

CONTACT

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Together





Missouri PTA President Wendy Jackson
presents the Community Involvement Award
to Central High School's PTSA,
accepted by Lori Prussman,
President of the St. Joseph PTA Council.

Cover photo:

Missouri PTA Vice-President of Membership Services Shelly Throckmorton awards the Golden Gavel award to Blue Springs High School PTSA President Rachel Powers and Principal Dave Adams.

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CONTACT Staff

President/Publisher Wendy Jackson
Editor Ava Payne
Graphic Designer Bryan Gates

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PHONE: 800-328-7330 FAX: 573-445-4163

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PLEASE SHARE THIS MAGAZINE.

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

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

Phone: 312-670-6782 (670-NPTA), www.pta.org.

MO PTA 800-328-7330

President's Message By Wendy Jackson, Missouri PTA President



Missouri PTA serves PTA leaders and members throughout the Show-Me state, presenting workshops, offering printed and video resources, bi-monthly *Contact* magazines and maintaining a website to assist PTAs in the important work they do on behalf of children. State PTA board members attend PTA meetings throughout the state to do presentations and provide training or support for PTA units and councils in their own hometown. Please remember that we are here to offer you support and to train you. All you have to do is ask. It is our pleasure to serve the families in our state. Contact our state office at office@mopta.org or 1-800-328-7330.

I hope that you had the opportunity to attend the annual convention. It is a great weekend filled with workshops, general meetings, award presentations and key note speakers. It is just like your unit meetings on a larger scale. This is when we set the tone for the upcoming year. What takes place during convention gives the state PTA direction. This is also a chance to hear new ideas, and to share your success stories as well. If you did not have the opportunity to join us in October, please make a note to try and make it next year. You will truly come away with great ideas and a great deal of motivation. It is rejuvenation in a weekend.

As we move forward this year, I am in hopes that you and your board are making great strides in reaching the goals you have

set for your unit/council. Myself, I am a goal minded person. I thrive on making lists and completing set goals. Each day, I try to set a certain goal and a certain amount of things I need to accomplish. I use that same philosophy for my PTA work. If I try to tackle everything that may be on my list then it becomes overwhelming. Instead try a long term list of things that need to be done, but are not imminent, and a short term list, things that need to be done ASAP. I know as a leader you are juggling kids, your homes, work, and PTA. I am so THANKFUL that you have chosen to use some of your time to commit to helping the families in your community. It is just as important today as it was so many years ago.

On that note, as advocates for children, PTA members speak before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children and youth. Missouri PTA conducts a variety of legislative activities throughout the year. The purpose of these activities is to gather information, to relay legislative information to PTA members and other advocates, and to provide opportunities for PTA members and advocates to contact legislators on a regular basis. Please sign up for legislative alerts, and plan to attend a Town Hall Meeting in your region. Details for the Town Hall meeting in your area will come via email and the USPS. We hope to see you and your unit represented at these events. As always, the Representatives/Congressmen need to hear from you. If we do not speak for the children, who will??

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

America's PTA

By Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor, PTA National President

When PTA's founders, Alice McLellan Birney, Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Selena Sloan Butler, began our powerful mission a century ago, they had no idea that America would be the protector of freedom for so many.

They could not have foreseen America becoming the father of nations and inspiration for families yearning for our abundance and prosperity.

They would not have known that hundreds of thousands of children would live on U.S. military bases around the world, providing love, support and hugs to our service men and women as they fulfill America's manifest destiny.

They never thought that hundreds of thousands of volunteer reservists would be deployed far from their neighborhoods—or beyond the Halls of Montezuma—away from their ones they love.

And it wouldn't have mattered. Because our mission is timeless—to fulfill the promise America makes to every child from birth: That their future will be brighter than our present—and that they will be our future leaders.

Our voice of five million caring adults work every day, in every corner of America, to improve the life of every child. It doesn't matter where they live. It doesn't matter who gave birth to them.

We care as much for the kids and families in Harlem as we do for the kit and kin in Alaska. From forming partnerships between schools and families to address achievement gaps, to building self-esteem through art and music with PTA Reflections, our members take on great challenges with practical, helpful solutions.

We find resources where there are none. Last year, our members helped children in more than five hundred schools vaccinate our kids from the flu. Our Healthy Lifestyles grants helped twenty thousand kids become healthier and stronger.

We generated one-point-five billion dollars that opened pathways to brighter futures for kids.

In short, every child is our child. We care for each one like we do our own. And the kids of our enlisted and commissioned are our children too.

This is why we have joined the Department of Defense and other organizations to form the PTA Military Alliance for Parents and Partners.

This is why, at our National Convention, PTA members passed a resolution mobilizing our members to support the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Our voice of millions can help provide shelters from the storm, foster stability for kids and families in constant transition.

We know our children can see as many as half their schoolmates move away to other bases.

We watch our kids start life in one military school and end up at another in only a year.

We cry as our boys and girls get a kiss from parents departing for new missions.

And we want to bring them and their families the structure, support and resources they need to feel as safe and secure as we civilians in our own homes.

Know this, my friends: You have an army of voices, unified as one, ready to help you help our children. And that's help with a capital "H". Don't hesitate to count on us the way our military families count on you. Thank you for serving our military families. Thank you for lending your voice. And thank you for being partners in raising our future leaders.



The National PTA® Military Alliance for Parents and Partners is a group of organizations that work together to provide resources to and advocate for military-connected families. The alliance identifies and addresses the unique social and educational challenges that these families face due to issues of deployment and mobility, among others.



