



## Reflections from the President



**Kim Weber**

Missouri PTA President | [kimw@mopta.org](mailto:kimw@mopta.org)

As I prepare for my last month as President of Missouri PTA reflecting on my term as the 43rd President, I am giving some of my space in this issue to my family to share their message to you. After all, if it hadn't been for their love, daily support, and of their sacrifices I would not have been able to travel this journey. For that I will be forever grateful to them and I look forward to being their full time cheerleader as they have each been mine these last several years.

So as you all spark on your journey, and use your own families for support keep in mind the words of a spouse and how much it means to have their support:

I am proud of what my wife did in her term, although it wasn't always easy. Whether it was with worry when she would have long days and nights traveling so late after working a regular scheduled work day at her job then driving across the state to a local meeting. Or if it was the countless hours on a computer or phone, doing the paperwork and making the connection with local units and councils, away from her family and friends, we made it. I always supported her and tried not to question her decision because I clearly saw the commitment and passion to serve PTA. Being the husband of the State President taught me some things too. "Don't take the position if you are not serious about helping your school or the children that PTA advocates for. They deserve only the best out of the PTA leaders and make sure you are all that you can be to do the role, with the support and understanding of your loved ones. Don't forget to talk to them and ask them their thoughts and suggestions along the way."

We all start on this journey to help make the lives of our children better and as our children grow older and enter adulthood, we see what that journey has done. My daughters have been with me through every day of my PTA years and contributed so much to my presidency. They have their own perspective on what that journey was like, some funny, some heartbreaking, and some very humbling to me but it was their journey too and I asked them to share it with all of you.

- Learning how to maneuver and post on social media at the speed of light on behalf of your Mother as she was speaking or at a conference that she was attending.
- Being thanked for "volunteering" to help with Missouri PTA packet stuffing and mailings when we are pretty sure we were volun-told to help.
- Being woken up from the screams of "What happened to the

file? "How do I do this excel document?", and countless other computer disasters as our mom tackled Microsoft Office.

- Making decorations for board meetings, conferences, conventions, even recruiting elementary students at a school to help make and decorate 250 paper butterflies.
- Hoping for cell service to use your smart phone for directions to find home when your Mother was talking and missed the turn to take the right way back from a meeting but instead was on country road in the middle of nowhere late at night.
- Hearing once again, "I could use some extra help, what are you and your friends doing tomorrow night?" As if there was ever a choice and our friends even knew that.
- Helping pack four days of outfits with shoes and accessories in a carry on case for a plane trip with her wardrobe of all black and blue.
- The countless hours spent sitting in a library, conference room, classroom, school, legislator's office, State Capital, being told, "Just a minute, I am almost done."
- Testifying before the Senate Education Committee on the importance of Early Childhood Education on behalf of Missouri PTA in front of my college Dean of Students.
- Going to the Governor's Mansion for dinner and a meeting with Governor Nixon in his office and being allowed to take pictures from his window overlooking the Missouri River, forgetting to ask him to be a part of the picture.
- Being able to name drop at an elementary school where we taught that has a PTA.
- Knowing that our Mother's PTA advocacy might just be the reason we are both teachers today, because it was the inspiration and constant daily reminder of the mission of PTA that made us both want to do more and be educators for children of this state.
- Lastly but most important, "It was a long ride but definitely worth it."

You see it takes a village or an average size house to make a difference and without the support of my family, I would not have been able to provide the support and resources, you as units and members of PTA needed to maintain the high level of support to the children in your schools and communities.

I want to send a great big hug to Phil, Stephanie and Amanda for allowing me to travel this incredible journey with each of you by my side. Thank each of you, the PTA membership of Missouri PTA for allowing me this opportunity to serve as your President, it truly was a great ride.

# Missouri PTA Board of Managers

If you'd like to join the Board of Managers, apply online at:  
<http://mopta.org/would-you-like-to-become-a-mopta-officer/>

*From the Editor*

**Andrea Battaglia**

MoPTA Contact Editor

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We are nearing the end of this term for Missouri PTA and it's a time that many of us are looking back at what we've accomplished as a group and looking forward to the many great changes to come. I'm sure you're in the same mode in your local unit or council. And here's what I want you to remember as you move forward:

You've accomplished a lot. You've worked hard. You've done a good job. You've got great skills. You've developed into a stronger leader. But remember that we can always do more. Remember, your skills are important and using them to help others makes your skills invaluable.

