

CONTACT

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March 2012



Missouri PTA Annual Leadership Conference



REALLY . . .

really committed

. . . PTA

really involved

**May 4-5, 2012
Stoney Creek Inn & Convention Center
Columbia, MO**

Training, networking, team building, skills development, and resource opportunities

Adults and students (middle school & high school) are encouraged to attend

Adult Registration: \$85.00 Student Registration: \$40.00
(1 free student registration with each paid student registration!)

Registration packets mailed to all unit and council presidents in March

Cover photo:

Meagan, Missouri PTA Student Representative, promotes the Distracted Driving Resolution at the Liberty Council's Kid's First Town Hall.

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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.

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President's Message *By Donna Petiford, Missouri PTA President***The Difference an "A" Makes**

Not all parent groups are the same. People make the difference. People you can call and people who can visit your school. If you are PTA, you are unique, but you are not alone. You have the support of local field volunteers, a state office, and a team of professional and volunteer leaders.

In 1971, Missouri PTA was issued a group exemption number by the IRS. In order to reduce paperwork, the IRS recognizes all PTAs in Missouri as "exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code" and local PTA units are not required to file their own paperwork to obtain 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.* Missouri PTA supplies an annual list to the IRS of PTA units who are in good standing with Missouri PTA. PTA funds are independent of school funds, but PTAs are accountable to Missouri PTA for IRS requirements and for meeting the standards of being affiliated with the national association. PT"A" provides peace of mind with oversight, responsibility and knowledge.

Through our publications such as the summer and winter packet mailings, bi-monthly newsletter, website and Facebook page and through our experienced field service volunteers and professional office staff, Missouri PTA provides information and resources on best practices for current leaders which, in turn, creates an accountable model for future leaders. PTA leaders receive training and tools on organizational management, effective family engagement and local, state and national advocacy. In addition, Missouri PTA and Na-

tional PTA provide timely information on IRS changes to their local units.

PTAs work together to advocate for local, state and federal funding for schools. We work to promote legislation and policies that will strengthen family engagement in education and provide opportunity and equity for all children.

PTAs run units locally, to best suit their students – but over 100 years of parent involvement knowledge is never more than a phone call or e-mail away. If you would like more information about the difference an "A" could make in your parent group, please let us know.

If your "A" parent group (PTA) needs verification of tax exempt status for donor substantiation or for grant-writing purposes, please contact our state office for assistance.

*The IRS sometimes recognizes a group of organizations as tax-exempt if they are affiliated with a central organization. This avoids the need for each of the organizations to apply for exemption individually. A group exemption letter has the same effect as an individual exemption letter except that it applies to more than one organization. For more information about group exemption requirements and procedures, see Publication 4573, *Group Exemptions*, <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4573.pdf> or call the IRS toll free 1-877-829-5500.

Missouri PTA extends its sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Irene M. Powell, of Clinton, MO, who passed away on December 9, 2011. Irene served as President of the Missouri PTA from 1961-1964.

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

The importance of arts education

By Betsy Landers, PTA National President



Somewhere inside each of us, especially when we are young, lies a budding artist. Fostering that creativity—nurturing that spirit to let our imaginations fly—is the very essence of educating a child.

Recently the National Endowment of the Arts announced that it will lead a new

federal level task force that will emphasize research on the arts and well-being at all stages of life. Chief among the departments involved is the Department of Health and Human Services. In an era of tightening school budgets that see funding for arts programs and classes eliminated or cut altogether, this is a much needed step forward in recognizing the importance of arts in education. Studies continue to endorse the well-known fact that when children express themselves through the arts, they are more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, more likely to participate in a math or science fair and more likely to be elected to a school office.

This is something PTAs nationwide understand well! That is why each year, hundreds of thousands of student participants in National PTA's Reflections arts program can attest to how the arts impact

their lives and their ability to express themselves.

No child should be denied the chance to develop their talent or be denied an outlet for their artistic expression because of budget cuts. Thousands of PTAs across the country and in our military based schools overseas make it possible each year for our children to be involved in the arts through Reflections. Sadly for many, they may not have had the opportunity otherwise.

Every child in this nation deserves the chance to have a well-rounded education and to have the tools to reach their full potential as they grow into adulthood. The arts are a vital ingredient!

Visit PTA.org/Reflections for more information about National PTA's Reflections program and to find out how your PTA can participate in next school year's program.

National Convention Registration is Open June 21-24, 2012

Registration for the 116th Annual National PTA Convention and Exhibition in San Jose, California, is now available at pta.org.



Participants will be able to:

Attend dozens of workshops led by dynamic presenters to enhance your confidence and leadership skills;

- Gain practical ideas and best-practices on how to run your state, regional or local unit PTA;
- Receive advocacy, education, and program updates about how you can make a difference in government and family engagement;
- Network with hundreds of peers and exhibitors from around the country, and
- Check out the great attractions and activities San Jose has to offer by visiting the San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau website, SanJose.org.