Specifically, members of the alliance work both jointly and independently with National PTA to develop a collaborative strategy to create awareness around serving military families and provide and develop resources for military families. The founding participants include: Military Children Education Coalition, National Military Family Association, Military Impacted Schools Association, and the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity. Visit pta.org for more information.

Missouri PTA Distinguished Service Award

Would you like to recognize and honor an extraordinary person for their service and dedication to PTA? The Missouri PTA Distinguished Service Award is a wonderful way to show gratitude and appreciation for a person's devotion to the children and the purposes of PTA.

The Missouri Distinguished Service Award fee is \$50.00 plus shipping and handling. This fee is divided equally between the Missouri PTA Scholarship Fund and the Missouri PTA general fund. The award includes a letter of recognition from the state president, a certificate suitable for framing, and a lapel pin. The Award form can be found in the Tool Kit or online at mopta.org at "Forms/Awards." Please allow two weeks for delivery of items.

DONATIONS

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

Building Fund

Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Eugene Field Elementary PTA

Scholarship Fund

Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Donna Petiford
Hickman Senior High PTSA

PTA and the IRS

By Patty Buckholz, Missouri PTA Treasurer

As of 2006 every non-profit organization, including all PTAs, must file a 990 annual information form with the IRS. A three year grace period was extended to all non-profit groups; that three year window has now closed. Effective this year, any non-profit that has not filed for three consecutive years is subject to removal of their non-profit status. To become reinstated non-profit groups that have not filed may have to file a 1023 Application for Non-Profit Status including fees of \$400 and up. Has your PTA filed a 990 this year?

While the most detailed and correct information is available through the IRS, here are a few pointers that may help.

Your Fiscal Year

Your PTA's fiscal year is defined in your bylaws. The fiscal year covers a full 12 months and most local PTA years run from July 1-June 30 and others from June 1-May 31 or August 1-June 31. When the fiscal year bridges parts of two calendar years then the corresponding tax year is defined as the first year of those twelve months, such as for the 2009-2010 fiscal year tax year is 2009. If you find a discrepancy between the fiscal year on your bylaws and that which is listed with the IRS, please call the Missouri PTA office and ask for assistance to make the correction.

IRS Filing Deadline

The IRS filing is due the fifteenth day of the fifth month following the close of the fiscal year. If your fiscal year ended June 30, then your filing deadline is November 15th. You can file any time between the close of your fiscal year and the deadline. Do not be late. The IRS is quite serious about imposing penalties and fines for being tardy. If you are genuinely running late you can file an extension for the 990-EZ but not for the 990-N.

Full PTA Name

While the name of your PTA may seem very obvious to you, the IRS has its own labeling system. Since all our local PTAs are part of Missouri PTA and National PTA you will find your PTA listed as "PTA - Missouri Congress-- (local unit name)". Missouri PTA has listed the name we have for your PTA on the Local Unit Information Page included in the pocket folder of the Summer *Tool Kit* from Missouri PTA.

990-N or 990-EZ?

The 990-N is filed in 2010 by PTAs that brought in \$25,000 or less in gross receipts (which includes all money deposited in your PTA account except the state and national portions of dues) in 2009. This is filed online at <http://epostcard.form990.org/>. If you have an email address and the following information: EIN, official PTA name and alternate names, PTA mailing address (school's address), president's name and address, the PTA's web address if

it has one, the PTA fiscal year and proof of the annual income (treasurer's annual report and the Annual Financial Review (audit) report), you will be able to make the 990-N filing in about 15 minutes. If no 990-N has been previously filed the site will give you the option to file for previous years. Once you have filed for any one year, the site will not allow you to file a 990-N for a previous year. Your filing will be confirmed with an email notice. Print off the email and save in PTA records, and forward the email to Missouri PTA.

A 990-EZ and Schedule A should be filed in 2010 by PTAs who brought in more than \$25,000 but less than \$500,000 in gross receipts in 2009. These forms are more detailed so plan time to complete them thoroughly; incomplete returns will be rejected. A local PTA is a subordinate of Missouri PTA; therefore use Missouri PTA's Group Exemption Number (GEN) 2198. On Schedule A, check Box 9 on the first page. Fill in Schedule A Part III using your past treasurers' Annual Financial Reports and/or previous 990 filings. Forms and instructions can be found at www.IRS.gov. Filing can be done electronically or on paper, either way save a printed copy. If you chose to have your filing done by a tax expert make sure they have experience with group non-profits. Take heart, next year the filing requirements are expected to change to allow more groups to file the simpler 990-N.

Letters From the IRS

The IRS makes every attempt to contact a PTA for which there are questions or notifications. Any letter from the IRS can be quite intimidating, however do not hide or throw away the letters. Your PTA should respond promptly before the stated deadline, if the deadline has passed call immediately to explain. Supply the requested information. If there are extenuating circumstances then explain them. Always use the PTA EIN number on all correspondence. Be sure to include copies of the IRS letter and any enclosed signature forms with your new/corrected information as instructed. Be sure to keep copies of all correspondence.

If you have received a letter stating you are incurring penalties and fines, respond immediately. Ask about your options. If you have resolved the information but are still facing penalties and fines you can try to request a waiver, reduction and/or payment plan; this is not always possible but it is worth a try.