Consider sharing your skills with others and really take the time to do it right. When you share your skills with others, it improves your learning in the area as well. By teaching others, it forces you to know your topic well enough that you can share it, defend your rationale and encourage others to learn what you've discovered. Do you have a program or membership solution that has worked for you? Share it with a friend – it's not being pompous, it's being helpful. We all improve when we learn together and share ourselves with each other.

The more you share with others, the more it reinforces the skills – and confidence – you have. Have you been in a situation where you're teaching others your expertise? And then they applaud when you're done? What a confidence boost! The more you share your successes with others, the more they have a chance to be responsive and reinforce what you should already know – you're great and you should be proud of this. Be confident and share your success with someone today.

Your time really matters and when you give it away, you help others. Recently, I went to help a friend with a project at her job. For me, it was a quick project that took a few hours, but for her and her company – it was a great adjustment to their current processes that increased efficiency, streamlined their procedures and cleaned up storage spaces. And during my time with her, I realized that I felt better about sharing my skills with her group too. Being open to helping others and teaching my skills made it easy to improve the lives of those around me. I encourage you to seek opportunities to use your skills to help others. I promise, it will be a mutually beneficial experience.

Consider helping your local unit and council with their project – maybe it's working in the clothing bank, maybe it's sorting food and supplies at the food bank, maybe it's helping raise money for the next project. Use your skills to help others and it will make a world of difference. Make today the day you step outside of your comfort zone and teach others how to effectively use your skills; it will make everyone more successful. We're all in this together.

Excerpt adapted from [www.andreabcreative.com](http://www.andreabcreative.com)  
"#OrganizeYourLife Share Your Skills & Success."

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**PTA Vision:** Making Each Child's Potential A Reality

**PTA Mission:** PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for all families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

The **Purpose of PTA** is to promote the welfare of the 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 close relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

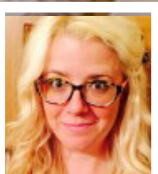
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# Reflections of a Busy Mom



**Kristina Wilmoth**

Missouri PTA PR Chair | [kristinaw@pta.org](mailto:kristinaw@pta.org)

It's easy for us all to agree on one thing: we are busy. We have early mornings, lost socks, messy kitchens, a full email inbox, and a consistent nagging at our subconscious regarding the tasks we ignore on a daily basis. Some might argue that being "busy" is killing us. Images of a worn out, hard-working father clutching his chest in pain as sweat beads up on his furrowed brow can scare us into associating "busy" with impending doom. But is being busy really all that bad?

I am a dedicated wife, mother, and part-time employee for multiple non-profits, with more cumulative work hours than a than "full-time" job. No matter what the role and responsibility, I tend to find ways to make my work busy and I don't think that's wrong. Here are my reflections and reasons why:

**Being a busy mom teaches my children responsibility and self-worth.** As a young mom, I stayed home with my 2 children while I attended college part-time. I found ways to fill my entire day with activities, chores, outings, homework, housework, and even daydreaming. I wrote to do lists and found great satisfaction at crossing items off and adding more items in their place. Did I feel overwhelmed? At times, yes! But I also felt accomplished and productive. I felt I was giving to my family as much as my husband, who worked outside the home and provided our income. My children were able to observe our busy little family making goals, accomplishing them, and creating new ones.

**Working on multiple projects challenges me to prioritize.** A deadline is not the only thing that can push an item to the top of my to-do list. If one of my children has a school project that is causing her anxiety, I move all my work to the side to give my child the attention she craves. If I find that my constant procrastination when writing a monthly newsletter causes me to miss simple grammar errors, that project then becomes a priority as I give it more attention and care to display my dedication and work ethic to myself and others. If something is important to me, I give it the priority. It's that simple.