More information about registration fees, hotels and travel arrangements is available at pta.org.

Keep Your PTA Financially Safe

By Shelly Throckmorton, Missouri PTA Treasurer

As corporate financial scandals dominate the business pages, volunteer groups, such as PTA, have to recognize the risks to their own organization. Any group that comes into contact with money, whether it's a Fortune 500 company or a PTA, needs to safeguard its assets. Clear bylaws, sound policies and procedures, and consistent checks and balances are essential for even the smallest of PTAs.

Theft from PTAs is all too common. It doesn't happen because there's a criminal in your midst. It happens because rationalization meets opportunity - opportunity you CAN prevent! Any purchase, whether made with PTA funds or by a member, should have a paper trail: authorization form, receipt, and reimbursement request. "You have to have fiscal controls and checks and balances so no volunteer is ever out there alone handling large sums of money," says Helen Little, CPA, an association financial consultant.

Checks and Balances:

Implement cash controls. Don't put money in Tupperware containers. Don't keep PTA money at the Treasurer's or President's home. And ideally, don't even leave cash at school overnight. These may seem like common-sense rules, but they are routinely violated by tired volunteers who are closing up an evening event and just want to go home without counting up the money and making a bank deposit.

Another hard-to-follow, but simple rule, is to never leave people alone with money. That means two people sit at a table to sell tickets and two people count the money at the end of an event. Allow only board members to count cash. That way, if there's a money problem, it's the board members who are responsible. After the money is counted, it should be handed off to the treasurer and each counter should get a signed receipt for the handoff. The treasurer should arrange to deposit money in the bank as soon after the conclusion of an event or project as possible.

Use financial request and reimbursement forms. Similarly, no PTA member should be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses and no bills should be paid until a member fills out a form detailing what the money was used for and produces receipts. All bills must be paid by check, never cash.

Require two signatures on every check. No one person should have the authority to issue PTA checks. At many PTAs across the state, all checks must carry the signature of the treasurer and the signature of the president or other authorized signer. This policy helps the treasurer by allowing her to tell people, 'No, I can't just write you a check.' NEVER sign a blank check or a check made out to "Cash".

Electronic bill paying is not recommended. PTAs have had vendor's double bill their account and in some cases, billed the PTA and not provided the product. It is harder to have the proper checks and balances to keep track of the PTA funding. Also, the use of debit cards or credit cards is not recommended. You can't have two signatures to use it and it is a lot harder to track the expenses within your budget.

Practice "Internal Financial Controls". Have someone who does not have check signing authority review the bank statement monthly. This can be done by having the bank statement sent to the alternate person before handing off to the treasurer, asking the bank to send a duplicate statement or setting up on-line bank

account viewing. This person is looking for red flags including: checks showing up in non-sequential order, checks made out to cash, cash withdrawals, checks written out to non-approved vendors, checks written for non-approved expenses, checks written out individuals.

Conduct annual audits. Audits are essential to make sure all the numbers truly add up. An internal audit committee should have at least three members who are not signers on the account, review the books annually to match financial request forms with receipts and bank statements.

Write down the rules. Some PTAs have been hesitant to create or carry out cash controls because board members are nervous about offending volunteers. But clearly explaining policies and procedures in writing prevents people from feeling singled out or mistrusted. Every PTA that has had money stolen never expected it to happen.

Get bond insurance. Even well-crafted cash controls and regular audits cannot protect every PTA from theft. That's where bonding insurance comes in. If any money is stolen, bonding insurance ensures that it will be recovered. The amount of the bonding insurance should be determined by the amount of cash a PTA typically handles. Some insurance companies insure specific PTA officers, such as presidents and treasurers or elected officers. In this case, those should be the only members handling money.

In addition to the above mentioned ways to keep your PTA financially safe, make sure your unit also adheres to the following ways to be fiscally responsible.

Contracts: Please remember that ONLY the President can sign contracts for your PTA. Always carefully read contracts, especially the fine print. You need to make sure that the PTA is not accepting hidden expenses or taking on unwanted liability.

Donations: Don't forget that if someone donates money or a product to you, you need to give them a receipt for the money or the estimated value of the product. The donor needs this receipt for their tax records and depending on your gross receipts, you made also need a record of this for your tax return filing.

State Sales Tax: The State of Missouri allows PTAs to qualify for exemption of sales tax on all purchases. Make sure your unit has applied for and received your Sales Tax Exempt number and form. All PTAs must file with the Internal Revenue Service! PTAs with gross receipts below \$50,000, must file an electronic e-postcard, the 990-N. PTAs with gross receipts in excess of \$50,000 but below \$200,000 must file Form 990 EZ, including required schedules. All forms are due to the IRS on the 15th day of the fifth month after the close of your PTA units fiscal year. For example, if your fiscal year ends June 30th, the forms are due November 15th. If you are unsure of your fiscal year, please refer to your units bylaws. Please note that gross receipts are the total of all funds that come into the PTA before any expenses are removed. This includes all dues.

