state of Missouri has a few tools that I believe are very useful. The first is the Missouri Highway Patrol website at, www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov. This site has a sex offender registry where you can look up the county you live in and then enter your address to find out if there are any registered sex offenders living near you. You can choose to search within a 1,000 ft radius up to a 15 mile radius.

A hotline has also been set up for those that do not have access to the internet, the number is, 888-SOR-MSHP or 888-767-6747 and an attendant will perform the search for you.

Another website that is very helpful is www.familywatchdog.us. This site provides a picture of the convicted offender, but to get any detailed information or criminal background it would cost. There are some very useful safety tips that are free of charge.

As a father myself, I know there are few things more important to parents than their children's safety. With systems like these in place, I believe parents should feel not only more at ease, but also empowered to take control of their child's safety.

Please check these databases regularly as the information is updated frequently and if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact my office at (573) 751-1459.

Safe Routes to School

The SRTS Program was established in August 2005 as part of the most recent federal transportation reauthorization legislation--SAFETEA-LU. This law provides multi-year funding for the surface transportation programs that guide spending of federal gas tax revenue. Section 1404 of this legislation provides funding for the first time for State Departments of Transportation to create and administer SRTS programs which allow communities to compete for funding for local SRTS projects.

The administration of section 1404 has been assigned to FHWA's Office of Safety, which is working in collaboration with FHWA's Offices of Planning and Environment (Bicycle and Pedestrian Program) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to establish and guide the program.

Many of us remember a time when walking and bicycling to school was a part of everyday life. In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, the story is very different. Fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling, one-quarter are made on a school bus, and over half of all children arrive at school in private automobiles.

This decline in walking and bicycling has

had an adverse effect on traffic congestion and air quality around schools, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety. In addition, a growing body of evidence has shown that children who lead sedentary lifestyles are at risk for a variety of health problems such

as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Safety issues are a big concern for parents, who consistently cite traffic danger as a reason why their children are unable to bicycle or walk to school.

The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is to address these issues head on. At its heart, the SRTS Program empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again. The Program makes funding available for a wide variety

of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

Visit their website (safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes) for an overview of the program. Please note that each state administers its own program. Contact your Safe Routes to School State coordinator Todd Messenger for guidance on policies and project eligibility requirements. He can be reached at P.O. Box 270 – Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-7643, or at Todd.Messenger@modot.mo.gov.



Walk to School Day

Did you know that October 3rd has been designated as "Walk to School Day" to promote safe walking and bicycling throughout the year? Walking and bicycling are promoted because they enhance the health of kids, improve air quality and the environment, and make everyone aware of the importance of creating safer routes. For more information, visit www.walktoschool-usa.org/ and don't forget to get the word out to all in your community.

Creating a Positive Image

According to www.ehow.com/how_2067883_be-pta-president.html, all effective leaders have a great responsibility and opportunity to put your experience and knowledge to work to better your school. Here are a few tips.

1. Know and follow your bylaws. This document is in place for a reason and should be followed. If your first order of business is to establish committees, then do it. If you're supposed to throw a welcome back party, start planning. Don't forget that your bylaws are both your "roadmap" and your "law book". They ensure that everyone is "on the same page".
2. Take stock. You should be privy to information available from past years. Review prior event attendance and make adjustments if needed. Ensure that there is enough money to operate throughout the year or consider adding a fundraiser (with administrator approval). Take a look at your volunteer roster and start recruiting if necessary.
3. Make yourself know and get to know others. One of your first untapped resources may be the incoming kindergarten or new student parents. Introduce yourself as soon as you can. Let them know that you are looking forward to their help and support. Personally invite them to the next event. Likewise, parents who were not involved in past years may just need some personal encouragement. This is a great time to reach out to the community as well. You can open the doors and invite everyone in.
4. Walk the walk. Adhere to your organization's values. As the leader, project

a positive image and avoid gossip and complaints. Work to make the school and group a positive environment for all children. Say what you mean and mean what you say. It's a great asset to be known as a person of integrity.

Some words of caution: Trust your fellow volunteers and avoid burnout. Don't be afraid to take the necessary steps to vote to change your bylaws if they are not working; this is usually a simple matter of votes.

Lights On Afterschool

"Lights On Afterschool" is celebrated nationwide to call attention to the importance of after school programs for America's children, families, and communities. In America today, one in four youth (14.3 million children) are alone and unsupervised after school. After school programs keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire learning. They provide opportunities to help young people develop into successful adults.