Be Responsible

Each PTA will have its own standard as to whose individual responsibility it is to file the 990. The outgoing treasurer will know the financial information best, the new treasurer may be called upon to do any follow up work; it may be a project best shared by both treasurers shortly after the close of the fiscal year. No matter who is supposed to take care of it, every

board member should be aware of the filing and if the IRS was satisfied. Has your PTA filed a 990 this year?

Copy to Missouri PTA

Every PTA must send a copy of their 990-N email receipt or of their 990-EZ filing to Missouri PTA by December 1st. Copies of the Treasurer's Annual Financial Report and the unit's Annual Financial Review (audit) should be sent in as well. The IRS asks Missouri PTA to prove which local PTAs are in good standing, and having these documents on file is our proof of your standing.

Resources

For more information please consult the IRS at www.irs.gov, put key phrases in the search box. Also check the Missouri PTA Summer *Tool Kit* sent to all presidents, the "Members Only" section of mopta.org, and the National PTA's Quick Reference Guide *Money Matters* included in the Official PTA Kit sent to presidents upon request. *Money Matters* can be viewed online at www.pta.org/running_a_pta.asp, find the user name and password on the back of your membership card and follow the link to Quick Reference Guide.

Missouri PTA may also be able to help, call 1-800-328-7330 or email office@mopta.org

A correction has been made to the *PTA Money Matters Quick-Reference Guide* regarding the requirements for the filing Form 990/990-EZ. This correction only applies to the hard copy version mailed out to all units in the Big Box of Possibilities. The online version found on National PTA's website is correct. We've also attached the corrected pages and placed them in the Member's Only Section of our website (www.mopta.org). Please make sure your unit is referring to the correct version when figuring your tax filing requirements.

The corrected language is as follows:

As of the 2010 tax year, for returns filed in 2011 or later, PTAs with an annual gross income of more than \$50,000 (formerly \$25,000) must file Form 990 and Schedule A. If a PTA's gross receipts are less than \$200,000 and total assets are less than \$500,000, the PTA may file Form 990-EZ instead of Form 990. If gross receipts are \$50,000 or less, the PTA must electronically submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-postcard.

Go For It & Be Recognized

By Susan Rupert, Membership Emphasis Chair

PTA units across the state work really hard for the children in their school community. They work so hard that most of them forget to step back to look at their wonderful accomplishments and let others know about it. Missouri PTA wants to recognize the outstanding work you are doing. Take a moment to look through the 2010-2011 Grants & Awards booklet. "Toot your own horn" and let the whole state of Missouri applaud you. You deserve it!

Missouri PTA Honor Roll

. . . It's Soooo Easy!!!

One of the many ways your unit can be recognized for its outstanding efforts in the area of membership is the Missouri PTA Honor Roll. To qualify for the award a unit must either meet or exceed the previous year's membership total number by March 1st, 2011. No application is necessary for the award! Once qualified, your unit will receive an achievement certificate and be placed on the Honor Roll. This recognition is published on the Missouri PTA website and in the May issue of Contact magazine. Can't get any easier than that! So go for it!

Achievement Awards - Blue Seal

. . . It's the Basics!

Look at this check list. Can you say, "We did that" or "We will be doing that" to each requirement?

1. Unit bylaws were reviewed by the local unit executive committee at the begin-

ning of the current school year, kept up to date and sent to the state PTA procedure and bylaws chairman within the last three years.

2. All money on hand from MOPTA and NPTA membership dues was sent to the State PTA Office by the first of each month. ALL dues collected were sent by March 1, 2011. Delinquent dues (after March 15, 2011) were sent immediately.
3. Officers were elected no later than March and names and addresses requested on the Officer's Form were forwarded to the State PTA Office by March 31, 2011.
4. Your 2009-2010 Annual Financial Review was sent to the State PTA Office by December 1, 2010.
5. Your Annual Financial Report for 2009-2010 was sent to the State PTA Office by December 1, 2010.
6. Copy of required IRS Tax form submitted to the State PTA Office by December 1, 2010

If you made it through this checklist you are a unit in good standing and well on your way to meeting the basic requirements for the Blue Seal Achievement Award and many others. If not, don't worry. Watch your deadlines and get back on track. There is still time to go for it and be recognized!

Exciting News from Just Between Friends — Volunteer Management



New for this school year!

Just Between Friends has introduced a Volunteer Management module to their system which is suitable for tracking PTA® Three For Me hours.

The Volunteer Management module was developed to enable members of your entire school to easily sign up for volunteer activities. Parents and administrators can also track their volunteer and participation hours.

This is another way Just Between Friends simplifies your life and strengthens your PTA.

Not using Just Between Friends, yet?

Don't delay. Get started by visiting www.justbetweenfriends.com

Visit JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart and entering your unit.

Learn Just Between Friends

Visit www.LearnJBF.com for lots of "how-to" information, instructional PDFs and a schedule of training sessions.

Have questions?

Visit www.JustBetweenFriends.com and click on the Contact button. One of Just Between Friends' friendly and knowledgeable Customer Service Representatives are there to answer your questions and help you use the system.

10 Ways to Increase Your PTA Membership

Keep Your Membership Campaign in the PTA Picture

PROVIDE a "Welcome" packet of PTA information for distribution when a new family comes to register their children.

TOOT your PTA's horn! Develop a line art ad that may be placed in school papers, shopper newspapers, and other newsletters. Use a headline like "We're Bragging!" followed by, "We wanted to be subtle, but decided that we are really doing too many good things for kids to be low key..."

ATTRACT attention to your second request letter by crumpling it up, then flattening it out and writing in red across the top, "I'm sure this got lost in the pile of paperwork that comes with the start of school!"