Make sure your PTA is using all of these guidelines to protect its assets. Don't be one of those units that had to develop a fiscal policy AFTER a financial scandal. Head off problems by developing the policies before a crisis occurs. It's much easier to create the practices before a loss happens than it is to explain to your membership and the children in your school that their money has disappeared.

Who's On Your School Board?

Dorothy Gardner VP of Legislation and Advocacy

This April, residents of school districts across the state will head to the polls to elect their school board members. The idea of local control, with regard to governing schools, dates back to when Missouri first became a state. But the design of our current form of school districts came about during significant changes to the Missouri Statutes in 1874.

It was through these changes in 1874 that the creation of school districts came about. Districts were given corporate powers and designed for the general purpose of education. Under this new law, districts were to be organized by qualified voters of the area who held public meetings to established boundaries and elected six directors. Of the six directors two were to serve a one-year term, two a two-year term and two a three-year term. An annual meeting was to be held on the first Tuesday of April each year in order to hold the elections of directors. Once elected it was the duty of the board of directors to govern and control the school district.

Much has changed when it comes to Missouri law and education, but the basics with regard to how our school districts are governed still dates back to the sweeping changes in 1874. Every year we, the members of our local districts, elect the school board members we determine will lead our school districts in the right direction.

PTA's cannot support or oppose candidates running for school board but under IRS regulations, they can host candidate forums. Such forums serve a dual function of informing community members about their choices among candidates and demonstrating the value of PTA. So what is a candidate forum and how can your PTA go about holding an event?

A candidate forum is simply a platform for candidates running for public office to express their views. There are a few different formats: candidate speeches, panel discussions, and audience question-and-answer session. Your PTA can choose to employ one or a combination of these formats for your event. The key is to make sure the forum provides candidates an equal and fair opportunity to express their positions.

Organizing the forum

- Secure a location accessible to all, pick a date and establish time limits.
- Invite ALL registered candidates.
- Choose an unbiased moderator.
- Promote the event using a neutral tone. Make sure to emphasize the nonpartisan nature of the event.
- Review the chosen format with the candidates.
- Establish ground rules for the distribution of candidates' campaign materials. Do not allow any PTA members there in an official capacity to hand out these materials.

Conducting the forum

- Review the format once again with all the candidates present.
- Introduce the candidates to the moderator.
- Before you begin have the moderator explain the format, time limits and any ground rules to the audience.
- Do not ask a candidate to publicly endorse any issues.

- Thank all candidates for attending the forum.

So what questions might you ask a School Board Candidate? Here a few for starters. Another great source for questions is your local membership. Find out what questions they would like to see answered.

- 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 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?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge facing our public school right now and what is your plan to address it?
- Do all of the teachers in our schools meet the federal government's definition of highly qualified? If not, as a board member, what would you do to address this?
- How are our schools planning to ensure that students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be college and career ready?
- In what ways are you reaching out to the business community to build their support for quality public schools?
- What kind of community partnerships or activities could support student achievement outside of school?
- What would you do as a board member to ensure that afterschool programs and other activities remain in place for students?
- And finally it might be nice to know if the candidates running are active PTA members.

Who makes up your school board directly affects how your school district operates. Local control is a wonderful idea but it is coupled with the responsibility of the voters to pick the right people for the job.



MO Legislature Back-to-Work



On January 4th the Missouri Legislature returned to session in Jefferson City and have until the 60th day of the Legislative session to file bills. However the pre-filing of bills began back in December. Many of these bills are now in the process of working their way through the public hearing, committee and amending process, and, for some, a final vote. Missouri PTA is keeping a close eye on the filing and process of bills that pertain to child welfare and education. Visit the Capitol Chatter tab under Legislation on the website for the latest information, www.mopta.org/legislation/capitol-chatter.html.



Liberty Council PTA and Missouri PTA hosting a Kid's First Town Hall this past November

Of special notice are HB (House Bill) 1083, Sponsor Don Wells, District 147, and SB (Senate Bill) 567, Sponsor Robin Wright, District 5, which would prohibit all drivers from text messaging unless they are utilizing hand-free voice-recognition technology. At the 2011 State

Convention Missouri PTA passed a Distracted Driving Resolution and supports legislation designed to curb distracted driving. This resolution was introduced to the Missouri PTA Board of managers by our student members.

Advocate – Yes You Can!

Anyone can advocate. No special skills or in depth knowledge about the legislative process is required. Your passion to be a voice for *every child* is all that is needed. Pick one or two of the ideas below and become an advocate today.

