

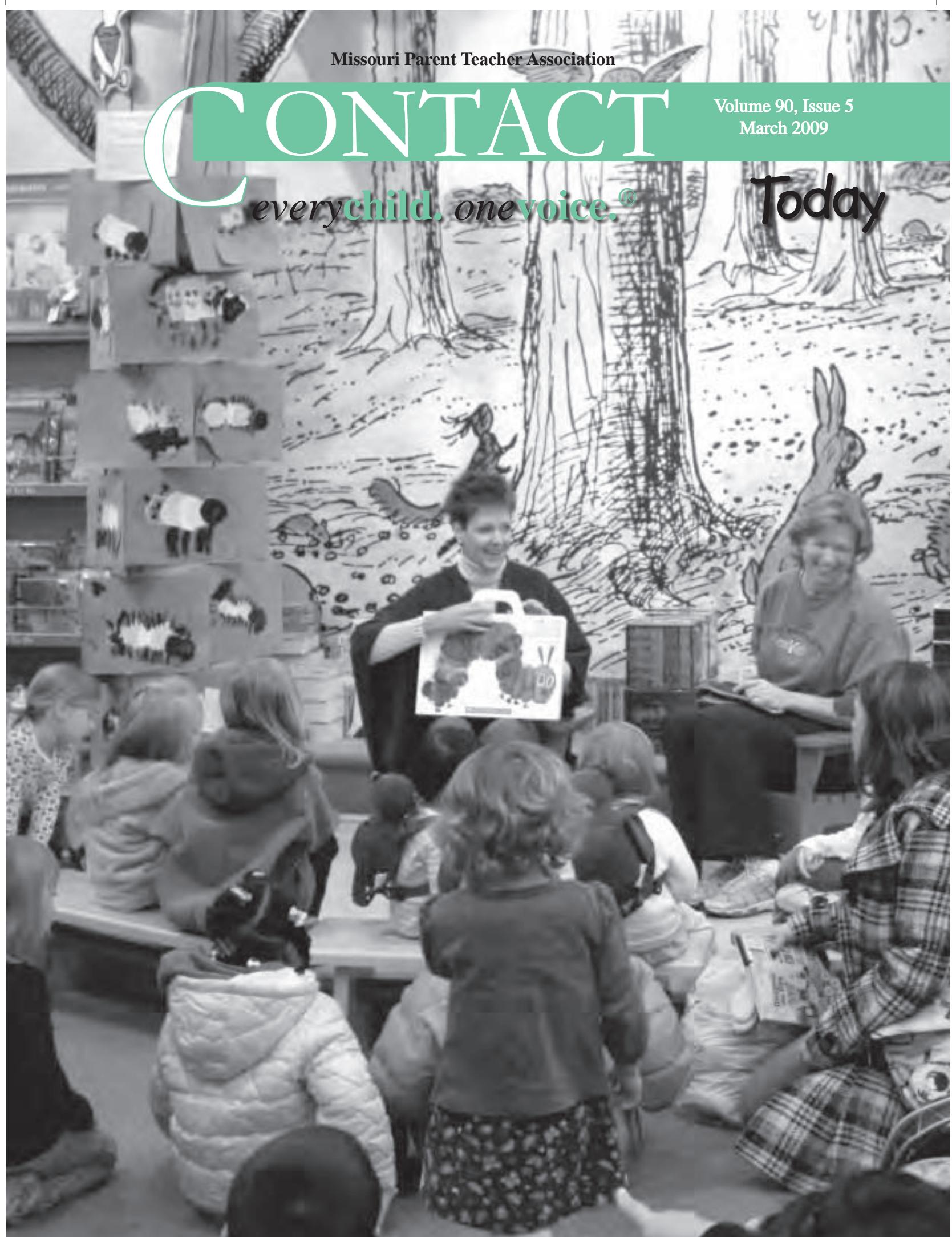
Missouri Parent Teacher Association

# CONTACT

Volume 90, Issue 5  
March 2009

*everychild. onevoice.®*

Today



**Parents and Students:  
Announcing a new video  
on Career Paths**

**what's  
your?  
plan.**

**Helping students (grades 7-16) explore their futures.**



**MissouriConnections.org**

Connect to Your Future

View the video online and check out other career exploration resources at:  
**[www.missouriconnections.org](http://www.missouriconnections.org)**.

The video also is available in DVD format at Missouri school and public libraries.

*This message brought to you by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

*For more information, call (573) 751-2660.*

## Cover photo:

West Englewood's Barnes & Noble Bookfair

## Contents

- 1 President's Message**
- 2 Leadership Conference**
- 3 Short Takes**
- 4 Mister Mayor**
- 5 Membership News**
- 6 Wellness by Bob Holden**
- 7 Prescription Drugs/Calendar**
- 8 Healthy Lifestyles Winner**
- 9 Reading Made Fun/Honoring Veterans**
- 10 Blue Springs Dental Program**
- 11 Alcohol Awareness**
- 12 Foodless Reward & Healthy Snacks**

## CONTACT Staff

**President/Publisher** Mary Oyler  
**Editor** Dorothy Gardner  
**Graphic Designer** Olivia Gill

## 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

# President's Message

By Mary Oyler, Missouri PTA President



In this issue there are many articles about the health and wellness of our children. I would like to visit with you about another way we can help our children. March 2<sup>nd</sup> is Dr. Seuss' birthday and the NEA's Read Across America program which focuses

the country's attention on how important it is to motivate children to read in addition to helping them master basic skills. All adults in children's lives play an important role in helping children read well and independently. By following some simple tips from the U.S. Department of Education it is easy for each of us to make a difference:

#### FAMILIES:

- Read to and with your children every day
- Talk with infants and young children before they learn to read
- Help your child see that reading is important – set an example - let them see you enjoying reading
- Ask your children to describe events in their daily lives

#### CHILD CARE PROVIDERS:

- Read to infants even before they are able to talk
- Set up a reading area
- Teach children rhymes, songs and poems
- Plan a field trip to the library

#### SCHOOLS:

- Start a school wide community reading program
- Set high expectations for students and encourage families to do the same
- Encourage students to visit the school and local library
- Establish a family literacy program
- Encourage teachers to work together to teach reading and writing across all the subjects

#### LIBRARIANS:

- Work with local partners to start community reading programs
- Help children learn to use the library's resources effectively
- Increase opportunities for preschoolers and their child care workers to visit the library
- Help motivate all children to read for enjoyment

#### GRANDPARENTS, SENIORS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS:

- Become a learning partner/reading mentor to a child in your neighborhood or from your

local elementary

- Start a community reading program
- Be supportive of school, community and state efforts to meet high reading academic standards
- Develop a monthly program at your library, school or community center in which seniors discuss their oral history with children

#### COMMUNITY, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Encourage the staff of your organization or the members of your group to volunteer as tutors to read with children
- Donate books to an early childhood center, mother's day out program or parent/child play group
- Think of ways your organization's expertise can help make stories come alive for students
- Help students write their own stories and produce them in book or dramatic form

#### MEDIA:

- Highlight successful reading programs
- Provide free newspapers for school use to promote reading programs
- Help your community learn how to help children read better
- Support local literacy programs by donating advertising space

When every member of the community pulls together to make a difference in the lives of all of our children, not only do our children succeed but our communities grow stronger. Refer to this list and decide what you can do to help make sure that every child's potential becomes a reality – Today and every day.