PROMOTE a program that attracts a new segment of your parents to join, i.e. Watch D.O.G.S.

IDENTIFY a real need in your community. A cause that people can rally around is likely to increase membership.

COUNCILS: Ask your regional director to send a note of encouragement to local units who are struggling or congratulations to a local unit who you know is achieving great membership growth.

THANK you notes attached to membership cards are a great way to remind people the impact their membership has locally, state and nation wide.

URGE prospective members to take action. Try this headline on your next recruiting letter. "More than 5 million people can't be wrong!" Go on to tell that the PTA is the largest child advocacy association in America.

REMEMBER to promote the national PTA benefit providers' exclusive discounts for members.

ENTERTAINMENT at general membership meetings is a great way to increase attendance. Feature the choir or band as your program and have a big PTA membership night.

NPTA Member Benefits

- **THE HP ACADEMY STORE** – HP Academy offers exclusive education discounts & savings on HP's consumer computing and printing products. PTA members get an exclusive 10% off, plus free next day shipping on printing supplies.
- **MEDICALERT** – PTA members receive discounted memberships to the MedicAlert Kid Smart® program, a 24-hour child emergency ID and caregiver notification services. Emergency responders can access your child's medical history and records with one easy phone call.
- **METLIFE** - MetLife Auto & Home has special group discounts now available to PTA members.
- **SHARP ELECTRONICS** - All of the products on the Sharp Electronics/PTA Member Store site are being offered to PTA members at reduced pricing.
- **SOUTHWEST VACATIONS** – 5% discount on vacation packages of two nights or longer to any Southwest destination.
- **T-MOBILE** – 14% discount off your monthly service charges for new and existing T-Mobile subscribers, plus additional savings for new subscribers.
- **OneCause VISA** – OneCause, National PTA, and Capital One have joined together to bring you this free credit card fundraising program which allows you to contribute 1% of every purchase to PTA.
- **NEW!! PARENTING SCHOOL YEARS** – The NEW edition of *Parenting* that focuses on the day-to-day needs and interests of moms with school-age kids. Filled with real,

mom-tested advice that's relevant to you as you navigate through the joys and challenges of the grade-school years. PTA members receive an exclusive subscription offer which includes:

- 1 year (11 issues) for only \$9.97 – less than \$1 an issue
 - 77% savings off the cover price – that's like getting 8 issues FREE!
 - Special Bonus - \$1 of your subscription price will be given to the PTA
- **INTRODUCING!!! PTA REWARDS CARD** – The world's

largest discount program! Loyalty Access Solutions has partnered with PTA to offer all PTA members an opportunity to save money by receiving discounts on more than 250,000 retail offers including over 400 of the world's most recognizable brand names.

Check out the National PTA, www.pta.org, website for further information on how your members access these benefits. Make sure the details on benefit access are provided only to your PTA members.

Where does the money go?

\$1.75 from each membership goes to National PTA, but what do they do with the money?



Three Missouri PTA Units Awarded for Parent Involvement!

By Deann Jepson, Parent Education and Involvement Chair

Congratulations to Espy PTA of Nixa, along with Platte City and Reed Middle School PTSA's, for their 2010 Parent Education and Involvement Awards! After careful consideration from the review committee, these three awardees' programs were selected to receive funding in support of their continued efforts toward educating and involving parents in their communities. Each award recipient was recognized for their creative and well executed programs specifically designed to not only involve parents, but also meet their needs. In addition, awardees will be honored at the 95th Annual Convention in Columbia, Missouri.

Beginning in 1993, the Parent Education & Involvement Award was established to help with programming costs incurred by local and council units throughout the state of Missouri. This award is granted to those who have effectively planned and initiated a program/project, specific workshop, or event which educates and/or celebrates parent involvement in their school.

This year, the Espy PTA of Nixa (Nixa, MO) will be utilizing their grant funding to support five PTA Family Meeting Night Programs. Each Family Meeting Night is comprised of a general PTA meeting featuring a topic speaker for parents; an educational activity and group tutoring for all Kindergarten through 4th grade students; and age-appropriate play activities for younger children. The combination of activities provides an opportunity for parents, children, school personnel and community members to interact and begin building relationships with each other in a relaxed environment. This program is an excellent example of how PTA is creatively encouraging parent education and involvement within the school.

Because Reed Middle School (Springfield, MO) has been struggling academically for several years, the PTSA decided to design an awareness campaign emphasizing the importance of MAP testing through "MAP WARS." This program involves the distribution of sample MAP questions to students in packets. Students are to take the packets home, answer the questions with parental supervision and signature when completed, and then return the packet to class. Rewards are based on the number of total correct problems per class. The two top classes from each grade will receive a pizza party, and individuals from each grade level with top scores will be awarded a special prize too. Therefore, the more students participate, the better their chance of winning the class pizza party. This non threatening approach helps educate parents about the importance of MAP testing and also offers an easy way for parents to become involved and connect with their children.

Parent involvement is considered to be an essential element in Platte City Middle School student success too. Platte City Middle School PTSA (Platte City, MO) offers a variety of resources which encourage and welcome parents to the school. Events are planned throughout the school year, including a family fun night, health night, and a family book fair. Special breakfasts for parents, grandparents, guardians, and veterans are a favorite, especially among busy parents who are eager to enjoy a quick breakfast with their child.

Learn more about these successful programs at the 95th Annual Missouri State PTA Convention. Award recipients will have an opportunity to share their success with convention participants in a special breakout session. Refer to your convention schedule for exact time and location.