**When I'm working on a task, I tend to let my mind wander**

**during downtime or lulls in activity.** During these multitasking times, I have experienced Ah-Ha moments where I find solutions, options, and ideas for other areas of my life. This is one of my favorite side effects of being busy! I utilize note-taking programs on my phone, laptop, and tablet to help me in this area. I write the note down and email it to myself and any other concerned party. This frees me to continue working on my original task and begins a conversation between myself and others to be addressed once I turn my attention to that project.

**Working for various organizations and serving in multiple roles shows adaptability and willingness to say, "yes."**

Although the word, "no" should be in my vocabulary (when a project is not for me), saying "yes" shows others that I care and I'm willing to work. This confidence not only builds my reputation but also builds my resume with education, training, and experience that can be applied to diverse opportunities. This is a vital way to differentiate myself from others.

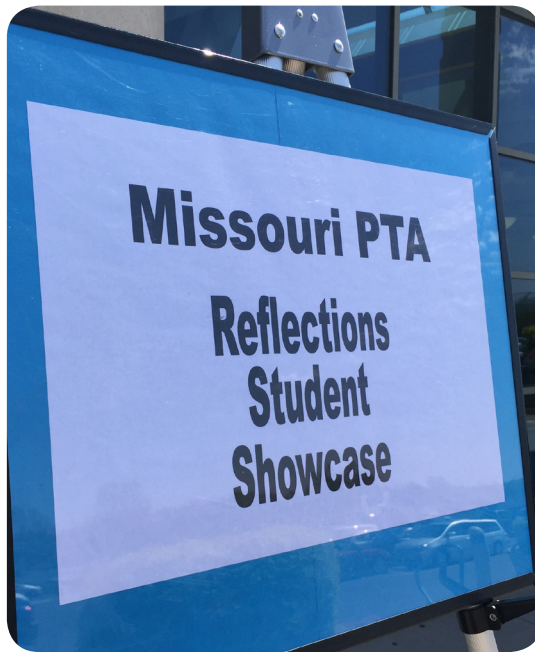
**Teaching myself to take the first step in order to complete what I began is a lesson I apply to situations both professionally and personally.**

Since agreeing to work with 5 different non-profits, I've found my ability to "get the ball moving" has improved dramatically and I've been able to apply it to my personal life. It's much easier to finish washing the dishes because starting the dishes is now my routine after dinner. When I read an email, I respond right away instead of marking it "unread" or flagging it to look at again later. If I want to accomplish tasks before responding to an email, I still click, "reply" and keep the reply email active in a separate tab until I finish my task(s) and can respond with "all done!" It feels so wonderful to be done and start a new task.

There are times when being a busy mom means I feel overworked, overwhelmed, and underappreciated. In those moments, I reflect and re-evaluate because I strongly believe that living a busy life can be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. I'm a busy woman, dedicated wife, mother of 5, and a hard-working professional. I'm a busy mom...and proud of it!



# Missouri PTA Reflections Showcase was out of this world!





# Missouri School Equity Plan

To learn more about Top 10 by 20,  
please visit the website:  
<http://dese.mo.gov/top-10-by-20>



Missouri's public school kids deserve effective teachers at every grade level and in every content area. Unfortunately, too often students in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools are taught by teachers who are ineffective or less than highly qualified.

The Department is working with education partners to prepare, develop and support effective educators as part of its Top 10 by 20 plan to be a top 10 state for education by 2020. We're helping develop a diverse pool of fully prepared, successful teacher candidates to meet the needs of all schools in every grade and subject.

Missouri has a plan to ensure that every classroom in our state is led by an effective teacher. It focuses on three key areas:

**Preparing educators.** The Department and colleges of education at higher education institutions across Missouri are working to improve preparation for classroom teachers. Teacher candidates are asked to reach higher standards than ever before to ensure that all Missouri teachers provide effective classroom instruction.

**Identifying critical shortage areas.** Recruiting qualified and effective teachers for all subject areas and in certain geographic areas – both urban and rural – can be a challenge. Missouri's plan focuses on identifying the root causes of shortage areas and implementing strategies to recruit and retain effective teachers.