*CONTACT* is the official publication of Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers. We are a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. *CONTACT* is published bi-monthly, six times a year. Subscriptions are \$7 per year.

Missouri PTA Office, Editorial and Publication Office: 2100 I-70 Drive SW, Columbia, MO 65203, PHONE: 800-328-7330 FAX: 573-445-4163 or www.mopta.org

Please notify the Publication Office in case of change of address or to purchase a subscription. It is important that we have accurate addresses so that we may provide the support and information to each local unit.

NOTE: Advertisements appearing in this publication do not constitute PTA's endorsement of the product or service.

#### PLEASE SHARE THIS MAGAZINE.

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

National PTA Office: 330 North Wabash Ave Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60611-3690  
Phone: 312-670-6782 (670-NPTA), www.pta.org.  
MO PTA 800-328-7330

## "Making the Case for PTA, Because It's Worth It!"

This exciting and motivational workshop will be presented by National PTA Representative Nore Hare, member of the Membership/Field Operations Department. Explore how to define that value of your PTA for your school and membership. Know the importance of describing what dues dollars fund. Why PTA? Know the personal, professional, and persuasive reasons people join or support PTA. This workshop promises to answer your questions on non revenue dollars as well as inspire you to plan your membership drives to not just your school but to your school and community!!!

**V**aluable in more ways than words can say,  
**O**ptimistic and helpful everyday,  
**L**ending support with a heart-warming smile,  
**U**nselfishly going the extra mile,  
**N**otable for all the work you do,  
**T**rusted because we can count on you,  
**E**ffective in all you undertake,  
**E**steemed for the difference you make,  
**R**eady to serve in so many ways,  
**S**pecial and deserving of our praise!

## Don't Miss Out!!!

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 2009 LEADERSHIP  
CONFERENCE MAY 1-2, 2009 AND PARTICIPATE IN THE  
ALL CONFERENCE WORKSHOP AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
ON FRIDAY EVENING.

# Missouri PTA 2008-2009

## “WOW!” REFLECTIONS PROGRAM

By Toni Wiechmann, MOPTA Reflections Chair

“Wow!” do we have some pretty talented kids in Missouri!!! Missouri PTA’s Reflections committee is very busy now with your students’ artwork for this year’s Reflections theme of “Wow!” Our deadline was January 16th and we received hundreds of pieces of art from around the state. Over that weekend we unpacked, catalogued, organized, and preliminarily judged every artwork submission and have sent the 25 finalists in each grade division and art category on for the final state judging. Missouri PTA’s first place winners will be sent to National PTA by March 2nd and we will announce state results that same month. National PTA winners are expected to be announced in late April or May of this year.

Missouri PTA wants to thank all the students who participated in this year’s program and the

many local Reflections chairpersons that made the program possible in their area. As quoted on the National PTA website, “National PTA believes all children deserve a quality arts education and encourages students to pursue artistic expression through participation in its annual arts Reflections Program.” We appreciate all that you do for our Missouri students!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2009 Student Showcase on Saturday, May 2nd immediately following our PTA Leadership Conference in Independence. Attendees will be able to see all of the talented Missouri students and their artwork as we award and recognize their efforts for this year’s program. And go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) to see the 2008 Winners Gallery for last year’s theme of “I Can Make a Difference By...”

# Show-Me State Games

## GEARING UP FOR 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The 2009 Show-Me STATE GAMES will be the 25th anniversary of the Olympic-style sports festival held in Columbia, MO. The Opening Ceremonies for the GAMES will be held on July 17 at 7:00 p.m. and more than 40 athletic events will be held during the weekends of July 17-19, July 24-26 and July 31-Aug. 2. For a complete schedule of events and more details about the 25th anniversary GAMES, visit [www.smgs.org](http://www.smgs.org)

# Filling the School Board

Now is the time of year many school districts will elect or re-elect School Board officials. The individuals who comprise the local school board will be instrumental in the quality of education your child will receive. Check to see if a local candidates forum will be held in your district. Make plans to attend, ask questions and listen thoughtfully to their answers. When it comes to our kids, “someone else will do it” is never acceptable. It is up to residents of each school district to make sure those board members are representative of the constituents they serve.

Taken from the PTA Grassroots Advocacy toolkit here are a few questions you might pose.

- What will you do to address the problems schools face with declining funding as they also try to meet the challenges of ever growing enrollments, children with special needs, and new educational technology?
- What specific plans would you recommend to support and improve public schools?
- What actions will you take to help reduce children’s exposure to violence in schools, in their neighborhood, and on television?
- What specific actions will you take to increase the role of parents in decision making and promote parental involvement in schools?
- If elected, what would you do to address the childhood obesity problem?

- What will you do to help attract highly qualified teachers to our schools?
- Do you believe that art and music are part of a quality education, and if so, what do you plan to do to make sure these programs remain in our schools?
- What is your view on voucher programs that allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private schools?
- What does being a supporter of public education mean to you?

And finally it might be nice to know if the candidates running are active PTA members.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATION TO THE FOUNDER’S DAY FUND

Southeast Elementary PTA

Laurel Hills Elementary PTA

Ozark Council PTA

Summit Lakes Middle High PTA

Meadowbrook Elementary PTA

Norfleet Elementary PTA

Delta Woods Middle School PTSA

# Help Us!

We are trying to compile current media contacts for the state of Missouri. Please send your local paper, television and radio contact information (name, address, phone & email) to Charlotte Melson at [Charlottem@mopta.org](mailto:Charlottem@mopta.org). Thank you in advance.

# Don't forget!

Please remember to submit your 2009-2010 unit officer list to the state office by March 31<sup>st</sup>. This will ensure they are on the list to receive information from both State and National pertaining to the next school year. Let us help you get off to a great start for next year!

# Awards!! Grants!!

Chances are you’ve done some awesome things this year. Don’t forget to apply for awards and grants. The deadline is coming right up! Most awards and grants are due to the state office by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Check your Grants & Awards booklet or the MO PTA website for details.

# Mister Mayor

By Dorothy Gardner, Editor

During the St. Louis National PTA convention, I vaguely remember being introduced to the newly elected National PTA President-Elect, Chuck Saylor. However, if you had asked me then or even a few months later what I thought of PTA's first National President-Elect male, at best I would have been required to parrot the bio I read on the website. After all, when was the last time you were able to formulate a solid impression based on a brief introduction and a handshake?