Does your PTA or PTSA have a successful activity or program which encourages parent involvement? If so, please let us learn about your event by applying for the 2011 Parent Education and Involvement Award. All MO PTA units and councils are encouraged to complete the application to receive supplementary funding. Application forms are located in your Grant packet or can be downloaded from the MO State PTA's Web site at www.mopta.org. For more information, contact Deann Jepson, Parent Education and Involvement Chair, at deannj@mopta.org.

Kid-friendly Mascots for elementary schools.



Each mascot comes in its own clipart set featuring the mascot doing a variety of elementary school related activities.



See if we have a clipart set of your mascot already done at www.toons4biz.com.



If we don't have what you want in our library of more than 7,000 images, we'll custom design a mascot for you.

The dog on the left was sent to us by a Principal and he asked us to redesign him and create a 50 pose clipart set.



TOONS4BIZ

Visit toons4biz.com or call 816-366-0199

Lean Green Running Machine 5K & 1 Mile Run/Walk

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, Laura Ingalls Wilder Elementary in Springfield, Missouri hosted its 2nd Annual Lean Green Running Machine 5K Run/Walk. The event hosted over 400 participants; many of them school-aged children from Wilder and other Springfield R-12 schools. In its first year, the run/walk was the first ever “green” race in Springfield, and this tradition continued in the 2010 race. Another tradition that continued was Wilder’s financial donation to the Springfield Council of PTAs Clothing Bank. The Wilder PTA sponsored this race to raise funds to benefit the Clothing Bank while also raising money to enhance their school’s fitness equipment and environmental education. In addition, participants from other schools could designate a portion of their entry fee to be paid back to their school’s PTA.

The large number of student participants in the race was no accident. Wilder

PTA established a hugely successful after-school running club (“green team in training”), More that 50 students from K-5 grade levels trained for 10 weeks in preparation for the race, and several other Springfield schools also established after-school running clubs, making this a community-wide effort to instill healthy fitness practices in children. Race organizer Page Zendeirouh stated, “Our hope was that engaging students in a regular training program with the ultimate goal of completing a race would instill them the desire to continue these practices throughout their life.”

Making the race “green” involved minimizing waste and reducing the carbon footprint of the race by using an on-line application, printing race materials through a “green” print house, offering on-site recycling, and giving away organ-



ic race day t-shirts and reusable race day bags. Runners and walkers could also visit the onsite Environmental Expo that offered interactive exhibits provided by local non-profit organizations such as The Nature Center, The James River Basin Partnership and The City of Springfield.

With two successful years under their belt, Wilder PTA is already working on plans for the 2011 3rd Annual Lean Green Running Machine 5K, and they hope even more students and families will participate. For more information about the race or starting a Green Team in Training please contact Page Zendeirouh at lean-greenrunning@gmail.com.

Million Hours of Power Campaign

By *National PTA*

Today’s changing family structure calls for more dads and father figures to become involved in the life of a child. To engage more men we have developed the “Million Hours of Power -- Give a Little, Change a Lot!” It’s a campaign to inspire men throughout America to collectively dedicate at least one million hours of service to the health, education, and well-being of America’s youth during a single school year.

Our partners for the campaign include the National Fatherhood Leaders Group and members of PTA MORE (Men Organized to Raise Engagement) who are on a mission to get men around the country to get more men involved and produce more positive outcomes for children.

Our goal is 350,000 men, each volunteering three hours of service to produce more than one million hours of volunteer service to America’s children during the 2010-2011 school year. The children they serve may be their own or those of their extended family and community.

Volunteers who want to log their hours toward PTA’s Million Hours of Power



Initiative can go to the Million Hours of Power surveyhosted by the National Center for Fathering. For more information, go to PTA.org/millionhours.

Official Sponsor of the 2010 Missouri State Convention

AIM
Association Insurance Management

Reflections – “Together We Can”

By Michele Reed, Reflections Chair

Have you ever wondered where “Together We Can” – as you hear these words what comes to mind? Working with a partner on a dance routine. Working as a group to make the environment a better place. Working with your child’s school to make a difference not only for your child but for all children. These are just a few of the ideas that come to my mind. As the theme for the 2010-2011 Reflections Program, “Together We Can” should inspire us as PTA Leaders and parents to encourage our children to participate in this valuable National PTA sponsored program. You might be thinking – it’s November and too late to get started this year – I will do this next year. Well I am here to tell you that it’s not too late to implement a successful Reflections Program in your school for this year. How? Follow the simple steps listed here and you will have a successful program in your school. For those of you who have already started your program you can use these same simple steps to make sure that your entries are submitted to Missouri PTA correctly and on time.

Full details for all of these steps can be found in the Missouri PTA Reflections Tool Kit which was distributed to all unit presidents in the Summer Toolkit. The Reflections Tool Kit can also be found in the member’s only section of the Missouri PTA web site. If you have questions – please be sure to contact your Missouri PTA Reflections chairperson, your Regional Director, or the Missouri PTA Office.

1. Get the word out – Post your deadline, where to get a copy of the categories, instructions, and rules in your school announcements, newsletters and website. Ask your school’s faculty and staff to promote Reflections by encouraging students to enter. Keep it simple – but get the word out to all of your students.

2. Line Up your judges – Contact members of your community and teachers at other schools who have a background in an category and ask them to help you judge the artwork. Remember to provide the judges with the category rules and the judges score card, as found in the Reflections Tool Kit.