"Lights On Afterschool" was launched in October 2000 with celebrations in more than 1,200 communities nationwide. The event grew in 2001 to more than 3,600 events and more than 7,500 in 2005. It was estimated that one million Americans celebrated "Lights On Afterschool" in October 2006.

"Lights On Afterschool" is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable after school programs by 2010. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has served as chair of "Lights On Afterschool" since 2001.

The Afterschool Alliance salutes the many "Lights On Afterschool" partners and programs who make this event a success, in particular the After-School All-Stars, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, Junior Achievement, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the YMCA of the USA. More information can be found at www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm?CFID=4086138&CFTOKEN=26222748.

Give Kids Good Schools

The Public Education Network (PEN), a PTA partner, has established the week of October 15 – 21 as "Give Kids Good Schools Week". PTA encourages its membership to initiate local conversations regarding public education during this week. To find out more about what you can do during Give Kids Good Schools Week, visit www.publiceducation.org/events_20071015_gkgs.asp or call (202) 628-7460.

Mark Your Calendar

OCTOBER

Positive Attitude month

- 3 Walk to School Day
- 7-13 National Fire Prevention week
- 8 Start the Art Week begins
- 12-14 **Missouri PTA Annual Convention (Columbia)**
- 15-19 National Health Education week
- 15-21 Give Kids Good Schools week
- 18 Lights On After School
- 19-21 **Emerging Minority Leaders Conference (Dallas, TX)**
- 21-27 National School Bus Safety week
- 27 Make a Difference Day

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

Looking Ahead

APRIL

- 25-26 Leadership Conference (location: TBA)

JUNE

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



Member Benefits Providers

Barnesandnoble.com

National PTA and Barnesandnoble.com have developed a discounted online bookstore for PTA members featuring over one million titles of books, textbooks, audio books, CDs, DVDs, and videos. Members will save 5 percent on all purchases ordered from this site in addition to any normal site discounts of up to 40 percent. New titles and special discounts will be featured periodically.

Liberty Mutual

As a member of the PTA you qualify for a special group discount on your auto, home, and renters insurance through Group Savings Plus from Liberty Mutual. With Group Savings Plus, you can enjoy the ease and convenience of paying your premiums through checking account deductions or direct bill. You'll also enjoy fast, easy round-

the-clock claims service and a variety of discounts including multi-car, multi-policy, safe-driver, passive restraints, and anti-theft device discounts.

Southwest Airlines Vacations

Southwest Airlines Vacations has teamed up with National PTA to offer PTA members an exclusive discount on vacation packages. Members can save five percent on vacation packages to more than 40 exciting destinations, in addition to everyday low rates and ongoing special offers. Southwest Airlines Vacations offers convenient and affordable vacation packages, perfect for busy parents trying to plan their next getaway! Simply choose your destination, select your flights and hotel accommodations, then add theme park tickets, tours, rental cars, and more - all in one place, for one low price.

Finding the Right Business Partner

Establishing a business partnership that is mutually beneficial to a corporation or business and a school or school district can take more ingenuity and creativity than ever before. The Council for Corporate and School Partnerships (www.corpschoolpartners.org/guide.shtml) is a great resource.

Get involved. Relationships go a long way toward mutual understanding. Get involved with business groups in your community. Take the opportunity to open their eyes about what's going on in your school and to learn about their concerns.

Brag. Don't be afraid to blow your own horn. Work to share the good things. Brag about the accomplishments of students and teachers. Show your excitement. For example, students in many schools are involved in community service projects, sometimes school-sponsored, sometimes as an activity of a group such as the National Honor Society. Total the hours and let the businesses know the extent to which your school is involved in the community.

Be creative. Think outside the box when it comes to identifying potential partners. Find



the unusual. The "Matching Needs and Potential Resources" worksheet in A How-To Guide for School-Business Partnerships may prove helpful.

Use proven strategies. A How-To Guide for School-Business Partnerships developed by the Council for

Corporate & School Partnerships provides proven methods for implementing long-term, sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships that can enhance the educational experience for all students. The How-To Guide is used in schools and school districts throughout the United States and was recently selected by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, Business Education Network (www.businesseducationnetwork.com) as "best practice" methodology for implementing and maintaining school/business partnerships.

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If you own a business or work for a company that wants to support all Missouri children by supporting Missouri PTA, please contact Toni Wiechmann (Missouri PTA Resource Development chair) at toniw@mopta.org or call (816) 847-0440.

Do You Know... Tina Zubeck?



Tina Zubeck is a familiar smiling face at PTA events. As a Missouri PTA past president, serving from 2003-2005 in that capacity, Tina has served our state and its membership well.

She has also served for two year on the national level on the board of directors and as chair of the field service committee. She currently serves as a member of the National PTA resource development committee.

