

CONTACT

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Together



MISSOURI
PTA
WELCOMES YOU TO THE
2011 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Destination: 
Leadership!



Distinguished Service Award

The Missouri PTA Distinguished Service Award honors individuals and groups for their service and dedication to the children of Missouri and the mission of PTA. Congratulations!

Stacy Baker – Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Debbie Barnes – Nixa Junior High PTSA
Francie Blackford – Ozark West Elementary PTA
Steve Bockshammer – Raytown South Middle School PTSA
Heather Borchardt – Manor Hill Elementary PTA
Dorothea Bradley – Center Senior High School PTA
Lynda Burns – Conn-West Elementary PTA
Lee Carlile – Franklin Elementary PTA
Sarah Chayre-Guapo and Family – Butcher-Greene Elementary School PTA
Bob Childers – Nixa SCORE High School PTSA
Jazzy Chun – Butcher-Greene Elementary School PTA
Bridgette Duet – Prairie View Elementary PTA
Patsy Duhon – Belvidere Elementary PTA
Susan Ewing – Logan-Rogersville Elementary PTA
Bruce Failla – Liberty Middle School PTA
Jamie Glass – Shoal Creek Elementary PTA
Tracy and Brent Goodall – Cambridge Elementary PTA
Julie Goodman – South Valley Middle School PTSA
Marilyn Guernsey – Thomas PTA
Karen Hall – Northview Elementary PTA
Kim Harris – Nixa Early Learning Center PTA
Shannon Harris – Kellybrook PTA
Steve Harris – Kellybrook PTA
Jayne Hartwig – Trailridge Elementary PTA
Kathryn Heflin – Alexander Doniphan PTA
Bridget Herrman – Alexander Doniphan PTA
Don Johnson – Raytown South Middle School PTSA
Amy Johnston – Eugene Field Elementary PTA
Ruth Ann Kite – Logan-Rogersville Elementary PTA
Julie Huff – Nixa Junior High PTSA
Marge Humphrey – Meadowmere PTA
Clint Jones – Center Senior High School PTA
Stacey Keenan – Shoal Creek Elementary PTA
Karen Kershaw – Inman PTA of Nixa
Amy Koenigsfeld – Espy PTA of Nixa
Ryan Knight – Ozark South Elementary PTA
Misty Kuntz – Meadowmere PTA
Tara Laws – Manor Hill Elementary PTA
Charles Lee – South Valley Middle School PTSA
Donna Lien – Martin City K-8 PTA
Michelle Lindsey – Ozark Upper PTA
Kelley McCormick – Mason Elementary PTA
Ron McCoy – Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA
Lori McIntyre – Belvidere Elementary PTA
Debbie Maynard – Northview Elementary PTA
Christie Mieseler – Ozark Junior High PTSA
Becky Morgan – Springfield Council PTA
Deb Mullen – Liberty Middle School PTA
Lisa Orchard – Raytown Council PTA
Dorothy Paige – Center Senior High School PTA
Kim Palmer – Martin City K-8 PTA
Lori Paulson – Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA
Aaron Person – Belton High School PTSA
Connie Phelps – Potosi Elementary PTA
Tracy Ann Prasad – Hazelwood West Middle School PTSA
Cheri Pratt – High Pointe PTA
Iris Pugh – Grandview Council PTA
Mike and Helen Quirk – Ozark Council PTA
Denise Riley – Liberty Junior High School PTSA
Anna Roberts – Trailridge Elementary PTA
Misti Ryal – Manor Hill Elementary PTA
Ana Saint – Delta Woods Middle School PTSA
Janis Scott – Ozark North Elementary (O.N.E.) PTA
Crystal Seiler – Century PTA of Nixa
Agnes Selepeo – Liberty Junior High School PTSA
Marilou Simmons – Martin City K-8 PTA
St. Joseph School District Print Shop – St. Joseph Council PTA
Tammy Sprinkle – Raytown Council PTA
Angel Vaughn – Conn-West Elementary PTA
Lisa Walker – Grandview Council PTA
Debbie Weaver – Belton High School PTSA
Greg Westfall – Center Council PTA
Susan Wilkerson – Ozark East Elementary PTA

Recipients of the Distinguished Service Award receive a letter of recognition from the state president, a certificate suitable for framing, and a lapel pin. A portion of the award fee goes to the Missouri PTA Scholarship Fund.

Cover photo:

Scenes from the April Leadership Conference in Independence, Missouri.

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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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President's Message

By Wendy Jackson, Missouri PTA President



As you receive this issue, we are knee deep in summer time celebrations, vacations, fun and sun! Although school is not in session, many PTAs are gearing up for the upcoming school year. We at Missouri PTA are very busy making sure that we are giving you, our members, the tools you need to begin the school year. We are planning Schools of Information, Regional Conferences, and revising our resources. Your summer Tool Kit from Missouri PTA and the National PTA Big Box of Possibilities will be arriving at your home shortly. These two resource kits are invaluable to your PTA unit/council. It is our hope that you will utilize these and share the information with your board, equipping them with the materials to go from good to great.

As you plan your summer vacations and family reunions, we hope that you are also planning for the upcoming school year. We all know the old adage of "failing to plan is planning to fail". A little bit of planning now will make for less stress at the beginning of the school year, which we all know can be very stressful. Go ahead and set a date before school starts to print and collate all those beginning of the

school year notes that will need to be sent home, i.e. volunteer opportunities form, membership form, party contribution form, home room representative form, and so forth. This will also help the teachers as they begin to plan and prep for those very busy first few days of school. Plan a tentative calendar of events, sign up your school for the Just Between Friends (JBF) membership system, find business sponsors for your PTA this year, and begin plans for back to school events. It will all be worth it, not only in planning, but you will begin to build relationships among your board members.