- Attend a local Kid's First Town Hall Meeting. This will give you an opportunity to hear your local representative's opinions on PTA issues.
- Mark your calendar and attend the Missouri's Child Advocacy Day in Jefferson City on March 28th. Find a couple of PTA members to go with you and make a day of it.
- Did your PTA host the Reflections program at your school? Write a short note to your local representatives explaining the program, how many children participated and any winning entries that went on to the state level. This will create a connection between your students and the elected official.
- Not a member of the JC/DC network? Join today!! Forms can be found in the Tool kit, Winter Packet or go online to the Missouri PTA webpage, www.mopta.org, and click on the "subscribe to Legislative alerts" in the 'Act Now' box on the front page. When legislative alerts arise be sure to take action.
- Pick one of issues from the list of 2012 Missouri PTA Legislative Platform and write a short note to one of your local legislators letting them know you feel that this is an important issue. Our legislators hear from paid lobbyist in Washington D.C. and Jefferson City each day. It is paramount they also hear from us. The 2012 Missouri PTA Legislative Platform can be found in the 2012 Legislative Handbook (delivered to all presidents during this past December) and online at <http://www.mopta.org/legislation/capitol-chatter/610-2012-legislative-platform.html>.

Safe and Sober Prom Night

by Kurt Larson

My retired neighbor thinks I am an alarmist. He explains that his now-adult children experimented with alcohol when they were teens, and everything turned out just fine for them. My neighbor is statistically correct. After all, most teens who drink do not die, kill others, or become addicts. But these statistics are meaningless to me because a not-insignificant number of teens do drink and use drugs, especially during prom to graduation season, with tragic consequences.

The *Safe and Sober Prom Night* program (SSPN) was established in Missouri in the 2004-2005 school year. SSPN encourages students to take a pledge – a written commitment to their parents – to stay drug and alcohol free on prom night. In exchange, these students are given incentives to take and keep their commitment, including contributions toward their senior graduation party, wristbands and/or t-shirts, bumper-stickers, and an opportunity to win cash, all at no expense to the schools.

At a series of high school assemblies preceding prom season, students are presented a bluntly realistic perspective of the tragic effects of drinking and drugs, based upon real case of families affected by alcohol and drug-addled drivers. Students are given a glimpse of the criminal, civil, and practical consequences these decisions can have on their future. The timing is perfect for this message, as soon-to-be graduates are stepping into adulthood and beginning to make decisions about their future beyond high school.

So, is a position of abstinence from substance abuse, bolstered by a pledge of sobriety, a worthwhile effort? According to the Surgeon General, the highest prevalence of alcohol dependence in the U.S. population is among 18-20 year olds, and youth who begin drinking by age fifteen are four times more likely to develop a dependence upon alcohol later in life. Four times more likely. So, every day we delay their first drink improves the chance our

teens will lead a life free of alcoholism. Who does not want that for their kids?

And while underage drinking kills more teens than all other illegal drugs combined, it is equally alarming to me that, according to the Partnership for a Drug Free America, nearly 1 in 5 teens admit to abusing medications not prescribed to him or her. Teens have the mistaken belief that prescribed medications are not “hard drugs” and are less dangerous than the street drugs. After all, they are prescribed by physicians, FDA approved, and marketed as “safe”. More alarming yet, 3 out of 10 teenagers think these drugs are not addictive, according to the same Partnership Study. Yet like my neighbor, parents often close their eyes to this developing epidemic.

Call me an alarmist. Many parents think this could never happen to them, or their teens. But it is happening in our community, and every addiction begins with a first time. For some kids, that is prom night at the unsupervised home of an irresponsible parent.

Since 2004, I have spoken at more than 100 area high schools, and reached out to more than 40,000 of our students and their parents to offer the opportunity to make a written pledge to stay drug and alcohol free on prom night, and as a lifestyle beyond high school. They do not need us to have a permissive attitude toward alcohol and drug use. Instead, they need to know that we care deeply about each and every one of them, and that we want them safe, alive and healthy after prom and graduation. It seems to me if by our efforts just one life is saved, or if even one more teen can avoid a lifetime of substance addiction, it is worth the effort.

Kurt Larson is a Springfield attorney with Larson Law Firm, and founder of Safe and Sober Prom Night in southwest Missouri high schools. SSPN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. For more information about SSPN, visit www.safeandsoberMo.com.

Reflections State Showcase



PTA REFLECTIONS
40 Years of Achievement in the Arts

3:00 p.m. on May 5, 2012

Stoney Creek Inn & Conference Center

Columbia, MO

Teacher Appreciation Week Planning Starts NOW

By Erin Pottberg, Parent Education and Involvement Chair

“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” I am not sure who said it but it is applicable in all of our lives, isn’t it? Teacher Appreciation Week is May 7th - 11th and the time to plan your events is rapidly approaching. This week of gratitude for our teachers (and sometimes PTA units will treat this week as “staff appreciation”) comes at a time when the school year is winding down and as momentum has begun to slightly slow down. Which is exactly why it is so important to show our teachers just how much we appreciate the impact they have on the lives of our children.