3. Provide Student Participation Incentives - Work with your school’s teachers and administrators to provide incentives for all students who participate. Think outside the box for things that would encourage participation in this wonderful program.

4. Have your entries judged locally - have your submitted entries judged by your local judges. The three highest scoring entries in each category in each age division in your school will be the entries you forward to Missouri PTA for judging.

5. Make sure your unit is a “Unit in Good Standing” – Verify with your president and treasurer that your PTA unit has satisfied all “Unit in Good Standing” criteria as outlined in the Missouri PTA tool kit and bylaws. Check with your Regional Director or the Missouri PTA office if you’re not sure.

6. Keep Local Unit Records – You should make paper copies of all literature pieces, digital copies of all musical composition, film video production and dance choreography entries and, if possible, take digital photos of all photography and visual arts entries sent to Missouri PTA. This will ensure that the photography and visual arts entries submitted to Missouri PTA are returned to you in the spring. This will also help in the event that the electronic media for some reason is damaged.

7. Complete all necessary paperwork for state judging – Be sure to follow

the steps outlined in the Missouri PTA Reflections tool kit and submit a Form A, a Form B for each age division, and make sure the student entry form is completed correctly. Entries without all paperwork completed will be excluded from judging at the state level. Make sure you have completed all of the items on the Local Unit Submission Checklist as found in the Missouri PTA Reflections Tool Kit

8. Recognize All students who participated- Some schools will have a “showcase” or art fair prior to sending the entries to Missouri PTA inviting students, parents and community members to the event. Students who participate in the Reflections program can be honored with a certificate of participation or some other token of appreciation for their hard work. Also, recognize those students whose entries are being sent to state PTA for judging on their achievements. Thank your judges for their time and effort.
9. Send all entries to Missouri PTA by the deadline – Once you have all of the paperwork completed and have verified that your entries have followed all of the rules, make sure that they arrive at the Missouri State PTA Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday January 14, 2011. Entries that arrive after this date and time will not be considered for judging.

10. **Have Fun** – If students see that you are having fun and are excited about the things they can create then they will be excited about participating and putting the effort into the project.

Parenting

Official Media Sponsor
of PTA’s Reflections Program

Informing The Masses

By Dorothy Gardner, VP and Director of Communications

Every organization is only as strong as its members. This holds true whether you are a small PTA unit of 50 members or a large international corporation. Everyone involved in the organization is in some way crucial to the overall success or, unfortunately, failure. One of the benefits of our organization, the PTA, lies in the fact that our members join because they want to. Something or someone encouraged them to fill out a membership form and pay their dues. They want to be part of PTA. However, it is up to the leaders of each PTA unit to actively engage those members.

Our PTA, from the national level down to the brand new unit, is an ever changing, evolving entity. Today, more than ever before, information about what PTA is and what PTA is doing at all levels is more readily available to members. The information age has allowed us to communicate much more effectively. We can literally put information right at the tips of our member's fingers, and in most cases in a much more time and cost-effective manner.

One can never foresee by simply looking at a filled out membership form which aspect of PTA a member will feel most passionate. Through effective communication, we are able to pass along a variety of information and grow a more empowered membership. Each year a unit or council is awarded the Outstanding Newsletter and Outstanding Website award. While the format of each differs their purpose within the unit or council is closely related – inform the membership.

Columbia Council PTA is this year's winner of the Outstanding Website Award, and what an outstanding website they have created. In addition to providing members, in this case units, with the general requirements or bare bones – contact information, a calendar of events, and links to both National PTA and Missouri PTA – they took the website one step further. It was a



detail that is most often overlooked when units develop websites. Not only were all the units within the Council represented with a link to their own site, but the website made sure to highlight special events or programs taking place among the units. In addition to local unit events, relevant community events and both National PTA and Missouri PTA program and events were highlighted. What a great way to demonstrate the link between home-school-community.

The PURPOSES of the Parent Teacher Association

"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 the close relation between the home and the school, and parents and teachers may cooperate in harmony in the education of children and youth."

"to develop initiative and the general well rounded efforts as well secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education."

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Principally Speaking
by Kaysie Wahlert, LO Principal

Dear Families of Great Lions,
Parent/Teacher Conferences were a great success at Liberty Oaks this year. We had approximately 98% of our families participate. We would like to thank all of our families for attending and for PTA sponsoring our books, fair, spirit wear, yearbook sales, and staff dinners. Our evening would not have been the success it was without the support of our Liberty Oaks families.

Parents are always asking for ways in which they can help their students develop as learners at home. It is important to keep in mind that it is perfectly normal for kids to have different learning styles. All students can and will learn at Liberty Oaks. It may be that they need more time and/or learn in a different way. It is our goal to partner with students and parents to help students achieve success. We have multiple interventions taking place at Liberty Oaks currently to support a variety of learners. Our number one recommendation would be to read with your child at home often (20 minutes daily) as a general recommendation. Reading skills target a child's ability to learn in every content area. Listen to your student read aloud at home. As teachers, this is how we learn a great deal about each child's reading skills. Most importantly allow your student the opportunity to hear you read. Parents are experts at providing a great model of expression which helps develop fluency and meaning.

Our school library website has several items recommended for extra practice of a variety of different skills. Staff librarians also have a great deal of support materials that could be utilized at home to provide students the additional practice they may need. The internet can also be a very practical tool for parents to Google specific skills and find numerous avenues for practice that kids enjoy. The following website is one our staff pulls resources from often: <http://www.ck12.org/for/teachers.html>. Don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher for resources. We are happy to provide additional practice at home.