Take some time to review both Missouri and National award applications and see if your PTA can not only qualify, but WIN some of those awards. There is always a sense of pride and accomplishment to see your hard work pay off in the eyes of a child and to be recognized with an award to boot.

I have such a tremendous amount of respect for all volunteers. Volunteers give of their time and their talents freely, without any compensation other than the satisfaction of helping others. I hope that your time spent volunteering on behalf of children and families is as rewarding as mine, because "Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much".

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 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

As Contact went to press, we learned that the delegates to the 2011 National PTA convention voted to pass increasing the National PTA dues by fifty cents. Effective immediately the dues will go up from \$3.75 to \$4.25 for Missouri individual dues. The business dues will be \$5.50. Missouri PTA did not raise their portion of dues and has no plans to do so. Please check your bylaws to see how this increase affects your unit or council. If you have questions, please contact your Regional Director or Missouri PTA.

Individual dues

National portion was \$1.75 and goes to \$2.25.
Missouri portion was \$2.00 and stays at \$2.00.
Total \$4.25

Business dues

National portion was \$1.75 and goes to \$2.25.
Missouri portion was \$3.25 and stays at \$3.25.
Total \$5.50

Congratulations Kathy!

Kathy Nevans, past Missouri PTA president (2005-2007), has been voted in as a National PTA Board of Directors member for a two year term. She will be a great representative for all children. She “Believes” in our mission and speaking for every child with one voice!

Meet Our New National PTA President



Betsy Landers was elected National PTA President-Elect at the June 2011 PTA National Convention in Orlando. She previously served a two-year terms as National PTA President-Elect (2009-2011) and National PTA Secretary-Treasurer (2007-2009).

A PTA member since 1989, Betsy’s dedication to PTA has been unwavering. When she encountered challenges with her first PTA experience, she stayed with the group to ensure future volunteers had a better experience. When her children were transferred to a

new school, she helped form its first PTA as secretary. When her children were transferred yet again, she led the way to forming its first PTA – this time as president. She then took on increasing responsibilities at Shelby County Council PTA, then at the Tennessee PTA Board of Managers simply because of her passion to be involved and her desire to foster a widespread culture of excellence at the local level.

As State President of Tennessee PTA, Landers led that organization in working with the State Board of Education and several legislators to write what would become the Parent Involvement Act, using the PTA National Standards as a model. Now Tennessee law, the Act mandates that all school districts in the state have a written parent

involvement policy.

Though her involvement is now at the national office, Landers is quick to point out that the real power of PTA lies at the local level. “It’s the parents who dedicate themselves to improving their children’s education, PTA members who are committed to advocating for all children – those are the people who make a real difference.” Missouri PTA was delighted that Betsy could join us at our Convention last year.

She is married to Ben G. Landers and has three children, Benton, Nicholas, and Mary Frances.

Missouri PTA thanks outgoing National PTA President Charles “Chuck” Saylor, Jr. for his service to the children of our nation.

The Official Back to School PTA Kit— Discover the Possibilities with PTA!

Register for your free *Official Back to School Kit* from National PTA and get the tools you need to serve your community and run your PTA. The kit contains the invaluable *PTA Quick-Reference Guides*, as well as membership materials, program and advocacy resources, and special offers from national partners.

All local, council, district, and region PTAs must register to receive their kit for the 2011–2012 year. The registration form allows your incoming PTA president or other authorized leader to provide your unit’s preferred shipping address and date—to ensure that the kit gets into the right hands at the right time.



For more details about kit delivery and contents, go to PTA.org/OfficialKit or call 1-800-307-4782.

The *Official Back to School Kit* is available exclusively to PTAs in good standing.

Membership Award Winners

As units begin planning for back to school, learn how two award-winning units maximize their membership! A list of all membership award winners is available at mopta.org.

Where are you in your school's village?

By Rachel Powers, Immediate Past President, Blue Springs High School PTSA

Congratulations to Blue Springs High School PTA in Blue Springs for winning Missouri PTSA's Golden Gavel membership award for the highest total membership for three consecutive years.

"It takes a village"...we've all heard this phrase at one time or another in our everyday lives indicating that we need people to help achieve the goals we've set in place. We are not always successful on our own. In thinking about what it does take to achieve and maintain membership goals in PTA, I kept coming back to the phrase, "It takes a village". My village consists of my parent volunteers, local community, students, faculty and administration. Where are you in your school's village? That is the question I want you to consider when putting together your plans for the upcoming school year.

Parents are our backbone, the foundation; without the efforts put forth from our parents, the membership drive would not be successful.

Teachers/Staff are an enormous opportunity for enrollment and support.

Students are the reason we are putting forth such great efforts to reach our goals.

Administration is a key component of a successful membership campaign. We need them to verbally remind teaching and support staff of the importance of joining PTSA. Principals are your biggest cheerleaders within your schools.

When you reflect on your past year think about your role in the village...Did my PTA make a difference to the students? Did we assist them in becoming better students, better citizens, and better people? Did we reward their successes? Ask yourself what part of the village was I?