Then came a dreary, rainy Friday in October of last year. With camera in tow, I raced into the Platte County Middle school to cover what would begin as a school tour and end with a profound respect for a southern gentleman.

Each one of us can recall the story of how it all began, the incident, moment or event which propelled us into the PTA world. Usually the generic version sounds something like 'because of my kids.' I know this because I've used it myself. But, stop for a moment and reflect. More often than not there was something else, either internal or external, that was really responsible for the dedication you feel today. For Chuck Saylor it was a PTA welcome event when his wife nudged him with her elbow, pointed to the PTA volunteer serving hot dogs and said "do you want to eat now or after you've helped her." This proved to be just the beginning of many '3 for Me's' or, as Chuck likes to say "180 minutes." He made the time to give then and still makes the time to give today.

After meeting with administrators and staff at the middle school, we headed down to Ms. Miller's 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. Room cloaked in darkness, it soon became clear that instead, we had entered into the Twilight Zone. Each student contributed to a class rendition of Edgar Allan Poe's classic *The Raven*. In conclusion, the students presented Chuck with a copy of a collection of Poe's stories. The rest of us in the room then sat back as Chuck spent time talking with the kids, asking each one what they wanted to be when they grew up and then politely asking if they would all sign his literary gift. Anyone who has ever

dealt with an eighth grader can attest to the fact that these "almost teenagers" can be a very difficult crowd. With skill and ease about him, Chuck drew the students into the conversation. They listened not just because they had to, but also because they wanted to hear what he had to say.

Next up on the school tour list was Barry School and Mr. Damon Parker's Kindergarten class. Down on the floor, Chuck greeted the students who were striving to maintain their criss-cross applesauce positions. Moments later, engrossed in the story How I Became A Pirate, students craned their necks attempting to get a better look at the pictures. A smile came across my face as I recalled kindergarten memories of my own. Both my children had many guest readers, but as I snapped pictures I couldn't recall if any of them had been Dads. However this was no ordinary Dad. No, there is nothing ordinary about Mister Mayor.

So how do you know if you've made an impact in children's lives? When they think you are the Mayor. Years ago when Chuck's oldest son was playing baseball, a little leaguer came up to Chuck and tugged on his jacket. Peering up at him, a young man asked if he was the mayor over at Woodland. He had seen Chuck countless times at school and had come to the conclusion that Chuck must have been a very important person. To this day he still calls Chuck, Mister Mayor. When Chuck talks about the positive impact of parent involvement, he speaks from experience.

All parents can achieve the same memorable experiences of accomplishing something positive by making a direct connection with children's education. The key, Chuck believes, is to get them in the door. Let them know they don't need to volunteer every day, just commit to 180 minutes. When speaking with parents he likes to equate volunteering to going to the movies. "Do you have 180 minutes to go out and see a movie?" he asks. And then he backs that up with "do you have 180 minutes to donate to your child's school?"

When he looks out at our present environment, the need to help our students become well-rounded looms large. Unfortunately, the pool of volunteers has shrunk. He firmly believes the quickest

fix to the problem is to engage more men. This is and will continue to be a prominent anthem for Chuck.

Parent involvement was just one of the issues Chuck let me pick his brain about during convention breaks. He had mentioned the education system, as a national security issue; when I wanted to know what in his mind was one of the biggest problems we as a nation face. The answer I received was an eye-opener - infrastructure. Point to any major city on the U.S. map and there is a strong likelihood of finding a school operating in a condemned building. Each day teachers try to teach, students struggle to learn, and school districts take on increasing social services in outdated building with plaster falling from the ceiling and lead pipes in the walls. Across the nation some schools are at the technological forefront while others lag leagues behind.

All children should be afforded the right of equality in education; the opportunities across the board should be the same. Now is the time to get this message across to our elected officials. It is time to take a hard look at No Child Left Behind. Currently local school boards are bearing the load, and disparity in tests exists between the states. We need to take it upon ourselves to serve as ambassadors to both the White House and Congress as advocates with regard to children's issues. Even at 6 million strong nationally we, the PTA, are still a small group. It is important we shout louder and longer.

During the course of three days, my time with Chuck Saylor well surpassed an introduction and a handshake. From his genuine interaction with students to his passion for political change with regard to education, I felt I finally had enough information to formulate a solid impression. I thought back to his initial escapade into PTA volunteering and moved forward to knowing that his favorite food happens to be hot dogs. Way back in the beginning, Chuck began his PTA journey by prioritizing and putting the kids first. Not much has changed since; the picture has just gotten much larger.

# Membership Awards

## DON'T FORGET TO APPLY!!!

Have your unit recognized for its great work by applying for our membership awards. It's easier than you think. Award applications were provided in the Tool Kit you received last summer and are also available on the state website, [www.mopta.org](http://www.mopta.org), under "Form/Award Applications". Most take no longer than a few minutes to fill out, so what are you waiting for?

### **Outstanding Membership Campaign Grant** (Deadline: April 1<sup>st</sup>, postmark)

This award and a check for \$100.00 will be presented to the unit with the best overall membership campaign. Many of you did great things. Let us know how you did it -- you may take the prize AND inspire other units to do the same!

### **Unit Membership Awards – Exclusive 100 & Silver Acorn** (Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, postmark)

You can qualify for the Exclusive 100 Award in one of these three ways:

- 100% increase (membership must be doubled from previous year)
- 100 member increase over previous year
- 100% enrollment (memberships equal or exceed school's total enrollment as recorded by the school principal on the application)

Qualify for the Silver Acorn Award in one of two ways:

- membership total equals 75-99% of school's total enrollment as recorded by the school principal on the application
- membership total equals a 75-99% increase over the previous year's recorded membership total

### **100% Faculty Award/Golden Apple Award** (Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, postmark)

Qualify for this award by having all Full-time Certified personnel within your school as your PTA members. Combined units count faculty for each school within the unit. Along with your unit award, your school principal will also receive a special "Golden Apple" award certificate for the school.

### **Students Make A Difference Award** (Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, postmark)

This award is presented to the PTSA with the highest percentage of students as PTA members based on the school enrollment as recorded by the school principal on the application. You are required to differentiate between student and adult members on your roster.

### **Council Membership Awards** (Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, postmark)

- Oak Leaf Award (2% membership increase within council's combined units membership totals from previous year)
- Exclusive 100 Award (increase of 100 members from previous year's recorded council's combined units membership)

***Get those applications in and make your unit an Award Winner!***

#### **WE'RE MOVING.....**

the Golden Gavel, Students Make a Difference and Community Involvement Awards to the spring Leadership Conference. Traditionally these awards have been presented at the State Convention in the fall, but when better to receive these honors than the year they were earned!