Tina's PTA involvement began when her son Bobby entered kindergarten. The PTA leadership at his school had dissolved and new leaders were needed. Tina stepped in. During the following years, she served at virtually

every position on the local unit level like many of our great leaders. Tina's past involvement at the state PTA level spans fourteen years and includes serving as a Pony Express regional director, health/safety chair, meetings coordinator, vice president of legislation, treasurer, first vice president, president, and immediate past president. Tina encourages volunteers to "just know that you do impact lives – adults and children." You help make families be better and ultimately kids benefit! Nothing is better than that!

Tina's hobbies include traveling, riding with her husband Bob on his Harley-Davidson, and reading. She is very proud of her family – husband Bob (26 years together), Bobby (24) who is a Navy pilot, Ashley (22) who is the International Advertising Editor for Discovery Girls magazine, and Ellen (20) who

is a sophomore at Mizzou. Tina sums it up by saying that "my three children and husband are the best things I have done in my life. They are awesome!"

Editor's note: Tina also currently serves as vice chair of the Board of Trustees of the Missouri Public School/Education Employees Retirement Systems.

E-Learning Courses

At a time when PTA budgets are tight and schedules are even tighter, e-learning is a solution for members looking to expand their skills cost-effectively and without the need to travel. This e-learning initiative is a step toward achieving PTA's goal of making all members informed advocates by 2020.

Choose from the following courses, and look for new courses to be added throughout the year. Each course takes 30 minutes to an hour to complete and can be revisited repeatedly for more practice. You can find the e-learning courses at www.pta.org/leadership_training_resources.html. To login, you'll need to use your username and password located on the back of your membership card.

PTA Basics—Discover the history and structure of PTA, as well as the programs and issues that the national network of PTA members undertakes across the country to strengthen parent involvement in every school. (Course designed for emerging local leaders.)

Grant Writing—Does your PTA need more non-dues revenue to use in the school or community? Get familiar with the grant-writing process by taking a free introductory course on the basics of grant application.

Conflict Management—Learn the basic principles and techniques of conflict management by immersing yourself in a simulated real-life situation, guided by immediate feedback and expert advice.

Planning and Goal Setting—Developed

around a five-step process from Franklin Covey, this course contains printable tools and exercises for use in setting and reaching your goals.

Parliamentary Procedure—We have all attended a meeting where there were no objectives, people interrupted each other, conversation was dominated by arguing, and decisions weren't made fairly or in a timely manner (or at all!). Learn how rules of conduct positively effect the decisions a PTA makes while ensuring fair and orderly unit operations.

Running a Successful PTA Program—Outlines the steps for taking a program idea from concept to reality to meet the needs in your school. (Course designed for both emerging and current local PTA leaders.)

Effective Advocacy for Your Child—Organize around local issues and address them to benefit the needs of children and your community. (Course designed for emerging local leaders.)

Writing and Proposing PTA Resolutions—This course combines "stories from the field" with advice from members on researching and drafting resolutions and a checklist for writing and proposing resolutions.

Planning Your PTA Year—Disorganized volunteer projects lower enthusiasm and make people wonder why they tried to get involved in the first place. This course sets you up for a successful year, assisting your planning and goal setting.

The Bottom Line



By Peggy Preston, Missouri PTA CONTACT editor

Are we unusual? I live in a town where the local businesses have been and are very active with our schools. We've had an active Adopt a School program for several years and our PTA units have always had a good number of business memberships. In fact, our school district's theme was "Partnering for Education" last year. Our outstanding Nixa Chamber of Commerce even provides a 'welcome to Nixa' package for all new teachers each year. (This year there were almost 70 of them. Please understand that our district is located in a very fast growing area; we just opened another new elementary building in August.)

Our local support by the community for taxies levies and bonds has been outstanding as well. Although we have more voters who do not have children in schools those who do, the Nixa voters have never turned down an issue. They have faith in our schools and are very proud of them.

Our schools have a wonderful "open door" policy to families, community, and business while ensuring that our schools are safe at all times. We encourage volunteerism. Our PTA units and councils have been very successful and have a great reputation of doing what's best for kids. Our annual Strategic Planning has been successful in part due to the numbers of patrons who participate.

Are we unusual? I hope not. But if your school does not have a great working relationship with families, community, and businesses, you have some work to do. That, or move to Nixa. (I'm just kidding! We're "packed".) I encourage you to lay the groundwork by first opening lines of communication, inviting collaboration, and asking for input. Your efforts will certainly pay off. Just remember that our kids are worth it!

How May We Help You?

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