- Was I the parent that sat at the enrollment table?
- Am I the teacher/staff member that joined?
- Am I the student who benefits from a successful membership campaign?
- Am I the administrator that encourages faculty and staff to join?

Membership is the essential element that allows you to accomplish the plans that you have set for your unit.

6 Keys to Membership Success

1. Planning – put together your "Membership" committee early. Outline job requirements for the VP and their helpers. Make sure key people will be available the week of enrollment! This includes finding and scheduling volunteers to man the table that week. Also, make sure your unit treasurer understands how she must work alongside the Membership Chairman to coordinate funds/deposits.
2. Work with Administration to get PTA information to the parents in the enrollment packet that each student receives over the summer. If parents feel that PTA membership is another "expected", "required", "necessary" element of enrollment, they will most likely join during enrollment or at the beginning of the school year.
3. Make working the PTA table at enrollment fun for both the volunteer and the potential members. Have decorations, candy, a drawing or raffle of some kind...anything to make your organization's table stand out from the endless tables the parents and students need to visit
4. Make sure that your school administration appreciates the importance of staff participation. Give them ways/options/ideas that they can inspire/entice/bribe staff with to reward them for joining. How about letting them wear jeans to work one day (if your school doesn't usually allow them) if they join? Maybe your PTA can sell a ticket to a brunch that costs the price of membership. Get your volunteers to supply food, etc. and make it special. The staff will begin to look forward to it each year and your participation will increase.
5. Advertise the benefits of joining PTA to your staff and parents. Not only do we provide funds schools can use to support students in extra ways, but members can take advantage of deals that the National PTA has created with retailers, etc. Make sure all potential members are provided a list/handout showing how joining can benefit them!
6. Enlist the help of local businesses. Sell business memberships and then prominently display/advertise the partnership to the community. You'll find your unit receiving repeat business members.

"The Race Is On"

By Shelly Throckmorton, VP and Director of Membership

Congratulations to this year's winning unit of the 2010-2011 Outstanding Membership Campaign Grant, John Nowlin Elementary PTA in Blue Springs.

This unit used their school's mascot, the Knights, as the focus of their campaign, "The Race Is On." A membership poster was displayed illustrating the membership race. Each class had their own knight on horseback running toward the finish line.

John Nowlin Elementary PTA utilized colored flyers displaying their membership logo to promote their campaign. They included details

about how purchasing a membership helps the school and the member's benefits. They designed flyers geared toward individuals, faculty & staff and businesses. Those purchasing a membership before September 30 received a free John Nowlin "Knight" water bottle. A "Bounce House Party" was the incentive for classrooms to have 100% participation. Business members received a special John Nowlin paperclip holder shaped like a school and were mentioned in a monthly newsletter. A "second push" after the holidays brought in an additional 20 members.

Great job John Nowlin Elementary PTA and thanks for reminding us "...don't be left in the dust – PTA is a must!"

2011-12 Membership Theme

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



10+ WAYS TO START YOUR MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN OFF RIGHT!!!

1. **START NOW!** It is never too early to start planning. A well planned membership campaign is ready to go by the first day of school or before.
2. **HAVE THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE IN PLACE:** Membership recruitment is a big job. Split the task into different areas so committee members can use their talents and no one person is overwhelmed.
3. **SET A MEMBERSHIP GOAL:** All good plans have a goal and a “map” on how to get there. 2-5% growth is obtainable for most units. Make sure everyone knows that goal and how you plan to reach it.
4. **BUDGET:** Make sure your budget includes money for the promotion of your membership campaign.
5. **1ST MEMBERS:** Each of your unit’s officers and chairmen need to be a member. Sign them up first!
6. **SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS:** Enlist the support of your superintendent and principal. Make sure each of your school board members are card carrying PTA members. Get permission to attend back-to-school meetings to promote your campaign and sign up staff as members.
7. **BUSINESS PARTNERS:** Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings to invite local businesses to join. Ask them to display posters for joining PTA. Give them the opportunity to support the work your PTA does and create ways to give visible recognition for that support.
8. **NEW FAMILIES:** Provide realtors with PTA “Welcome” packets to give to all home buyers. Any person should be considered a potential member, not just parents of school age children.
9. **CREATE MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES:** Arrange for discounts or coupons for PTA members at local businesses or create awards for students and/or classrooms that reach 100% membership. Give away a token with each membership, such as a sticker, button, or pencil inscribed with your PTA’s name.
10. **NATIONAL BENEFIT PROVIDERS:** Be sure to promote these along with any local incentives you may be offering. Provide details on how to access the benefits only to your PTA members, not to the school as a whole. Check out the National PTA website, pta.org, for further information on how your members access these benefits.
11. **BACK TO SCHOOL PTA PACKETS:** Put together packets that inform, promote & invite. Tell prospective members 3 things your unit accomplished last year, 3 goals this year, 3 reasons why their membership is important to the children of your district, the children of Missouri and the children of our nation. This can also be their opportunity to sign up to volunteer for specific events or be a room parent.
12. **BE VISIBLE:** Make all events PTA membership events. Have a bulletin board showing the progress of your drive and an invitation to all to join.
13. **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:** Have a “welcome committee” present with a smile to help direct students & parents to classrooms. Hold a “First Day coffee get-together” off campus – for new parents or those of us who still cry -- to deal with first day trauma and an opportunity to join PTA.
14. **MAIL DUES MONTHLY:** Work closely with your treasurer to make sure the state and national dues are sent in on the first of each month. No one is officially a PTA member until their dues reach the state office.
15. **TAKE A DEEP BREATH!** You are doing great! Remember to use your resources, i.e. PTA Membership Quick Reference Guide, MO PTA website, or National PTA website if you have questions.
16. **TOOT YOUR OWN HORN!** Units/volunteers work hard for our children and deserve to be recognized. Take time to display the awards your unit has earned over the years. Look at this year’s recognition to see how you are going to Unleash the Power of PTA!