All deadlines still apply; March 1st postmark for membership dues to count toward awards and the April 15th postmark for applications. Don't forget to apply and we'll see you in May!

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATION TO THE BUILDING FUND**

Bridger Middle School PTSA  
Southeast Elementary PTA  
Laurel Hills Elementary PTA  
Mathews PTA of Nixa  
North Kansas City PTA COuncil  
Summit Lakes Middle High PTA  
Norfleet Elementary PTA  
Delta Woods Middle School PTSA

## **10 WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR PTA MEMBERSHIP**

1. **DISPLAY** membership awards received at meetings or hang them in the school.
2. **ASK** your membership for their input. Get a jump on next year and send an evaluation form asking for their feelings and/or suggestions on programs & activities.
3. **PROVIDE** your members with copies of your PTA budget so they can see how your funds are spent to benefit their children. Consider showing how it breaks down in \$ spent per child.
4. **HOLD** a poster or slogan theme contest for students with a PTSA membership. Plan the contest with cooperation of the teachers at the end of the year for next August or September's membership drive.
5. **INSPIRE** parents to become members from the very first opportunity. Set up a PTA table at spring kindergarten enrollment and offer information about your PTA.
6. **GIVE** a small flower and/or "thank you for joining PTA" note to all school staff members during Teacher Appreciation Week.
7. **ENCOURAGE** your officers, including incoming officers, to attend training at Leadership Conferences and Conventions.
8. **HAVE** an end of the year picnic in May and ask parents to consider signing up for next year's board positions.
9. **THANK** your members and list their names in your final newsletter.
10. **COUNCILS:** Offer special recognition to all units, which exceeded their previous year's membership, at the last council.

## Wellness by Former Governor Bob Holden



Wellness begins at home, should be reinforced at school and must resonate though all facets of society if we want to claim success. Wellness does not mean exercising for thirty minutes a day; it is a belief that includes making healthy food choices, learning about physical education and participating in physical activity. It is a lifestyle that our children must be educated about and encouraged to live by for the rest of their lives.

Health and economic benefits to the individual are well documented, but the untold story is the benefit to the long term vitality of our country and our culture. The fact of the matter is that healthy children learn better. It is our responsibility to aid them in this effort. By interjecting a curriculum of wellness into schools, students will be academically successful and have a greater opportunity to live a long and productive life.

Two-thirds of America is overweight or obese, and one-third of all children fall into the same category; there is clearly an obesity epidemic in this country. This reality puts this generation on the fast track to increased risks of developing unhealthy habits and serious health problems, including: Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, and cancer. Economic consequences of the problem are full-blown, as the annual cost for overweight and obesity Americans has reached \$122.9 billion dollars or 9.1% of total U.S. medical expenditures. The health and economic consequences are great, and will only worsen until we take the initiative

to educate our children and ourselves and make wellness a priority.

Wellness must become an integrated part of the educational curriculum for every classroom nation-wide. The school environment is the ideal atmosphere to promote wellness education as our children are still lead by our actions as to the amount of exercise allotted in their daily schedule, to the food they eat for lunch (and sometimes breakfast), their rewards for achievement, and how they raise funds for extra-curricular activities. Unfortunately, we are sending mixed messages to our children.

The School Health Policies and Programs Study indicates that almost all middle and high schools and some elementary schools have either vending machines or a school store available to students. Less than 8% of all K-12 students are provided daily physical education for the entire school year. Fast food brand names such as Pizza Hut, Taco Bell or Subway are offered in 18% of elementary, middle and high schools and many more schools offer off-brand comparable menus in their cafeterias. This issue of mixed messages is one of key concern for organizations such as Action for Healthy Kids, who stress that 'foods in the school meal programs should be safe, have appealing packaging, be tasty, culturally diverse, and appealing to youth, and ensure high-quality meals.'

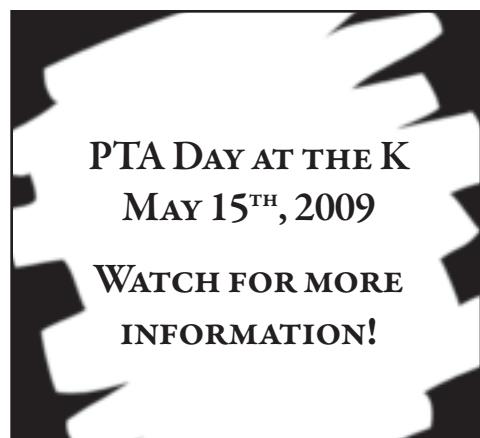
Despite these insurmountable challenges there is hope. In a recent conversation I had with Former Surgeon General David Satcher, sponsored by the Action for Healthy Kids coalition, myself and other leading experts revealed an important reality, "The catalyst for improving school wellness is leadership. Whether it's a superintendent, a principal, a motivated school board member, an active and interested parent, or all of the above, school wellness has to start with one committed individual or constituency". Government representatives and school administrators can take steps to make wellness a mandatory criterion of school accreditation.

Community organizations like Action for Healthy Kids ([actionforhealthykids.org](http://actionforhealthykids.org)) are an invaluable resource for stakeholders at all levels. Their recent report "Progress or

Promises: What's Working for and Against Healthy Schools" evaluates school wellness practices and outlines national surveillance studies. But they go a step further, rather than just identifying problems in our schools they provide suggestions on how to improve conditions, and provide avenues for action through local wellness teams.

We must all become active stakeholders in promoting wellness in our society. Teachers and education staff can include wellness as part of their communication plan with parents. Here at the Holden Public Policy Forum @ Webster University ([www.webster.edu/holdenppf](http://www.webster.edu/holdenppf)) we provide an environment for business leaders, field experts and public servants to talk about how public policy decisions effect peoples' daily lives. Whether it is by talking with their district superintendent, becoming a team member in the numerous school wellness initiatives or organizations, or writing their local and state representatives, parents need to become active stakeholders and can truly make a difference in their schools. We all have the ability to create awareness about the issues facing our children. We also have the ability to make wellness a priority in every aspect of their lives – be it at home, in school, clubs or through religious and community organizations. Changing the status quo is doable if we have the will and the leadership. We will all reap the benefits or pay the cost for generations to come.

Following a career in public service spanning more than 25 years – culminating in eight years as Missouri State Treasurer and four years as Governor - Bob Holden now is a private sector leader in the fields of education and international economic development.