We can hardly believe we are entering the holiday season already. If you attended our movie night at Ball Theater, I am certain you found it enjoyable. We have approximately five weeks of school prior to our winter break. The staff at Liberty Oaks wishes your family a fun, fulfilling holiday season.

Something to Read About
By Pepper Gerstner, LO PTA President

Last month, I took off by mentioning that I'd like to introduce you to PTA by using sets or eyes differently than mine. So, I asked around the school to find out what PTA meant to others and to find out why some joined our Local PTA.

It was interesting to hear from the students & staff and I think you'll be encouraged to find out what others say about our unit. (See page 6.)

Please consider joining our PTA. By joining, you will not receive a schedule of when you must volunteer, but instead, you will receive a welcoming to come volunteer when you want. Our unit is full of wonderful parents & staff members that consistently work together for the benefit of our children. It's encouraging you to work with us on that.....it can only get better with YOU involved!

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Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA is no stranger to communication awards. Having won the Outstanding Website Award in the past, they continually demonstrate year after year they know how to get information into the membership's hands. This year we were impressed by not only the look but the quality of their newsletter. To stand out and become the recipient of the Outstanding Newsletter Award it is imperative the content is just as important as the layout. It is easy to remind members of an upcoming pizza party or fundraiser, but what was impressive about Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA's newsletter was the fact they made a point to include information about programs and events taking place at not only the local level but also in the community. In addition they made a point to include informative articles on a variety of topics and report on PTA programs and events – how the money was spent.

We are living in an era where people are not only seeking out information but are weeding out information. If the information lacks quality the reader will most likely move on. It takes very little effort to toss a newsletter in the trash or 'click' to a different website. The challenge is to provide the membership with meaningful information. With regard to a newsletter it is imperative to first catch the readers eye and then feed them informative engaging articles. Websites are beasts of a different nature. Seen as an information portal, if a user is unable to find what they are looking for in 3 or less 'clicks' they will most likely move on to another site. In addition, if you want users to revisit the site then the information must be more than just the bare bones.

The information is out there. The challenge is to get it in our member's hands. We can't expect members to simply know what PTA is all about unless we provide them with the tools to learn what we have to offer.

The Importance of Legislative Chairmen

By Denise McCarter, Vice-President of Legislation and Advocacy

Does your unit or council have a Legislative Chairman? If not, now is a great time to get one. Presidents, did you know that if you do not have a Legislative Chairman, you are considered to hold that position and are to carry out this position's duties?

When PTA was founded in 1897, its main purpose was "to promote the safety and well-being of children". PTA had a voice in acquiring child labor laws, in promoting kindergarten classes, and in developing the juvenile justice system. Over its 100 years, PTA has taken a stand for children and made a difference.

Today, PTA continues to work "to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship" and "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth". In its mission statement, PTA is to be "a powerful voice for all children" and

"a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child". Is your unit or council working towards these goals?

The duties of a Legislative Chairman at the unit and council level is to be aware of and communicate to the unit what is happening in Jefferson City and Washington D.C. that affects children. These issues are provided by Missouri PTA and National PTA through Action Alerts sent by email. The Legislative Chairman works to keep all PTA members informed on pressing issues and encourage them to speak up and advocate for children. Missouri PTA encourages every council to hold a "Town Hall Meeting" including local legislators, school administrators and teachers, community leaders and parents. Having an Legislative Chairman can promote unit, council and community partnerships and can lead to greater effectiveness within the

school community.

Look around with an eye out to spot that person who might be interested in local, state and national government. Most PTA members don't know that there is a legislative position at the local level. Use your school newsletters or email. Often a working parent is able to serve in this position more easily than volunteering during the day. A grandparent or neighbor can be a great resource when looking for volunteers. There may be someone who is willing to help but is just waiting to be asked.

Having a Legislative Chairman at the local level is very important in working toward the purposes and mission of PTA. Making legislative issues a priority is the first step. If you need help or more information to make this happen, contact Denise McCarter at denisem@mopta.org.

Missouri's Governor Recognizes Parent and Family Involvement in Education

By Denise McCarter, Vice-President of Legislation and Advocacy

On August 16, 2010, Governor Jay Nixon signed a proclamation declaring September 6-10, 2010 Parent and Family Involvement in Education Week in the state of Missouri. The Missouri PTA is excited that our state continues to recognize the importance of parent involvement in the success of children throughout the state -- in their academic growth and success, as well as their overall well-being. Missouri PTA is committed to finding and providing information that can help local schools explore the benefits of parent involvement. Although the week has passed, parent involvement is always important in the educational success of our students.

Here are a few tips that you can do individually to help support parent involvement:

- Volunteer to help in any classroom to

read, do math, spelling, etc. for a child who needs extra help.

- Find out if a child could use a lunch buddy to talk with while eating.
- Ask if there's an after school club that could use your help or start a club using your own expertise in a certain area.
- Volunteer in the library to put books away, or read a story at story time.
- Ask your principal, school board, or district administrator for a copy of your district's "Parent Involvement Policy". If they don't have one, ask the Missouri PTA how to get started.
- Make sure your school is collaborating with your community in a positive way.
- Missouri PTA will provide to you through your local units, a chance

to participate in family activities which will increase parent and family involvement throughout the state of Missouri.

Consider spending time at your child's school or after school activities. Your support and involvement will make a difference.