Early Bird Awards

The unit that sends the **HIGHEST MEMBERSHIP** based upon last year’s **TOTAL MEMBERSHIP** to the state office **POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 23, 2011** will earn the **EARLY BIRD AWARD** and be recognized at the Missouri PTA Convention in Columbia in October.

THREE (3) WINNING CATEGORIES

Early Childhood/Elementary/Special Ed.
Middle School-Jr. High/Combined Unit
High School

NO APPLICATION NECESSARY

Get those dues in by September 23, and YOU MAY BE A WINNER!

Missouri PTA Unit Benefit

NEW!! PRIDE FUNDRAISING - Pride Fundraising will help your PTA with the professional resources and know-how necessary for hosting healthier, more profitable Fun Runs, Bike-a-thons and Walk-a-thons. Missouri PTA units can save \$100 when you use Promotion Code “MOPTA” when registering for an event license. For more information please visit our custom landing page at www.PrideFundraising.com/MOPTA. Be sure to request a FREE sample and information packet while you are there.

High School Concussion

By Thomas A. Martin, Psy.D., ABPP

Director of Adult Neuropsychology, Department of Health Psychology
Clinical Associate Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia
Immediate Past President, Brain Injury Association of Missouri



Dr. Martin will be presenting a workshop on concussions at the Missouri PTA Convention in October.

Research has identified a disturbing increase in the rate of concussion, also known as mild traumatic brain injury, among both male and female high school athletes. While an estimated 140,000 athletes sustain a concussion each year in the United States, this number may very well be an underestimate as many concussions go unrecognized and unreported. A concussion is a brain injury often resulting from a blow or jolt to the head. This force causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth and/or side to side inside the skull where several mechanisms for injury may occur. For example, the inside of the skull is remarkable for areas that contain bony protrusions which may poke and jab brain matter resulting in contusions and other tissue damage. A host of neurochemical changes also accompany a concussion with this process capable of causing ongoing damage to brain cells in the hours after injury. Concussion impacts both boys and girls and participants in all competitive activities, including football, basketball, lacrosse, wrestling, band, and cheerleading.

The brain controls every aspect of our being, including sensory and motor functioning, cognitive abilities, breathing and heart rate, and personality. A brain injury can result in changes in any area of function with alterations in mental status (e.g., feeling dazed or confused, seeing stars, or blacking out), physical (e.g., onset of headache or nausea), sensory (e.g., vision/hearing disturbance, decreased coordination), cognitive (e.g., diminished speed of processing, attention, learning or memory), or emotional (e.g., irritability, reduced tolerance for frustration, labile emotions) symptoms. The scope and duration of these symptoms are related to severity of injury and may last for seconds or persist for weeks or months.

While the brain is nothing short of amazing in its ability to recover from the consequences of a concussion, high school athletes who return to play before being afforded appropriate time to heal from their injury are at increased risk of incurring another brain injury, as well as more severe symptoms, including consequences that may be long-term and life-altering. Most people who incur a concussion experience a complete and relatively speedy recovery, with a small number of individuals realizing lingering symptoms. For example, we know that younger persons, whose brains are still developing, need longer to recover from a concussion than adults. Similarly, younger persons with a history of a learning disability or neurological condition (e.g., seizure disorder, previous concussions) may also take longer to recover from a concussion.

We know that persons who are recovering from a concussion are at increased risk of experiencing another concussion, possibly related to their diminished sensory and motor functioning, as well as the vulnerable state the brain is in as it is recovering from injury. Students athletes who return to play before they have fully recovered from their symptoms are not only at increased risk of incurring another brain injury but also

for experiencing more significant and enduring consequences from a follow up concussion. Although very rare, children who have incurred a concussion prior to recovering from a previous brain injury have experienced rapid swelling of the brain resulting in death. A lack of appreciation regarding the significance of concussion, as well as limited ability of key stakeholders (e.g., students, coaches, parents) to identify a concussion has resulted in student athletes returning to play before they are fully recovered. Determining when an athlete has recovered from a concussion can be complicated as some symptoms may abate (e.g., headache and nausea) while other symptoms (e.g., diminished cognitive ability) remain undetected. Also symptoms that are not present at rest may emerge as the athlete becomes physically active.

Several states have passed legislation regarding the management of concussions in high school athletes, with Missouri considering such a bill. This legislation is designed to promote awareness and understanding of concussion among high school athletes, their parents, coaches, school personnel, and the student body. Research has demonstrated limited appreciation and misperceptions about concussion held by the general public and many health care providers and this education provides an opportunity to fill the large gaps in knowledge base and correct mistaken beliefs related to brain injury. This legislation also mandates that high school athletes who incur a concussion not be allowed to return to play until they have been evaluated and released to do so by a licensed health care provider who is trained in the assessment and management of concussion. Such legislation will serve Missourians well by enhancing awareness and understanding of concussion and ensuring our high school athletes are not placed at increased risk of harm by being returned to play before they have fully recovered from their concussion.