# The Dealer Lurking In Your Medicine Cabinet

*By TSgt Jason R. Henke*

Recently, the abuse of prescription drugs has steadily been rising among teens in the United States. "As of 2008, teens cite prescription drugs as the second most accessible drugs available to them, after marijuana" (Street Drugs). Unfortunately, we often don't think of prescription drugs as being typically dangerous; rather, we often see them as medicine. "Though overall teen drug use is down significantly nationwide in recent years, there are troubling signs that teens view abusing prescription drugs as safer than using street drugs" (Office of National Drug Control Policy, January 2008). While prescription drugs do have a medical purpose for the prescription holder, they also can be very harmful when used recreationally. Prescription drugs allowed for use in this country fall under the Controlled Substance Act (CSA). The CSA places all substances into one of five schedules. This placement is based upon the substance's medical use, potential for abuse, and safety or dependence liability.

"The prescription drugs most commonly abused by teens are painkillers, powerful narcotics prescribed to treat pain; depressants, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and stimulants, mainly to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)" (Office of National Drug Control Policy, January 2008). Prescription drugs are often abused by crushing the tablet into a powder allowing the individual to snort or inject the drug into the user's body. Oxycontin, for example, "was designed to be a slow-release formulation. Snorting or injecting an opioid such as Oxycontin results in a rapid release of the drug into the bloodstream, exposing the person to high doses and causing many of the reported overdose reactions" (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2008). Many prescription drugs react dangerously with other substances. "Typically, prescription drugs should not be used with alcohol, antihistamines, barbiturates, or benzodiazepines. Because some of these substances slow breathing, their combined effects could lead to life-threatening respiratory depression" (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2008).

Many teens are getting prescription drugs from home, friends, relatives, and online pharmacies. "A teen may scout their own home first if they're looking to get high from prescription or over-the-counter drugs. You can address this troubling trend by safeguarding and monitoring all of the medications in your house—whether they're in your bathroom, bedroom, teen's room, living room, kitchen, or garage" (The Anti-Drug). Never store prescription medications after the need for them has passed, because of the increased risk that these pills could be taken and misused. "For environmental reasons, never flush any medications down the toilet or drain, unless the prescription bottle specifically says you should. If you have unneeded or expired medications, properly conceal and dispose of them by putting them in a bag or container, and mixing them with something unappealing, like kitty litter or coffee grounds. Then throw the bag in the trash. Also, remove any personal, identifiable information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away" (The Anti-Drug).

At this point you might be asking yourself what you can do to prevent your children from abusing prescription drugs. First, you should assess your home to see if it's conducive to prescription drug abuse. "What prescription drugs do you have? Where are they kept? Would you know if some were missing? The good news is that you can take steps immediately to limit access to these drugs and help keep your teen drug-free: safeguard all drugs at home, monitor quantities and control access, set clear rules for teens about all drug use, be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines, properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash, and ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well" (The Anti-Drug).

## WORKS CITED

- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2008, August 20). Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications - NIDA InfoFacts. Retrieved September 11, 2008, from [www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/PainMed.html](http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/PainMed.html)
- Office of National Drug Control Policy. (January 2008). Prescription for Danger.
- Street Drugs. (n.d.). Prescription Drugs. Retrieved October 6, 2008, from [www.streetdrugs.org/prescription.htm](http://www.streetdrugs.org/prescription.htm)
- The Anti-Drug. (n.d.). Rx Danger Zones: The Search Starts at Home. Retrieved October 6, 2008, from [www.theantidrug.com/drug\\_info/transcript-house-tour.html](http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/transcript-house-tour.html)
- The Anti-Drug. (n.d.). What can you do? Tips for preventing Rx abuse. Retrieved October 6, 2008, from [www.theantidrug.com/drug\\_info/prescription\\_what\\_can\\_you\\_do.asp](http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/prescription_what_can_you_do.asp)

## Mark Your Calendar

### MARCH

1	Membership Dues to State Office
1	PTA Hearst Awards applications due to National office by 11:59 am
2	Read Across America Day
8	Daylight Savings Day Begins
11-12	National PTA Legislative Conference
15-21	National Poison Prevention Week
17	St. Patrick's Day
29	PTA Chorus of Voices for Children Week Begins
31	2009-2010 Officer's Due to State Office

### APRIL

1	Membership Dues to State Office
7	World Health Day
8	Passover Begins
10	Good Friday
12	Easter
13	Drop Everything and Read Day (D.E.A.R.)
15	Unit, Membership, Health & Safety, and Student Safety Award Application Due to State Office
15	Parent Involvement Grant Application Due to State Office
20	Volunteer Recognition Day
22	Earth Day
23	Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
24	Arbor Day
26-2	National Volunteer Week

### MAY

1	Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
1	Hepatitis Awareness Month
2-2	National Bike Month
5	National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
9-9	National Teen Pregnancy Awareness Month
10	Resolutions Deadline
10	Membership Dues to State Office
11-15	Leadership Conference
15	Cinco De Mayo
15	Teacher Appreciation Week
16	National Music Week
16	Mother's Day
16	Children's Book Week
25	PTA Day at the K
25	Armed Forces Day
25	Memorial Day (State Office Closed)
25	National Missing Children's Day

# Healthy Lifestyles Grant Winner

*By Ramona Shull, Westridge Elementary PTA President*

Out of 474 applications from 47 States, Westridge Elementary was one of 22 Units from 13 States to win the Healthy Lifestyles \$1000.00 Grant. Westridge was the only PTA Unit in Missouri. Yes, we had reason to celebrate! On November 11, 2008 we held our Unit Meeting but this time we had something special in store for our children and parents. We had let them know in advance that we won the Grant, and that we had special things planned for this Unit meeting. The children had participated in a Healthy Recipe Contest, and the winners would be announced at this meeting. Parents were encouraged to come not only for the valuable information, but we had drawings for them too.

I, the Unit President, opened the meeting and shared how the Grant was obtained and why this was so important for our school to receive.

We then moved right onto our first speaker, Kim Picker, Community Relations Specialist with Children's Mercy Hospital and Family Health Partners. She spoke of the importance of having breakfast everyday. If our children come to school with breakfast already eaten they are ready to learn and more focused. She also shared the sugar content in some very popular breakfast cereals and discouraged parents from buying them and to opt for the healthier alternative cereals where a little Splenda, or fruit could be added to the cereal instead. She also provided breakfast alternatives for those who do not like traditional breakfast food. Family Health Partners is a Managed Care Organization affiliated with Children's Mercy Hospital. They offer lower cost medical coverage to children and families who may not qualify for Federal or State assisted coverage. With today's economy, the downsizings, lay-offs and the escalating unemployment rate, there is now a higher rate of people without proper medical coverage. Bringing in Children's Mercy and Family Health Partners incorporated brought a community piece to our function

and they are well-respected organizations in our area. Ms. Picker made herself available to families as needed afterwards.