Recognizing teachers during this week is not just a PTA event; it is a nationally recognized effort that was started in 1953 at the urging of Eleanor Roosevelt. The occasion receives media attention and is for many PTAs, the last big event of the year.

Ideas for celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week can be found online at National PTA’s website. You will also find a press

release, poster and sticker template to customize. Schools sometimes will celebrate each day of the week with a particular theme or method of thanking our teachers. For instance, you can survey your teachers to find out their favorite color, beverage, snack food, flower, etc., designating each day of the week as the day to bring that item or wear the color.

However, Ozark School District teachers, Megan Taylor and Mandy Dickens both agree that an old-fashioned handwritten thank you note is one of the best gifts a teacher can ever hope to receive. “I’ve gotten a lot of candles, lotions, coffee mugs and gift cards; however, the “thank you’s” bring tears to my eyes every time. It’s nice to hear from parents & students that I’m appreciated,” says Taylor. This gesture is not only free, but sincere.

Regardless of your approach to Teacher Appreciation Week, be sure to start outlining your plan now so that you are ready for



the first full week of May. Enlist helpers for a bigger celebration. Check out some of the resources listed below for some inspiration.

- PTA.org/teacher_appreciation.asp
- pinterest.com
- familyfun.go.com
- tipjunkie.com
- ptagreatideabank.org



Men’s Involvement Men – Let’s Get Involved!

By Richard Davis, Men’s Involvement Chair

I’m a father and I’ve been involved in my daughter’s education since she was in kindergarten. This shouldn’t be a big deal, but it is.

Men often don’t think about their own involvement in their children’s education, thinking that “Mom will take

care of that.” I made the decision to get involved before she even started school, but I wasn’t sure how to go about it. I started with attending PTA meetings, but still wasn’t sure what my role should or could be. The principal at my daughter’s elementary school asked me to head up their new Watchdogs Program, which promotes dads volunteering and doing school-based activities. I read the Watchdogs information and got excited – this was the opportunity I had been looking for.

We had great success our first year and the program continues.

Through my Watchdogs efforts, I was asked to participate in our school’s PTA Board, providing them with monthly updates on the program. I have since served as her school’s PTA treasurer and president.

Now I move into the role of Men’s Involvement Chair at the state PTA level. We all know that children excel at school and in life when parents are involved. My focus will be getting the men involved, whether it’s Dad, Grandpa, Uncle, or just male friend. I look forward to serving you on this journey to make all our children’s lives better.

10+ WAYS to UNLEASH the POWER of YOUR MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN!!

1. **REACH OUT:** Contact those community members, businesses & parents who have had strong interest and leadership in your PTA but no longer have children in school.
2. **MEMBERSHIP HONOR ROLL:** Create an Honor Roll of members and publish it in your PTA's newsletter, website or bulletin board.
3. **PSAs:** Contact your educational TV channel about time during their programming for public service announcements about PTA. Many stations give up to 30 minutes each month.
4. **WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT:** Provide copies of the PTA budget to members to show how their investment of time & money is being spent to benefit the children. Be prepared to answer questions about line items.
5. **THANK YOU... THANK YOU!!!:** Take time to thank your members and volunteers often for their support and time. Without them there would not be a PTA.
6. **BREAK DOWN BARRIERS:** What is keeping people from joining and participating? Examine the obstacles and possible solutions. They can be economic, family-related, or "comfort" related.
7. **USE YOUR TIME WISELY:** Instead of starting from scratch use the customizable resources that are available online at PTA.org/Marketing.
8. **NATIONAL BENEFIT PROVIDERS:** Keep these updated and visible. Promote these exclusive discounts along with any local incentives you may be offering. Provide details on how to access the benefits only to your PTA members.
9. **THE STUDENT MARKET:** Offer a special drawing to all students that are members because it is never too late to join. Make sure the prize appeals to them i.e. iTunes Gift Card.
10. **COUNCILS:** Spotlight those units that are doing an outstanding job promoting membership. Ask one unit to present a short membership program at each council meeting. Not only will it help other units but it will give a local unit leader an opportunity to serve in a new role, a presenter.
11. **LISTEN:** What drives people to join, be informed and involved changes with their personal/family needs or situations. Be willing to listen. Be prepared to find ways that PTA can benefit them and how they can benefit PTA.

AWARDS - DON'T FORGET TO APPLY!

Did your unit Unleash the Power this year? Your unit deserves to be recognized for its' great work by applying for the many Missouri and National PTA awards. It's easier than you think. Award details, qualifications and applications were provided in the tool kit you received last summer, the recently mailed winter packet and are also available on the state website, www.mopta.org, under "Form/Award Applications". 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!

Most applications take no longer than a few minutes to fill out, so what are you waiting for?

The following award applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2012.