While the consequences of concussion can be significant and life altering, it is important to remember that the brain is very resilient in recovering from insult, that not every fall or tumble will result in a brain injury, and that most persons who experience a concussion experience a speedy and complete recovery. Equally important is our evolving appreciation regarding the impact repeated concussions may have on the brain as well as the effect concussion can have on the developing brains of children. Education regarding the signs and consequences of concussion, recognizing our student athletes who have incurred a concussion and ensuring that these kids do not return to play until they have fully recovered from this brain injury are simple yet effective measures to ensure the welfare of our children and those who may be most vulnerable to such an injury.

For more information about concussions, see The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>), the Brain Injury Association of America (<http://www.biausa.org/About-Us/about-brain-injury-association.htm>) and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (http://www.biamo.org/new_page0.aspx).

July – UV Awareness Month

By Dani Riley, Health & Safety/Juvenile Services Chair



Ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun can cause a lot of different problems. Be aware and be prepared to keep everyone in your family healthy. There are three types of ultraviolet rays: UVA, UVB, and UVC. Here's an easy way to remember them: UVA is for aging, UVB is for burning (sunburn), and UVC is for cancer (DNA damage from the sun can lead to melanomas and other skin cancers).

While protection from sun exposure is important all year, most people are outside more in the summer months, where the UV rays reflect off surfaces like water, concrete, and sand. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes that the hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. are the most hazardous for UV exposure in the US.

Do we have to stay inside all summer long?

Not as long as you follow the CDC's recommended "healthy sun" habits:

- Seek shade during the midday hours (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
- Wear clothing to protect exposed skin
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of at least 15 or higher and reapply at least every two hours. You'll need to apply more often if exercising or in the water.

How much sunscreen is enough? If one bottle of sunscreen lasts your family all summer, you're not using enough! To ensure that you get the full SPF of any sunscreen, you need to apply 1 oz – about a shot glass full – for an adult, a little less for children. No children under six months should be exposed to the sun. Baby's delicate skin just isn't ready for it.

Are tanning beds safer? Nope, sorry. Try sunless tanner instead.

Have a healthy summer!

STUDENTS WORK HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Mark Kempf, Student Involvement Chair

During April's Leadership Conference, our PTSA Student Leaders spent time learning how they can have a voice, and make a difference to not only their own unit, but also to legislation policy. These students participated in workshops that discussed issues that impact being a PTSA Student leader and demonstrated firsthand how board meetings and convention general sessions work through both a mock board meeting, and a mock general session. The students also did some brainstorming concerning student program ideas for upcoming Conventions and Leadership Conferences.

Perhaps the highlight of the Student Leadership Conference was the work accomplished on a resolution to be presented at this year's Annual Convention concerning Distracted Driving. The idea for this resolution came from the students at last fall's Missouri PTA Convention. This effort is being accomplished by the students, and will be presented by the students. Adults have offered support, but the work is entirely the product of these hardworking PTSA Student Leaders.

Work on this resolution is a demonstration of what our students can accomplish, and proof that through PTSA students can have a voice that is heard by not only local units, but also statewide and potentially all the way to Jefferson City or beyond.

We're hoping for a good turnout of Student PTSA members at this year's MOPTA Convention to help support the resolution and to be a part of this historic opportunity. Just like it was for Leadership Conference, MOPTA is again offering one FREE student registration for Convention with every paid student at Convention. We hope this allows units to include more students in their unit training plans.

Reflections Student Showcase



On Saturday April 30, 2011 Missouri PTA held its annual Reflections Student Showcase. In this the 41th year of the National PTA Reflections Program, 68 students and 300 guests from across Missouri came to the Hilton Garden Inn in Independence to be honored for their achievements.

Missouri PTA is very proud of all students who entered entries into this year's program, and we hope to see even more entries next year when the Reflections program theme is "Diversity Means . . .".

Missouri's National Reflections Winners

Missouri PTA received notification from National PTA that we had four students place

at the National Level of judging of the Reflections Program.

Alyzza V of Kansas City won an Award of Excellence, for her Dance/Choreography entry in the Intermediate division. Alyzza will receive from National PTA a \$200 cash award, a silver plated Reflections medallion, a certificate and letter signed by National PTA President, Chuck Saylor, and recognition in the annual PTA Reflections Online Gallery.

Aden P. of Sparta won an Award of Merit for his film/video production entry in the primary division; Ben G. of Lee's Summit won an Award of Merit for his film/video production entry in the middle/jr division and Haley M of Columbia won an Award of Merit for her musical composition entry in the senior division. Aden, Ben and Haley will each receive a silver-plated Reflections medallion, a certificate and letter signed by National PTA President, Chuck Saylor, and recognition in the annual PTA Reflections Online Gallery.

Missouri PTA would like to once again congratulate these talented students! As well, we would like to say "thank you" to the PTA schools and Reflections chairmen who organize and administer this program. Without you it would not be possible. We look forward to seeing the work of students again next year.

Congratulations to all!



Back to School with Reflections

Meet the teacher nights are a great opportunity to start your unit's Reflections program. There are many ways to "get the word" out at back to school nights – below are the top 5.