Our next speaker was Thelma Blew, MS, RD, LD. She is a Parent in our school and is our Redemption Chair and the Co-writer of this Grant along with myself. Her initials, as I explained to our families, means she has a Masters of Science in Nutrition, she is a Registered Dietician, and a Licensed Dietician in the State of Missouri. She spoke about childhood obesity being on the rise and that it is considered an epidemic. We need to do everything we can to protect our children from this by showing them what a healthy lifestyle is. If we don't, our children will have very short life spans. She provided various ways families could shop at the grocery

Their reward was to be able to take home a vegetable or fruit of their choice. Kids tried things like hummus and guacamole. They also were open to trying kiwi and pomegranates. Afterwards everyone was treated to special physical activities in the Gym.

Every family was provided a mini poster of the food pyramid and what portions sizes should look like to post on their refrigerators at home. There were many more flyers on how to incorporate more fruit and vegetables into the diet and information on the Katy Trail so that families could explore ways of getting more physical. Our grant afforded us the opportunity to provide posters in the cafeteria and the gym so that our Students can be reminded everyday to eat healthy and to stay fit.

Our goal was to get at least 100 people to our meeting. We exceeded that goal. We had over 200 in attendance. Our left over fruits and vegetables served our children in the cafeteria for the next week! The kids loved it. Our parents thoroughly enjoyed this sort of meeting and format. We couldn't have done this without National PTA, the support of our Board, the Principal and Staff at our school and most of all, our families!



store. How families should drop the pop because all the sugar and caffeine is bad for our bones. More importantly, we should all be incorporating more fruit and vegetables in our diets. We provided 5 tables of fruits and the tables all color-coded by the rainbow. Our children and families were challenged to try two new things that they had never tried before.



# Recipe for Success

*By Dorothy Gardner, Editor*

What happens when you combine extraordinary teachers, dedicated parents, a willing community member and a literacy goal? Well for West Englewood PTA this turned out to be a recipe for success. After hearing about a Barnes & Noble Bookfair event from another PTA, West Englewood PTA decided to give it a try. Sure it would be a fundraiser for the PTA, but they saw this aspect of the event as secondary. Instead the focus would revolve around literacy. It didn't take much for teachers to see the great inspiring potential this venue could have with regard to reading. Soon they were off and running planning both activities in school and on the day of the event with the spotlight on making reading fun.

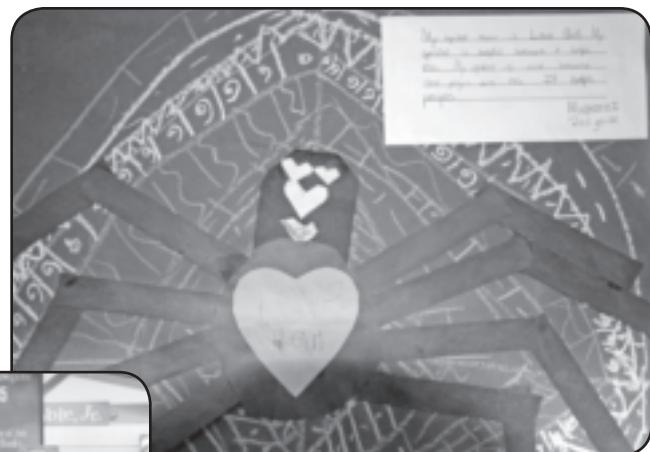
Prior to the event children worked on arts and crafts, which would later decorate Barnes & Nobles walls. In the mornings just a week before, the school mascot welcomed the students at the entrance by reading stories each day. But, so much more was yet to come when at last the big day in November arrived.

With the help of the very accommodating staff at Barnes & Noble, the PTA covered the large upstairs windows and the children's reading area with colorful hungry caterpillars and busy spiders from the Eric

Carle stories. Before long the families arrived and the fun really began. The day was separated into two parts. The early part of the event focused on the younger children. School



principal Lynda Casey with the aid of a few puppets read Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar followed by caterpillar craft creations. The latter part of the afternoon focused more on the older children. Third graders read from Traditions paragraphs and talented fourth and fifth graders



demonstrated folk dancing. Also planned for the day were a mystery reader and a guest reader who read in Spanish. Last, but not least, the day's events wrapped up with a scavenger hunt. To up the ante all participating families were able to enter into a raffle. Three lucky winners walked away with gift cards to Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com or Visa.

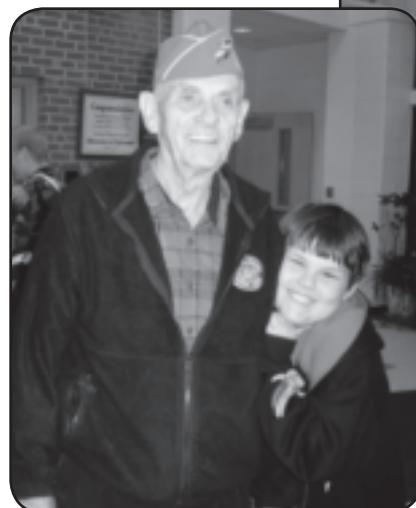
So just what did the PTA receive besides the awesome feeling of putting on a great event. On just that day, at any Barnes & Noble, for customers who presented a voucher upon checking out, a portion of the sale would go to the PTA. This was definitely a win-win for all involved.

If you are interested in conducting your own Bookfair contact your local Barnes & Noble.

# Honoring Our Veterans

*By Carla Cherry, Martin City PTA President*

Martin City School PTA hosted their second annual Veteran's Day Celebration. Many attended including Martin City families, staff and community members. The program began with the Independence Young Marines Color Guard posting the flag, followed by a tribute to the flag by Tommy Fuller, an Air Force veteran and grandfather of two Grandview District students. Next up a sing-along was lead by music teacher, Elizabeth Reicher and accompanist Lois Jones, a special video presentation narrated by John Wayne and the program ended with refreshments and fellowship among all the veterans and those who came to honor them.



# Dental for Kids A PROGRAM OF STANDUP BLUE SPRINGS

By Monica Meeks Hackett

Tooth decay is currently the single most common chronic childhood disease—five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever, according to the Surgeon General.

The Surgeon General has identified dental and oral diseases as “silent epidemics.” Left untreated, the pain and infection caused by tooth decay can lead to problems in eating, speaking and the ability to learn. Without proper dental care, children risk significant health problems later in life, including heart attack, stroke and diabetes.

To address these serious issues, StandUp Blue Springs launched its program, Dental for Kids, after learning from school officials and the county health department that thousands of children in Blue Springs do not receive dental care. These children are either uninsured, or they are covered by Medicaid, which is accepted by only one dentist in Blue Springs.

Launched in 2003, Dental for Kids provides free dental care and dental hygiene education for low-income children who live within the boundaries of the Blue Springs School District. They are the children of the working poor and in some cases, the homeless.

In the last five years, the program has provided more than \$270,000 worth of free dental and reduced-cost orthodontia care to more than 450 low-income children. Many children referred to Dental for Kids have never been to the dentist, and most of them would not go if not for the program.