Outstanding Membership Campaign Award
Council Achievement Award
Unit Achievement Awards (Blue & Gold Seal)
Outstanding Local Unit/Council Newsletter Award
Outstanding Local Unit/Council Website Award
Membership Awards
Student Safety Award
Health/Wellness & Safety Education Award
Parent Education & Involvement Award

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

Missouri PTA Unit Benefit

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

Is Your PTA Sales Tax Exempt?

By Shelly Throckmorton, Missouri PTA Treasurer

Is your PTA paying sales tax on its purchases? Does your PTA have its own Missouri Sales Tax Exempt number and certificate? Do you know that if you do have a Missouri Sales Tax Exempt number, it needs to be renewed every three years? Hopefully you answered “No” on the first question and “Yes” for the second and third. If not, read on and you’ll be able to change your answers to these questions.

The State of Missouri considers PTAs to be a “Not-For-Profit Civic Organization” and thereby qualify for Sales Tax Exempt status. Every PTA should take advantage of this status. For many units, this could be the difference of a few hundred dollars a year!

Some PTAs use their school district tax-exempt number to avoid paying sales tax, but it’s recommended that your PTA apply for and receive their own tax-exempt number. Just as your PTA doesn’t mingle its funds with the school district or files taxes under the school district EIN, it shouldn’t use a separate organization’s tax-exempt number for purchases it makes.

Applying for Missouri Sales Tax Exempt status is a fairly easy procedure.

1. Download a copy of Form 1746 from the Missouri Department of Revenue website, <http://dor.mo.gov/forms/>.

2. Complete the form with the details about your PTA, including location, mailing address, type of business and reason for requesting exemption.
3. Make a copy of your bylaws, financial records for the past three years (or number of years in existence if less than three) and your exemption letter from the IRS.
4. Submit your completed Form 1746 with the copies you made to the Missouri Department of Revenue. Use the address listed on the top of Form 1746.

While this may seem complicated, it’s not. The IRS letter is available from the Missouri PTA state office upon request (to units in good standing), the unit president, treasurer and secretary should be in possession of current unit bylaws and financial statements are as simple as a copy of the “Fiscal Year-End Report” prepared by the treasurer for the last three years.

Once your PTA has been given a Sales Tax Exempt number and certificate, it will need to be renewed every 3 years. This MUST be done before your current certificate expires or you may be required to start the entire process from the beginning.

1. Download a copy of Form 1746R from the Missouri Department of Revenue website, <http://dor.mo.gov/forms/>.
2. Complete the form with details required.
3. Attach a copy of financial records for the past three years (or number of years in existence if less than three) and a written description of your PTA activities.
4. Submit your completed Form 1746R with attachments to the Missouri Department of Revenue. Use the address listed on the top of Form 1746R.

An example of both of these completed applications may be found on the Missouri PTA website, www.mopta.org, under “Forms/Awards/Grants”. Still have questions? Email the state office at office@mopta.org.

Remember those 3 questions posed in the first paragraph? Now is your chance to change your answers to these questions and make sure that your PTA funds are utilized to their fullest with a little bit a paperwork and time.

Missouri PTA will be 100 years old this year. Wow, 100 years of advocating for the children of Missouri, a true reason to reminisce, acknowledge our accomplishments and to CELEBRATE!! We are working on plans for a Diamond Celebration Evening in conjunction with our annual state convention, Saturday, October 20, 2012 to be held at Hilton Kansas City Airport, 8801 NW 112th Street, Kansas City, MO 64153.

Your past presidents as well as current & past board members are working hard to complete a history of the past 100 years in a beautiful hard bound coffee table book for your enjoyment. To reserve your copy all it takes is a donation of \$100 which will also include your name or unit’s name engraved on a permanent plaque to be housed at our state office. We want all units, councils, school districts and as many individual PTA members, current and past, to come together and support our efforts in making our Diamond Celebration a SUCCESS! So be a part of our history, but more importantly, become a part of our future. Donate to: Missouri PTA’s 100th Anniversary Fund, 2101 Burlington, Columbia, MO 65202-1945. Questions: email Kathy Nevans at kjnevens@aol.com.

For your convenience you can pay by Paypal at www.mopta.org.



Regional Directors

By Linda Wansing, VP & Director, Department of Field Services

Have you ever struggled with an answer to a PTA question? Have you ever been excited about an activity your PTA participated in and wanted to share it? Have you ever needed to just get a confirmation to what you think is the correct path to take on a particular situation in PTA?

Missouri PTA has a group of Regional Directors who are just the people you can turn to. A Regional Director is a person who serves YOUR UNIT! They are experienced PTA leaders who have the desire and knowledge to help you succeed in PTA!

Each unit is assigned a Regional Director who is available to assist you with your questions about your unit, to offer advice, and to listen to your awesome achievements. They are basically your “cheerleader” and “coach”. Feel free to contact your Regional Director anytime you have a question or want to share an accomplishment.