1. **Display Board** – Create a display board with some of the important facts about Reflections. Make sure you have a paragraph of what Reflections is and how it was started. New parents can't encourage their child to participate if they don't know what Reflections is or how it works.
2. **PowerPoint Presentation** – Have a computer set up on your display table and run a PowerPoint presentation of past winner's entries
3. **Take Home Paper** – Create a single sheet flyer with information about the Reflections program. This flyer should contain the current year's theme, your local unit's deadline for entries and the location of where students and parents can find the full set of rules for the Reflections program.
4. **Stickers and Magnets** – If your budget allows, purchase computer sticker paper or computer magnet paper and create a sticker or magnet that each person who stops by your table can take home. This should have the theme and your deadline on it.
5. **Samples** – Borrow and display samples from previous winners. Make sure to include a sample from each of the 6 categories (literature, visual arts, photography, video/film production, dance/choreography, and musical composition).



2011-12 Reflections

Diversity Means . . .

Check your Tool Kit and National PTA
Official Back to School Kit
for more information!

Nine Ways to Boost Parent Involvement

By Ava Payne, Contact Editor

1. Start on the Bottom Rung

Think of parent involvement as a ladder. Your first task is to get people to step onto that bottom rung. You want them to move from no involvement to some involvement. How? I know this goes against our usual advice, but have a low-key PTA event. That means no fundraising requests, no sign-up sheets, no membership recruitment, just families and school personnel getting together in a fun environment. Sponsor a free family ice cream social before school starts. Establish a welcome committee to make personal connections with families new to your school. Have coffee and muffins for kindergarten parents on the first day of school. Start an All Pro Dads club. Once you get a parent interested and connected to the school, you can move him up to higher rungs: occasional volunteer, frequent participant, even committee chair or officer.

2. Make it easy for parents to say yes

People are just shy enough or just busy enough or just uninformed enough that the slightest obstacle to involvement can become a huge barrier. Take away the predictable barriers and your group can flourish. No time? Keep events short and to the point. Don't know who to call? Include names and phone numbers on every parent group correspondence. Don't know anyone? Develop a new parent mentor system, where veteran parents reach out to newcomers. Not sure how you fit in? Distribute committee descriptions. Lost the sign-up sheet? Post information in a variety of media, repeated several times.

3. Provide Lots of Opportunities

Provide lots of different ways parents can get involved. If you provide a lot of involvement choices, it's more likely something will appeal to each person. Break big jobs into little ones so the tasks aren't overwhelming. Identify jobs that can be done at home. Differentiate between one-time projects and responsibilities that continue throughout the year. Indicate projects that require the use of a committee and those that are best handled by an individual working on his/her own. Describe the skills needed for each task. Let people know what kind of time commitment is involved for each job. Many parents are afraid if they say yes to volunteering it will turn into an endless job. Even an hour or two can be a big help.

4. Ask!

Possibly the single most effective way to increase parent involvement is to ask people personally to help. Most want to help, but it can be hard for them to take the first step. A conversation while waiting for the school bus or a phone call is hard to beat.

5. Make the Call

Has this ever happened to you? A parent says "I signed up to help with the field trip, but no one ever contacted me." If someone volunteers, contact them, even if you have enough help, even if the event isn't happening for months. No one likes to be ignored.

6. Talk the Talk

Don't assume that everyone knows what PTA is. Get the word out. Design an upbeat market-

ing and membership campaign. Use different forms of communication, including newsletters, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, backpack mail, outdoor signs, bulletin boards, etc.

7. Make It Fun

Enjoyment is contagious. People want to be part of a group that has fun while accomplishing its goals.

8. Roll Out the Welcome Wagon

Welcome people one on one at every opportunity. Go out of your way to introduce yourself. Don't assume everyone knows who you are or what PTA is all about. You and the other officers are your group's best ambassadors. Use nametags at meetings, so when somebody new does come, she won't feel like an outsider. On a more personal level, avoid pettiness and cliquish behavior. Don't take criticism personally. Avoid inside jokes that leave outsiders puzzled. People will find other ways to use their time if your group projects an unfriendly attitude.

9. Say Thank You

It seems so obvious to say thanks to people who volunteer their time and talent. But often by the time the carnival has been torn down, the newsletters have been copied, or the cookie dough has been distributed, you just want to put that project behind you. But do it anyway. Thanking volunteers assures everyone that their time is valued and their contribution is appreciated.

Fund Your Healthy Lifestyles Program

Looking for a way to fund a program at your school that will help ensure that all students stay healthy and ready to learn? With the PTA Healthy Lifestyles Grants from National PTA, your unit could receive up to \$1,000 to support activities planned for November's PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month. Grant applications are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT, Friday, September 2—giving you time this summer to work with your leadership team to put together a program and submit your application. The application form, event ideas, and other planning resources are available online at PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles. Check your Official PTA Kit for another copy of the brand-new PTA Healthy Lifestyles family activities poster for your school. English- and Spanish-language versions of the poster are also now available online at PTA.



**PTA Healthy
Lifestyles**

www.mopta.org

McCaskill's Education Roundtable Discussions

By Dorothy Gardner, VP and Director of Communications

Just this past April Senator Claire McCaskill hosted education roundtable discussions across the state in an effort to gain a clearer perspective from educators, administrators and parents regarding our nation's education policy, specifically the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This national act, also referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), is the most comprehensive federal education law and it is currently up for reauthorization this year. There is a general consensus among many in the political world that ESEA will soon be a very hot topic in Congress. ESEA was originally passed in 1965 as a part of the "War on Poverty." ESEA emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability. The law authorizes federally funded education programs that are administered by the states. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). It is important to note that without reauthorization, this funding stream will no longer be available to our schools.