Inman PTA Boosts Parent-Teacher Conference Attendance

Inman Intermediate School in Nixa, Missouri has increased parent-teacher conference attendance rates by having a Family Fun Night a couple of weeks before conferences. Sign-up time for fall conferences corresponds with an inexpensive, fun night for over 300 Inman students and family members. Inman's PTA offers Chick-fil-A catering, and sells snacks and drinks to complete the meal. During breaks from free bingo games, the students, parents and teachers play rounds

of Minute-to-Win-It. After bouncing pencils, flying tissues and flinging rubber bands the winners collect their prizes. The final event for the evening is a raffle, with prizes donated by Inman parents. The focus of this evening is parental involvement, not fund-raising, so the PTA is able to offer families a full meal and a chance to win a great prize for less than \$5.00, while at the same time offering parents a time to sign-up for fall conferences. These events have been so



popular and successful in the past that conference attendance has approached 100% - a great goal for every school!

Blue Springs PTAs Honor Grandparents and Special Friends

October 2nd was a busy day for PTA/PTSA's across the Blue Springs School District, as units hosted "Grandparents and Special Friends Day." The festivities started before the school day began at the middle schools. The honored guests were treated to musical programs, food, and school tours before the starting school bell rang, so as not to interrupt class time. The '60s theme at Delta Woods Middle School was "Peace, Love and Groovy Gators," complete with costumed PTSA members and far out decorations and music.

The fun then moved to the District's thirteen elementary schools, where

attendees accompanied their mini-hosts to class, recess, and lunch. The district served over 5,000 extra meals to accommodate their guests – that's a lot of grandparents and special friends! Dr. Paul Kinder, Blue Springs School District Superintendent, notes, "This is a wonderful occasion and we are very excited to have our grandparents and special persons spend some time with our students in our schools. Each year thousands of guests have the opportunity to see our outstanding teachers in action and share with their child a great educational



experience. Without a doubt, our guests will enjoy their time and see firsthand what amazing students we have in our classrooms."



Past Missouri PTA President Kathy Nevans leads a President's Workshop at the Blue Springs PTA Council School of Information. Please contact your Regional Director or the Missouri PTA Office for more information on scheduling a School of Information.

Short Takes

NATIONAL PTA WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

National PTA is looking for personal stories about how PTA has impacted your life. Are you a part of PTA's legacy? Did your PTA training help earn you a new job or award recognition? Did a PTA campaign impact your community? Please share your stories, pictures, experiences. Tell them how PTA made (or is making) a difference in your life, school, or community. Post your stories in the discussion forum at the PTA Great Idea Bank and pta.org or e-mail info@pta.org (add "PTA Stories" to the subject line).

CONGRATULATIONS TO MISSOURI'S

10-11 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Robert Becker, Kirkwood High School chemistry teacher, has been named the 2010-11 Missouri Teacher of the Year by a nine-member selection committee appointed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He automatically becomes Missouri's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year program.

CREDIT CARD CHANGE

MO PTA is unable to accept credit card payments at this time. We hope to offer this form of payment again in the future.

MOPTA.ORG "MEMBERS ONLY" SECTION

As a PTA/PTSA member, you have access to a "Members Only" section on our website. Go to mopta.org to set up your account, using the username and password found on the back of your membership card. The "Members Only" section contains the Missouri PTA toolkit, articles, and information to help run your unit or council.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A PART OF THE MISSOURI PTA FAMILY?

If you would like to serve on the MO PTA Board of Managers, please fill out a talent bank form at mopta.org or email the VP of Field Service, Pat Brune at patb@mopta.org.

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO PLAN FOR FOUNDER'S DAY

Founders Day, February, February 17th, is a reminder of the substantial role that PTA has played locally, regionally, and nationally in supporting parent involvement and working on behalf of all children and families. It's a time to reflect and take pride in our many accomplishments, and to renew our commitment to be:

- a powerful voice for all children,
- a relevant resource for parents,

Mark Your Calendar

November

PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 2 Election Day
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 18 National Parent Involvement Day
- 25 Thanksgiving

December

Winter Packet & Legislative Handbook

Mailed to Units

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 1 AIDS Awareness Day
- 1 Audit Report (Annual Financial Review)
Due to State Office
- 1 Copy of IRS 990 or 990-N to State Office

January

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 14 Reflections Deadline (Due to the State Office No Later than 4:30 p.m.)

- and a strong advocate for public education.

PTA's founders Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, and the founder of Georgia's Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Sloan Butler, were women of imagination and courage. They understood the power of individual action, worked beyond the accepted barriers of their day, and took action to literally change the world.

They had a simple idea—to improve the lives and futures of all of our children. As much as other conditions in America may have changed, that idea has not. PTAs keep it alive.

Today, PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation. Our members represent the ethnic diversity of our nation, and they come from the ranks of traditional families, single-parent households, blended families, grandparents, and other caring adults. Together, we continue to serve as the conscience of the country for children and youth. Let everyone across the state know about your celebration of Founder's Day by sending your event information to Ava Payne, **Contact** Editor, at avap@mopta.org

Missouri Congress of Parents & Teachers
Missouri PTA
2101 Burlington St.
Columbia, MO 65202



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Missouri PTA Reflections Program 2010-2011

“Together We Can”

Entries must **arrive** at the MOPTA office:

Missouri PTA
2101 Burlington Street
Columbia, MO 65202-1945

No later than 4:30 p.m.
Friday, January 14, 2011
Or they will be disqualified