The current Regional Directors for Missouri PTA are as follows:

- Gateway Region: Sarah Day and Renee Benjamin
- Ozark Region: Konni Hall, Dawn Thompson, and Cathy Barton
- Pony Express Region: Rebecca Cahill, Rebecca Stone, Ann Bradley and Lori Prussman
- Three Trials Region: Sherri Haupt and Norvel Johnson

Do you have what it takes to be a Regional Director? MO PTA is always looking for individuals who would like to serve in a Regional Director position. If you have served as a unit or council officer, you probably already possess many of the skills needed to fulfill the job.

What are the job requirements?

Keeping in touch with assigned units via meetings, phone calls and e-mails

Working with other Regional Directors to provide training for units



The Regional Directors meet at the January Board of Managers meeting.

Attending 4 Board of Managers meetings a year
Representing Missouri PTA at our annual Convention
Assisting with Leadership Conference and Reflections Showcase

Missouri PTA will work with you to provide the needed resources and training. In addition, we understand that volunteering for Missouri PTA should not be a financial burden for you. Your expenses are covered during board meetings, Convention, Leadership Conference, and the Reflections Showcase. In addition, mileage is paid for travel related to your duties.

Interested? We encourage you to fill out a Talent Bank Interest sheet and submit it to the State PTA Office or contact our Vice President and Director of Field Services, Linda Wansing, at lwansing@mopta.org for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS to our Leaders Project Class of 2011!

The following individuals accepted the challenge and put in the time and effort to join the Missouri PTA Leaders Project Class of 2011. This class was recognized at the state convention during Saturday evening dinner.

Their dedication to PTA and desire to improve their leadership skills and broaden their knowledge will be of great value to them, their local PTA and to Missouri PTA.

- RaeLynn Anderson
- Cathy Crowley
- Sherri Haupt
- Teresa Holman
- Kim Horton
- Amy Koeningsfield
- Nikohl McKee
- Jeff Rogers
- Stephanie Wade
- Carmen Dawn Zirjacks

Will YOU accept the challenge and join the ranks of Certified PTA Leaders? We want to recognize your accomplishments and hope to see you as a part of the Leader's Project Class of 2012!

Information about the Missouri PTA Leaders Project is available at mopta.org.

THOMAS EDISON PTA'S MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE CAMPAIGN

By April Payne, Edison PTA President

Thomas Edison PTA in St. Joseph holds a Membership/School Supplies campaign as a membership incentive. The program begins on April 1st and runs through the last day of school. During the campaign, parents can pay \$25.00 to purchase school supplies for the all and to purchase a PTA membership. The \$25.00 fee is easily broken down: \$5.00 goes to Edison PTA to pay for a PTA membership, and the remaining \$20.00 is given to the classroom teacher to purchase items needed for the student to begin school.

As parents it is easy to spend hundreds of dollars trying to purchase items our children need to begin the school year. The program allows participants to send their child to school with only a backpack on the first day of school. Offering this service saves them time but also relieves them from extra expense. Some teachers have an abundant amount of certain supplies (scissors, construction paper, markers, and glue) so rather than purchase more of the same items, they use what they have and put the supplies money towards purchasing items they specifically need for their classroom, rather than from a canned list.

How does it work? On July 1st the PTA President and Treasurer make checks out to each teacher based on the number of students who have prepaid. A teacher that has students signed up for this program will receive a letter naming the students and a check for that amount (example... if a teacher has 3 students teacher will receive a check for \$60.00, and PTA would put 15.00 toward memberships for following year). April will begin our fourth year running this campaign and sales have increased each year.

MARATHON SCRAPBOOKING FUNDRAISER IDEA

Blue Springs South High School PTSA held a 12-hour scrapbooking day fundraiser in February. For \$30, each attendee received a large workspace, lunch and dinner, door prizes, demonstrations from scrapbook vendors and local merchants, and a chance to catch up on their scrapbooking uninterrupted.

SPRINGFIELD COUNCIL OF PTAS HELPS STUDENTS IN NEED

The Gertrude McBride Student Fund was established in 1921 and is named for a highly respected educator and PTA leader. The fund assists worthy high school and middle school students in need. The McBride fund is administered by an application process. In the past, these funds have been used to purchase caps/gowns, art supplies, eyeglasses, dress shoes to wear to a funeral, clothing, sports participation fees, athletic shoes, etc.

www.mopta.org

MISSOURI PTA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Awarding a Distinguished Service Award is a great way to recognize and honor an extraordinary person for their service and dedication to PTA. This 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. **Please see your winter tool kit for the application form or check at mopta.org in the "Members Only" section under "Tools".**

BLUE SPRINGS PTA COUNCIL HONORS SUPERINTENDENTS AND SUPPORT STAFF

The Blue Springs PTA Council honored their Superintendent, Dr. Paul Kinder, the assistant superintendents, and all the central office support staff with a luncheon in January.