Senator McCaskill's education roundtable discussions were not open to the public but it was her intention that local PTA members make up the audience. In addition to extending an invitation to local PTAs to attend, several local PTA leaders were offered the opportunity to participate in the discussion as panel guests.

A great deal of the discussion centered around standardized testing, accountability measures, employing and developing highly trained teachers, nurturing both college and career-ready students, and parent engagement. Two of PTA's primary goals, with regard to the federal education policy, focus on common core standards and meaningful parent involvement.

Many parents and educators agree, in its current form, ESEA relies too heavily on standardized testing as the main means for

addressing accountability issues. We all know there are several other factors, completely out of the school's control, that have an effect on test scores. For instance, some children simply do not do well on standardized tests. In many cases the outcome of these children's test scores do not adequately reflect the knowledge they have amassed throughout the school year. Just recently MOPTA highlighted a YouTube video produced by an elementary school in the Ozark region designed to boost morale with regard to the upcoming MAP test. Sure the video was entertaining and super cute, but the measures this school went to just to help ease the dread of the MAP test should give one pause. Imagine if your job performance was determined by the work done during one week out of the entire year. What sort of stress and apprehension would you feel?

Currently parents are mentioned over 300 times in ESEA. Study after study has shown despite economic, ethnic or cultural background, parent involvement is a key factor in student's success. But there is a difference between involvement and meaningful engagement. When parents first find out they are expecting, many doctors recommend books such as "What to expect when you are expecting." Bookstore shelves are filled with books offering help with the terrible twos or out of control teens. Where is the book on empowering parents to advocate for their child in the education system? Can you really meaningfully engage a parent by simply hosting a back-to-school night or a parent teacher conference? To be part of the solution parents must have input as to what the plan will entail.

Several of the PTA members who attended the McCaskill roundtable discussion came away with the impression that the Senator



felt there were major problems with the act in its current form. In particular, at the Liberty roundtable, the Senator posed the question of whether the federal government should even be involved when it comes to education. She mentioned that some feel there is no need for a federal Department of Education, saying that this is a state issue. In light of the economic recession and high budget deficits, redefining education as a state issue would be an easy way to justify more cuts in education. Many families choose to live in a particular state not because of how the state government functions, but rather because their job requires them to do so.

"Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree."
– Thomas Jefferson 1782.

Thomas Jefferson believed there was a clear connection between government and education. The only way to preserve a strong democracy is by seeking the input of the enlightened people it represents. Education is a vital part of our country's infrastructure. What we put in it today will directly affect the make up of our country in 20-30 years.

Child Advocacy Day



Each spring a group of organizations gather in Jefferson City for Child Advocacy Day (CAD). This year's Child Advocacy Day was held March 31. Child Advocacy Day is an opportunity for parents, providers, and community members to speak up and ask lawmak-

ers to make the health, safety, and education of Missouri's children a top priority for the state. During the day, participants are given the opportunity to speak with legislators about issues affecting our children and schools, attend the Child Advocacy Rally, visit exhibitors and attend workshops.

Child Advocacy Day is an excellent opportunity for the novice and experienced advocate. For those who have experience talking to their legislators CAD gives them the opportunity to network with other advocates and time at the Capitol dedicated to children and education. For the novice advocate Child Advocacy Day gives you a chance to talk to your legislators while having someone with more experience there to answer questions and provide a guiding hand. Child Advocacy Day also includes workshops geared toward funding for education, successfully advocating for children, and more.

While Child Advocacy Day provides an opportunity to speak with legislators in Jefferson City, it is not the only opportunity you

as an advocate have to talk to your legislators. Legislators are also available during the summer and fall when the Senate and House are not in session. You can also call, write or email your legislators. If you do not know who your Senator or Representative is you can find the information at www.senate.mo.gov and www.house.mo.gov

Whether you attend Child Advocacy Day, a MOPTA Town Hall Meeting, or a legislative and advocacy workshop at a MOPTA training you can always find information about the MOPTA legislative priorities on the MOPTA website (www.mopta.org).

To receive legislative alerts regarding issues important to Missouri, please join the JC/DC network on the home page of the Missouri PTA website (www.mopta.org). Simply add your name and email to the boxes in the lower right corner. Don't forget to sign up for National PTAs legislative alerts as well. You will find the form for that at the following link: http://www.pta.org/member_to_member_network.asp.

Dr. Leonard M. Young

Missouri PTA's Dr. Leonard M. Young, Professional Registered Parliamentarian, has been named the National Association of Parliamentarians' (NAP) Executive Director Designate. Dr. Young served as NAP President from 1999-2001.

Since 1984, Dr. Young has served as Missouri PTA's parliamentarian. In addition to his parliamentarian duties during convention's general meeting, Dr. Young also provides training for the Board of Managers and conducts workshops on parliamentary procedure at both convention and leadership conference. He actually makes parliamentary procedure easier to understand and, believe it or not, fun! Congratulations Leonard!



Put Your Unit / Council in Contact

Let everyone across the state know what your unit or council is doing! Send information and photos to avap@mopta.org.

Revised Robert's Rules of Order Coming Soon

Do you know how to conduct a meeting? How to deal with a contested election? The 11th edition of Robert's Rules of Order will be out in September. This reference book will get your unit or council through its thorniest parliamentary questions.

DONATIONS

Thank you for your generous donations. With your continued support, we can do great things.