**Supporting principals and school leaders.** Effective teachers and principals are the number one influence on student learning. Through programs such as the Teachers Academy and the Leadership Academy, teachers and principals learn important skills for building a school culture with a focus on academics, opportunities for professional collaboration, and shared accountability for student learning.

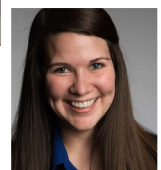
We want you, as parents of Missouri school children, to know about our efforts to prepare effective teachers and school leaders for every school, no matter the zip code. And if your children express an interest in an education career, we hope you will encourage them to consider teaching. They could one day make a big difference in the lives of Missouri children.





Talking with your teens about alcohol is tough.

Find help at [www.safeandsoberparents.com](http://www.safeandsoberparents.com).



## Mackenzie Lee

Director of Missouri Safe and Sober | [www.safeandsoberparents.com](http://www.safeandsoberparents.com)

Picture your son or daughter. What's something about them that makes you smile? How would you best describe your relationship?

We would do anything we could to ensure that our family members are happy and healthy. We provide for family by giving them shelter, education, discipline and friendship. But sometimes we get so busy running the family we can overlook the need to talk to our kids about the dangers of underage drinking.

We need to begin these conversations earlier than we ever have before. In 2015, the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed that children start to think positively about alcohol between ages 9 and 13. And according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Health Barometer, the average Missouri teen will take their first drink of alcohol at age 13.

Missouri Safe and Sober offers a free, video-based education program to all Missouri middle and high schools designed to prevent underage drinking and drunk driving. In the 2015 – 2016 school year, 55 middle schools and 301 high schools registered for the free and engaging program. While efforts like this program help to change the culture of underage drinking, parents are a key component in completing this comprehensive prevention effort.

Unfortunately there is no manual to being a parent. Sometimes it is hard for parents to know how to start an ongoing conversation about alcohol, but the conversations are always

worth it. Teens who consistently learn about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who don't.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. The purpose of this month is to raise public awareness of alcohol-related issues. The 2016 theme is "Talk Early, Talk Often: Parents Can Make a Difference in Teen Alcohol Use." If you haven't already had a conversation about alcohol with your child, then Alcohol Awareness Month would be a great time to begin one. It is never too early to start.

Here are five tips to starting the conversation:

1. Find a good time to talk free of distractions.
2. Don't try to cover everything at once.
3. Ask your child if they have any friends that drink alcohol, and what their thoughts are on it.
4. Use "what-if" situations throughout the conversation.
5. Use the conversation as an opportunity to set clear boundaries for your child.

Find more tips, underage drinking statistics, parent testimonials and engaging video resources at [www.safeandsoberparents.com](http://www.safeandsoberparents.com).

Cherish the special times you have with your kids. These years are precious and their health and safety is far too important to risk to something preventable like underage drinking.

## Family Engagement in Education Act and ESEA Bill

**March 2, 2015**  
Family Engagement in Education Act (H.R. 1194/S. 622) introduced in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate

**July 7, 2015**  
The Senate begins floor consideration of S. 1177

**July 14, 2015**  
Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECS) amendment passes on Senate floor by voice vote

**December 2 & 9, 2015**  
The House passes ESSA by a vote of 359 – 64. The Senate passes ESSA by a vote of 85 – 12



**February 2, 2015**  
The Student Success Act (H.R. 5), a bill to reauthorize ESEA-NCLB is introduced in the U.S. House.



**February 25, 2015**  
The U.S. House of Representatives begins floor debate on H.R. 5



**April 7, 2015**  
The Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177), a bill to reauthorize ESEA-NCLB is introduced in the U.S. Senate



**July 8, 2015**  
The House passes H.R. 5 by an 218 – 213 vote



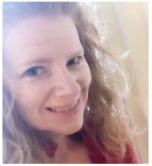
**July 16, 2015**  
The Senate passes S. 1177 by an 81 – 17 vote



**December 10, 2015**  
President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act into law



# Family Engagement



## Dorothy Gardner

Missouri PTA President-Elect | [dorothyg@mopta.org](mailto:dorothyg@mopta.org)

Family engagement. Seems like a simple enough idea but what does it really mean when we talk about education. Is it parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, family reading night? What does effective family engagement entail? This was the topic during the National PTA Legislative Conference's U.S. Department of Education roundtable discussion on the implementation of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

Working to bring parents into a closer relationship with their children's education was a founding principle for PTA. This need remains at the core of PTA's national public policy agenda and resource development. Prior to the inclusion of family engagement in ESSA, PTA was the driving force behind the Family Engagement in Education Act. For years PTA advocates would hit the Hill, armed with facts on the benefits of family engagement and ask our elected officials to support this act. After all the benefits are not new concepts. Research goes back 40 years supporting the positive family engagement.