DON'T FORGET!

New Officer information is due to the MOPTA office by March 31st.

Put Your Unit or Council in Contact!

Let everyone across the state know about the great things your unit or council is doing by submitting an article and/or photograph to Contact. Submissions can be sent to avap@mopta.org.

Missouri PTA recognizes Gavin Green who attends school in Ozark, MO for submitting the theme “Diversity Means” to the National PTA as part of their annual theme search. Congratulations and thank you, Gavin, for inspiring thousands of young artists to create works of art related to this theme.



PUBLIC RELATIONS TEMPLATES

We can help publicize your event! After all of your hard work to put an event together, a press release can be a daunting task. Missouri PTA can help; we have started putting press release templates online for your use. Choose your event from the categories, such as Founders Day, Reflections, and Membership Campaigns, and use the template to send to your local television station or newspaper a week or two prior to your event. Press releases can be found in the PTA Members Section under Tools.

REFLECTIONS EXHIBIT AT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National PTA® and the U.S. Department of Education hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, January 13 to celebrate the opening of an arts exhibit featuring award-winning artwork from dozens of students nationwide. The ceremony was held at the Department’s headquarters in Washington DC and marked the first time the U.S. Department of Education, National PTA and the National Endowment for the Arts all demonstrated national support for PTA’s Reflections Program.

MEET US IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD

Did you know MO PTA is on Facebook? Add us to your “fan” list!

INSTALLATION IDEAS ON WEBSITE

The “Installation Now” MO PTA publication is now available in the “Members Only” section of mopta.org. This publication is also available in hard-copy form from MO PTA.

Mark Your Calendar

March

Music in Our Schools Month

Women’s History Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
Postmark Deadline for Dues to qualify for State Awards
- 2 NEA’s Read Across America Day
- 5-9 USDA National School Breakfast Week
- 6-8 National PTA Legislative Conference
- 7 Principal’s Day
- 17 St. Patrick’s Day
- 18-24 National Poison Prevention Week
- 28 Missouri Child Advocacy Day
- 30 MO Legislative Town Hall – Gateway Region
Time and Location TBD
- 31 New 2012-2013 PTA Officers Form Due to State Office

April

Alcohol Awareness Month

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Keep America Beautiful Month

Mathematics Education Month

School Library Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
April Fool’s Day
Postmark Deadline for the following state awards:
 - Blue Seal Award
 - Council Membership Award
 - Gold Seal Award
 - Missouri Health/Wellness & Safety Education Award
 - 100% Faculty Award
 - Membership Awards
 - Outstanding Unit/Council Newsletter Award
 - Parent Involvement and Education Award
 - Student Safety Award
 - Students Membership Award
 - Council Achievement Award
 - Outstanding Membership Campaign Award
- 6 Passover Begins (Sundown)
- 8 Easter Sunday
- 10 School Librarian’s Day
- 8-14 National Library Week
- 12 National Drop Everything And Read Day
- 15-21 National Environmental Education Week
National Volunteer Week
- 22 Earth Day
- 25 Administrative Professionals Day
- 27 Arbor Day

May

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Healthy Vision Month

Hepatitis Awareness Month

Mental Health Month

National Bike Month

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

National Teen Pregnancy Awareness Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
Resolutions Deadline
- 4-5 **Missouri PTA Leadership Conference and 2012 Student Leadership Conference – Stoney Creek Inn, Columbia, MO**
- 5 Cinco De Mayo
- 6-11 NPTA Teacher Appreciation Week
- 7-13 Children’s Book Week
- 8 National Teacher Day
- 9 School Nurses Day
- 13 Mother’s Day
- 13-19 Food Allergy Awareness Week
National Women’s Health Week
- 19 Armed Forces Day
- 25 National Missing Children’s Day
- 28 Memorial Day - MO PTA Office Closed

How May We Help You?

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30th Annual Missouri Child Advocacy Day March 28th, 2012 Jefferson City



Missouri's annual Child Advocacy Day is an opportunity for parents, providers, and community members to speak up and ask lawmakers to make the health, safety, and education of Missouri's children a top priority for the state. Activities at Child Advocacy Day include:

- Workshops on current legislative and budget issues affecting children and families
- Meetings with legislators
- March to the Capitol and Rally
- Exhibits showcasing services for children and families
- Recognition of this year's Child Advocate Award winner(s)

Missouri Child Advocacy Day is sponsored by
MO Alliance for Children, Youth, and Families.

MISSOURI'S CHILDREN:

- 259 thousand live in poverty.
- 100 thousand lack health insurance.
- 318 thousand are alone after school.
- 12 thousand drop out of school.
- 5 thousand are abused & neglected.
- 310 thousand under 6 need child care.

**Let Missouri lawmakers know:
There are thousands of reasons to make children's issues a top priority for the state!**