Scholarship Fund
Randall Elementary PTA
Rose Acres Elementary PTA

Emerging Minority Leaders Conference

by Norvel Johnson, Membership Outreach Chair

Missouri PTA, hosted their 2nd Emerging Minority Leaders Conference in the Greater St. Louis Area, on April 9th, 2011 at Hazelwood North Middle School. Workshop topics included parents rights and responsibilities, responsible student behavior, the family-father connection, financial aid basics, school involvement for grandparents raising grandchildren, and others regarding parent

involvement in urban communities.

After a keynote speech by Dr. Dorris Walker McGahee, President of the Parent Assembly of St. Louis Public Schools, a panel discussion was held about minorities in the educational community. Entertainment was provided by two dance groups from Larimore Elementary School in Hazelwood.

PLAN AHEAD!

- Get a relationship started with the Chamber of Commerce in your town or city. Community support makes a huge difference.
- Have a "Minute to Win it" Night!
- Be visible at as many "Back to School" events as possible.
- Stay organized!
- Start the back to school evening and morning routine a week before school starts so there's not pandemonium on the first day of school.
- Have an officer's meeting to plan your goals for the school-year.
- Take a deep breath. Laugh. Things are going to go wrong but it will be o.k.
- Let the parents know what your unit spends its money on.
- If people volunteer, use them and let them have input.
- Relax and remember "It's for the kids!"
- Put together a packet for new families to the area and follow up with a phone call inviting them to a meeting.
- Get a new notebook – new supplies aren't just for the kids!
- Bring cookies to the school secretary. You'll need her help for something!

"Minute to Win It" games at Leadership Convention – try this at your school!



Best Tips for Back to School

CONTACT asked attendees at Leadership Conference for their best back to school tips. Here are a few!

As your board starts planning for the year, look closely at the Blue and Gold Seal applications. Use these as a guideline to prepare your plan of work. Not only will your unit be an award winning unit but your membership will receive excellent programs throughout the year. Be sure to assign someone to monitor the unit's progress, complete the applications and then mail them to the state office in March."

Make sure to network and personally shake hands with the parents in your school. Having a face to put with a name makes a big difference. Also, remember to personally ask people to volunteer for tasks and committee positions. This is not about putting people on the spot but rather letting them know you feel they would be great for a particular job. And finally ALWAYS let people know exactly what is expected of them. Never sugar coat a position. No one appreciates being blindsided.

2011 St. Louis Father & Kids Experience:



Once again Missouri PTA will partner with All Pro Dad at their Father & Kids Experience with the St. Louis Rams on July 16th. The Shriners Hospitals for Children All Pro Dad *Father & Kids Experience* is a hands-on event providing inspirational bonding opportunities for dads and their kids. This year's St. Louis area *Father & Kids Experience* at the Russell Training Center, hosted by St. Louis Rams Alumni Aeneas Williams and Grant Williams, will be from 9 a.m. to noon. Dads and kids will spend the morning running football-themed drills equipping dads on how to be better fathers, while spending quality time interacting with their kids.

Advanced registration is required and early registration is encouraged as the event is expected to sell out. A certain number of complimentary admissions have been reserved for PTA members, but they are limited, so please register at www.allprodad.com/pta. Additional registrations are only \$15 per family, which includes admission for one adult and up to four children. The event is recommended for children ages five and older.

Missouri PTA's Website gets an Overhaul!

Check out our new and improved website at mopta.org. Log in to the "Members Only" area, using the login on the back of your membership card, to access the Tool Kit, Reflections Kit, information from past workshops, and much more!

National PTA on Facebook

Babble.com has named National PTA's Facebook page one of their "50 Best Websites for Parents."

Use Just Between Friends to Communicate & Manage

Just Between Friends is the official PTA communications and membership management system. The online system was developed to help PTAs efficiently communicate with their entire school community; earn money for their unit; and manage membership. Benefits to PTA Units

- By using the system, units can easily perform all the functions necessary to manage and grow their PTA unit while earning money from Just Between Friends family-friendly sponsors.
- Leaders responsible for communications will streamline their tasks with automatic reminders and the ability to attach documents to their emails.
- Membership Chairs will spend less time: entering members, creating directories, printing membership rosters, and printing membership cards.
- VPs and Chairs responsible for volunteer recruitment and management will simplify their volunteer efforts by providing members the ability to self-report volunteer hours.

If you're not currently using Just Between Friends, it's easy to get started. Simply visit www.JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart to enter your unit. Then, visit www.LearnJBF.com for lots of how-to information.

Mark Your Calendar

July

National Parks and Recreation Month

- 4 Independence Day
Missouri PTA Office Closed
- 24 Parents Day

August

National Immunization Awareness Month

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

- 1 Dues to state office

September

National Preparedness Month

Baby Safety Month

- 1 Dues to state office
Deadline for the following state awards:
 - Advocacy Through Leadership (Individual) Award (AtLaw)
 - Advocacy Through Leadership- (Unit/Council) Award (AtLaw)
- 5 Labor Day
Missouri PTA Office Closed
- 5-9 Missouri Parent and Family Involvement in Education Week
- 11 Grandparents Day
- 15 Leaders Project application deadline
- 19 Constitution Day
- 23 Fall Begins

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

- 14-16 Missouri PTA State Convention in Columbia

Missouri PTA thanks the following proud sponsors of 2011 "DESTINATION: Leadership!" Leadership Conference:

Friday All-Conference Workshop sponsor



Membership Lunch sponsor



Thanks to these fine companies for their support of PTA.

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Missouri PTA Convention
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Stoney Creek Inn
Columbia, MO