While many school districts involve dental



professionals to identify decay, Dental for Kids offers a one-stop coordinated program for that decay to be treated and children placed with permanent dental homes. With Dental for Kids coordinating treatment, it is not necessary for school nurses to make multiple calls to dental offices in order to place children for care. No other coordinated program like Dental for Kids presently exists in Eastern Jackson County.

Although 22 local dentists volunteer their time for Dental for Kids, the agency raises funds to reimburse them for supplies, anesthesia and lab fees and to cover program coordination costs. Recently, the agency received a donation from the Blue Springs Council of PTAs as part of its 2008-2009 service project. In addition to program sponsors and grants, the Dental for Kids program is supported by the agency's only fundraiser, the Princess Party.

The event, for girls ages 2 – 12 and their ‘royal companions’, is held the first Saturday in October in Blue Springs. More than 550 princesses and their adult companions attended the fifth annual Princess Party in October 2008. The event raised

\$15,000 for Dental for Kids. The event featured more than 15 activities including a visit with the Tooth Fairy, face painting, a princess concert, dance party, crafts and a magic show, among others. All children received a new toothbrush.

The Princess Party takes more than 200 volunteers to stage, more than half of those students ages 14-18. More than 100 parents and grandparents volunteer, and more than 200 adults attend with their little girls. In several cases, moms and daughters who live in the district volunteer for the event together. Several members of Blue Springs PTAs also volunteer for the festive event, including Jennifer Casey, MoPTA Membership Services Vice President.

Dental for Kids makes a real difference in the lives of children and their families. This parent captures the feelings of so many of the families helped by the Dental for Kids program:

“This program is amazing. My children were able to get dental care that we never could have afforded. Both my children had many cavities and suffered pain. Now their teeth are fixed and they are pain free. Not to mention how much better their smiles look. Our dentist took the time to teach them how to take care of their teeth and they both try hard every day to make sure they brush properly. Thank you so much for helping us!”

# How Much Do You Know About Alcohol

*By Peggy Preston, Missouri PTA Health and Safety/Juvenile Services Chair*

Although the legal drinking age throughout the United States is twenty-one, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse reports that almost 80% of high school students have tried alcohol. In a survey of teen drinkers, 65 percent said they got alcohol from family members or friends. Most teens report that alcohol is easy to get – including 62 percent of eighth graders, 83 percent of sophomores, and 92 percent of seniors.

It's important to note that alcohol is the number one drug of choice for America's young people. Those who begin drinking

before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at age 21. Underage alcohol use costs the nation an estimated \$53 billion annually.

According to the successful We Don't Serve Teens promotion ([www.dontserveteens.gov/ads.html](http://www.dontserveteens.gov/ads.html)), parents can have an important role in increasing alcohol awareness among their own children.

Talk to your kids about alcohol ads.

Alcohol advertising and marketing is widespread. Next time your family sits down to watch T.V. use the occasion

as a "teachable moment" to talk about advertising in general, and alcohol advertising in particular. Encourage your teen to learn how to tell the difference between the facts and the hype and to become a smarter, more responsible, and more confident consumer.

Learn more about alcohol advertising standards.

Truthful, non-deceptive alcohol advertising enjoys certain protections under the U.S. Constitution. Alcohol advertisers have pledged to comply with self-regulatory codes designed to limit targeting of teens. Among other provisions, these codes direct that no more than 30 percent of the audience for an ad may consist of people under 21 and that ad content should not appeal primarily to people under 21. In 2003, the Federal Trade Commission (the nation's consumer protection agency and the agency that monitors national advertising) filed a report to Congress on alcohol industry self-regulation. In 2007, the FTC started a new study of alcohol industry self-regulation.

Let industry and government know if you see an alcohol ad you think violates the standards.

If you believe that an ad doesn't comply with the alcohol industry's self-regulatory codes, file a complaint in any of three ways with the company, with one of the alcohol industry's self regulatory organizations, or with the Federal Trade Commission.

## So...What's the Big Deal?

*By Peggy Preston, Missouri PTA Health and Safety/Juvenile Services Chair*

Each day, 7,000 kids in the United States under the age of 16 take their first drink. Those who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at age 21. The truth is that alcohol is a depressant, which means that it slows the function of the central nervous system. Alcohol actually blocks some of the messages trying to get to the brain. This alters a person's perceptions, emotions, movement, vision, and hearing.

**Why Do Some Teens Drink?** Experimentation with alcohol may be caused by curiosity, wanting to feel good, reduce stress, to relax, to fit in, and to feel older. From a very young age, kids see advertising messages showing beautiful people enjoying life...and alcohol. And because many parents and other adults use alcohol socially (like having beer or wine with dinner), alcohol seems harmless to many teens.

### Why Shouldn't Teens Drink?

1. The punishment is severe. Teens that drink put themselves at risk for obvious problems with the law; it's illegal; you can get arrested. They are also more likely to get into fights and commit crimes than those who don't. Regular drinkers also often have problems with school. Drinking can damage a student's ability to study well and get decent grades as well as affect sports performance – the whole coordination thing.

2. You can look really stupid. The impression is that drinking is cool but the nervous system changes that come from drinking alcohol can make people do stupid or embarrassing things like throwing up or peeing on themselves. Drinking also gives people bad breath and no one enjoys a hangover.

3. Alcohol puts your health at risk. Teens that drink are more likely to be sexually active and to have unsafe, unprotected sex. Resulting pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases can change or even end lives. The risk of injuring yourself, maybe even fatally, is higher when you're under the influence, too. One half of all drowning deaths among teen guys are related to alcohol use. Use of alcohol greatly increases the chance that a teen will be involved in a car crash, homicide, or suicide. Teen drinkers are more likely to get fat or have health problems, too. One study by the University of Washington found that people who regularly had five or more drinks in a row starting at age 13 were much more likely to be overweight or have high blood pressure by age 24 than their non-drinking peers. People who continue drinking heavily well into adulthood risk damaging their organs, such as the liver, heart, and brain. For more information, check out the KidsHealth website at [kidshealth.org/teen/drug\\_alcohol/alcohol/alcohol.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/alcohol/alcohol.html).

The truth is that alcohol use – like many other things – is a choice. It is a choice that can have far-reaching effects. So...what's the big deal? YOU and living the life you really want to live!

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATION TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Glendale High PTSA  
York Elementary PTA  
Bridger Middle School PTSA  
Southeast Elementary PTA  
Laurel Hills Elementary PTA  
Mathews PTA of Nixa  
Show Me State PTA  
Blue Springs High School PTSA  
North Kansas City PTA Council  
Summit Lakes Middle High PTA  
Meadowbrook Elementary PTA  
Norfleet Elementary PTA  
Delta Woods Middle School PTSA

# Foodless Rewards & Healthy Snacks

By Patty Buckholz, BSN, RN, MOPTA Administrative Assistant

We all want children to do their very best in school. We want that very best to translate into academic and social success both during school hours and throughout their whole lives. To enhance children's motivation in the classroom it has become common practice to reward students for behavior, academic achievement, attendance and more. Food is often used as a reward after all "it's just a little snack." The use of such food rewards falls under your school district's Wellness Policy. PTA's interest can be two fold; first to understand how rewards may be fed to our children, and secondly PTA's part in contributing to the use of foods in school.