No matter the zip code, income or socioeconomic background, studies have proven over and over that when families are engaged attendance goes up, grades improve, more students take advanced-level classes, and a greater number of families celebrate high school graduation. This same research also points out that family engagement is a key factor in both school improvement and thriving communities.

So the question from the U.S. Department of Education to the PTA leaders assembled for the roundtable discussion was simply this – what is effective engagement. ESSA requires all Title I schools to include a written parent and family

engagement policy in their school's education plan. This plan must welcome families and focus on strengthening the partnership between families, communities and the school.

PTA has been focusing and providing resources on this three-pronged partnership for quite some time through the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. These six standards focus on welcoming families into the school community, communicating effectively, supporting student success, speaking up for every child, sharing power, and collaborating with the community. These are, and always have been, the six pieces to the puzzle. Because PTAs are autonomous, they are in a unique position to provide the avenues to bring these three aspects together.

The nuts and bolts of how the standards are implemented will vary from school to school – even building to building. There simply isn't a one size fits all to effective engagement. Want to know what will get parents in the door? Ask. Only those who are a part of that community know what resonates with them. Encourage parents to take ownership of their voice within education by becoming part of PTA. Implement PTA resources to provide that avenue thereby strengthening the partnership between school, home and community. Engagement between and among the school, community and families will lead to commitment.

In the end that is what our children in our local communities, across the state and nationwide really need. A commitment to making sure their needs are a priority so they can aspire to reach their full potential.





# Missouri PTA April Legislative Update

## **Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

Back in 2011 students in the state of Missouri came together to write, promote and pass the **Distracted Driving Resolution**. This resolution was then submitted and passed at the National Convention.

Why was this issue so important to the students? At the time both Missouri and National PTA had resolutions pertaining to teen driving and cellphone use but nothing that spoke to the larger problem of distracted driving. Distracted driving isn't a teen problem. Every driver who makes the decision to drive distracted poses a potential risk to everyone else on the road, including him or herself. Distracted driving spans all ages, genders and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Did you know that at highway speeds, the amount of time a drivers keeps their eyes off the road to type a 3 to 5 second text message they will have traveled the length of a football field. Your personal awareness can make a difference.

For more information on statistic, research, campaigns, and pledges check out **[www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)**.

## **STEM Hits The Capitol**

**HB 2671**, Fitzwater (R-049), would establish the "STEM Career Awareness Pilot Program". This pilot program would target students in grades six through twelve and is intended to promote exposure to a variety of STEM careers.

If the bill passes, the Missouri Department of Education would select 25 secondary schools to participate in the pilot program. This program would be administered online and must meet specific criteria. In addition to the requirement to introduce students to a wide variety of STEM careers, criteria includes curriculum flexible enough to be used in a broad range of classrooms such as English and social studies.

The focus is to relay to students how both math and language skills are used by those in STEM careers. Other

criteria require the ability to retrieve assessment reports, include game-based elements, and be self-paced.

It is PTA's position that it is vital to our children's education that an increased emphasis is placed on the teaching of math, science and technology. These are important skills for success in a global economy.

## **Every Child Succeeds Act Parent Resource**

National PTA had developed a **PTA resource for families on Every Student Succeeds Act** that hosts ESSA summaries, an overview of what ESSA means for children and families, and insight into the Statewide Family Engagement provisions within ESSA. This webpage is a valuable tool for not just PTA members but to all parents across the country. Also included is a section that explains how Family Engagement, the portion of which PTA lead the groundwork with the Family Engagement in Education Act, is included and defined in ESSA.

Now that the law has passed it is up to the U.S. Department of Education to implement the law. While the department provides guidance to the states the law is designed to provide states with expanded opportunities to tailor fit education to the needs of the students in their state. It is important that we as members of PTA, advocates for all Children, make sure we are both knowledgeable and active participants in the implementation. PTA has developed the guide **ESSA: What Does This New Law Mean for my Child?** to assist parents with understanding how this law will affect the students in our schools.





# Making Cancer Walk the Plank

## Contribute to Contact!

Simply email us to be included in a future edition.

[contact@mopta.org](mailto:contact@mopta.org)

## Mary Robinson

Platte City Schools PTA President | 2015-2016

Rising Star, Siegrist, and Paxton Elementary students helped 'Make Cancer Walk the Plank' this month, as part of the Platte City Schools Parent/Teacher Association's (PTA) annual walk-a-thon fundraiser. Students pledged to make cancer walk the plank, and raised funds not only for the three elementary schools, but also for the American Cancer Society. The PTA will be donating more than \$1,100 to the organization.

More than 1,300 students participated in the event and walked the track at Platte County High School lined with sacks they decorated with names of people they were honoring. Laps around the track were broken up with other events including "kicking out cancer" soccer kicks, "picturing a cure" at the photo station, "hooping up cancer" hula-hooping, and "pulling for a cure" with a tug-of-war.

The Platte City Schools PTA wishes to thank all who pledged to support this event. Funds raised through PTA directly impact students in a variety of ways including field trips, cultural arts programs, social activities and educational enhancements for their schools.

## President Connect Facebook Group

Did you know Missouri PTA has a Facebook group page? It's just for presidents to communicate with both the state board and each other. This is a closed group - meaning the posts will not be available for public viewing. If you would like to participate in the Missouri PTA Presidents Connection Network please send your facebook request to join to this group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/presidentconnect/>





## Lori Prussmann

Missouri PTA  
State Treasurer  
[lorip@mopta.org](mailto:lorip@mopta.org)

Lori is also running for the position of Missouri PTA Secretary for the 2016-2018 term

# Meet Your MoPTA Board of Managers Members

**Your PTA Region** - Pony Express

**#Years involved in PTA and Missouri PTA Board of Managers** 23 years

**Why you believe PTA is important?** Advocating for those that can't advocate for themselves is very important; they need someone to be their voice.

**Why you got involved in Missouri PTA Board of Managers?** To advocate for kids on another level

**Your (proposed position)** Secretary

**What are your goals for your (proposed) position:** To maintain the records of our meetings with details and important information so that if ever needed proper documentation will be available.

**How can you be a resource for other PTA units/councils (as part of your position)** I can help them maintain high-quality records for their unit or council. Since I have extended experience, I can help in many areas.

**Your biggest PTA success (or what are you proud of/accomplished this year)** Staying relevant in order to help those in need out when they need a helping hand. Awards are nice but the one on

one help is the most rewarding thing to me.

**Goals you have for Units/Councils this year** Great training!

**Advice you'd give to others** All the hard work is worth it! The students and staff are depending upon each one of us to make a difference no matter what role we hold on "the board". Be respectful! Kill them with kindness! Be the best that you can be! Don't get caught up in "what others are doing", run your own race. This is not a competition! It truly is "all about the kids"!

**Something that makes you stand out** Loyalty, dedication and a sense of purpose!

**Anything else you want to share?** You only have one life to live! Make it count! Be the mentor to others that you wish that you had had! Leave the world a better place and make a difference! Students, staff and other parents are watching so always be at your best because you are a representative of something bigger than you. Others will judge the organization by your actions, so make a good impression!





**MoPTA  
Convention**  
is the best time to  
train your unit &  
council with  
MoPTA officers,  
resources & ideas.  
Join us in April!

*Bringing it Home*

**Missouri PTA Convention**  
is days away - see you soon!

**Friday, April 22 to Sunday, April 24**

**Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center**  
2601 S. Providence Rd., | Columbia, MO 65203

visit [www.MoPTA.org](http://www.MoPTA.org) for more information