The Missouri East Smart Guidelines<sup>1</sup> are part of your school district's Wellness Policy. Your district adopted the minimum, intermediate or advanced level of the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines for each of the categories: School Lunch, À La Carte, Vending, After School Programs and Other. The policies that utilize the minimum level of guidelines state, "All foods and beverages are offered in compliance with USDA regulations..." If the intermediate or advanced guidelines are used then policies state, "Foods or beverages will not be used as rewards in the classroom...for academic performance or student behavior." This puts a strict limitation on the use of foods in the classroom. Ask around, what does your policy say? Are your teachers using food rewards? Are they within the limits of your district's policy? Learning about policy limitations and how to modify practice to adhere to policy can be a slow process, and often requires thinking outside of the box.

Classroom parties, celebrations and fundraisers, which PTAs often sponsor, fall under the Wellness Policy's Other category. The policy guidelines will include consideration of types of foods and beverages, limiting the frequency of events and scheduling them only after the lunch period. It's too easy to say, "it's just a snack" or "it's just a room party" and go all out for pure junk food when you really can do it without candy, cookies or cupcakes. Let's educate ourselves so that we can help be part of the solution and not the problem.

There are multitudes of alternative rewards

for students. Social rewards including attention, praise or thanks are often more highly valued by children than a toy or food. Simple gestures like pats on the shoulder, verbal praise (including in front of others), nods, or smiles can mean a lot. These types of social rewards affirm a child's worth as a person.

Recognitions can be beneficial and inexpensive. There's a whole gambit of such recognitions from trophies, ribbons and certificates, to inclusion in daily announcements, use of a photo recognition board, calls or letters of commendation sent home to parents, notes from the teacher, etc. Privileges can be used as rewards, such as going first, helping the teacher, making deliveries to the office, getting a special seat, etc. A whole class can earn a few minutes of extra recess, be allowed to read outside, have music on while working, etc.

Many teachers use a reward system of points earned for a chance to "buy" something from the class treasure chest. Simple school supplies can be used as rewards such as decorated pencils, pens, erasers, stamps, and bookmarks. Other trinkets such as stickers or small toys, temporary tattoos, hair accessories or shoelaces can be used inexpensively (if use of them by the student does not violate dress code policies).

When it comes to foods try to focus on healthy choices. Best choices are fruits and vegetables, as most children do not eat the recommended five to thirteen servings a day. With good planning and the growing number of shelf-stable fruits and vegetable products on the market it can be easy and cost effective to serve fruits and veggies. Try lots of different varieties prepared in different ways to find out what your kids like best.

All kinds of fruits are easily served. Fresh fruit can be whole, sliced, cubed or cut in wedges. Canned, frozen and dried fruit needs little preparation. Unsweetened applesauce, fruit cups and canned fruit in its own juice or light syrup have a long shelf life, are low cost and healthy. Fruit leathers (not fruit roll-ups or gummy snacks) come in a variety of flavors and do not have added sugars. Popsicles made from 100% fruit

juice with no added sugars/sweeteners are a good choice.

Like fruits, vegetables are easily served. Fresh veggies can be cut in fun shapes, dipped in low fat dressings, or made into salads. Kids often enjoy fresh veggies that we are used to only serving cooked, such as snap peas, string beans, or squash slices.

Whole grain products with less than 35% by weight of added sugar and low trans fat are good choices. The use of cookies, snack cakes and chips should be used only occasionally. Better choices are whole grain cereals with little sugar (like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, or Frosted Mini Wheats). Whole grain crackers, rice cakes and low fat popcorn, low fat/low sugar granola bars are good choices. Small amounts of unsalted nuts are great when paired with fruit. (Be very careful to check for allergies to peanuts or tree nuts before serving any.)

Healthy beverages run the gambit from plain water, low fat and fat-free milk, soy and rice drinks, to 100% fruit juice or 50% fruit juice with no added sugars although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends only 1-2 servings of fruit juice per day. Water is the best choice with snacks.

The options for healthy rewards and snacks are endless. We can reward our students with a plethora of non-food activities and items. We can provide snacks, parties and celebrations with healthy food. It takes everyone working together to promote changes in our society, but surely the health and well being of our children is worth the effort.

For more information visit:

[www.cspinet.org/school/food/](http://www.cspinet.org/school/food/), [www.NutritionExplorations.org](http://www.NutritionExplorations.org)

1. [http://www.msbanet.org/Core/ContentManager/uploads/PDFs/Advocacy/wellness/Missouri\\_Eat\\_Smart.pdf](http://www.msbanet.org/Core/ContentManager/uploads/PDFs/Advocacy/wellness/Missouri_Eat_Smart.pdf) or [www.dhss.mo.gov/Obesity/MOEatSmartGuidelines2ndEd.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Obesity/MOEatSmartGuidelines2ndEd.pdf)

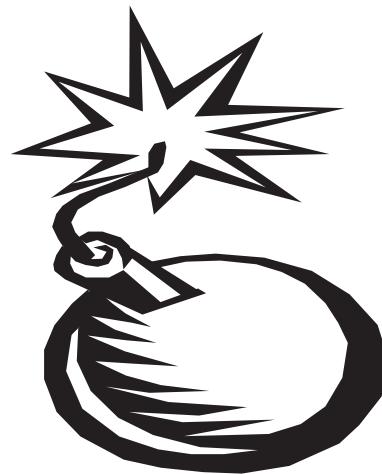
Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Jefferson City, MO  
Permit No. 210

# Missouri PTA Annual Leadership Conference

**May 1 - 2, 2009**

**Hilton Garden Inn  
Independence, Missouri**

**PTA: MISSION  
POSSIBLE**



Accept this mission and bring your entire board and *explode* all the possibilities for a great PTA/PTSA.

Training, networking, team building, skills development and resource opportunities. Adults and students in middle school through high school are encouraged to attend.

Adult Registration: \$75.00    Student Registration: \$35.00  
Registration fees include all workshops, Friday night keynote speaker and meals!

Student Showcase – students will receive recognition from Missouri PTA for their Reflections entries and art work will be returned in a quicker time frame!

**Mission instructions (registration packets) will be mailed to all unit and council presidents in March.**

Missouri Congress of Parents & Teachers  
Missouri PTA  
2100 I-70 Dr. S.W.  
Columbia, MO 65203

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

