

Contact



DECEMBER 2020

FROM MOPTA PRESIDENT

Count Your Blessings

BY CARLA WIESE



December is a very busy month at Missouri PTA, and I know it is for all of you as well. Aside from the hustle and bustle of preparing for winter break and the holiday season, we are busy with holiday parties, food drives, year-end financials, etc etc -- December is just busy!

Every December I find myself reflecting back on the triumphs and struggles of the year. What did I accomplish well? What did I fail miserably at? What do I want 2021 to look like for my family, community, and yes, Missouri PTA? We have accomplished a lot this year and we should celebrate! Here are just a few:

1. We have all learned how to continue the business of PTA virtually.
2. We have advocated for increased COVID funding at the federal level (and received the first round).
3. During the 2020 legislative session vouchers were not passed.
4. We welcomed new units to the PTA family.
5. We have learned how to think outside of the usual. We had to innovate and create new membership campaigns, fundraisers, etc.
6. Public education in Missouri is still going strong. There are AMAZING things happening in schools (in person and virtually) around the state.
7. Public Education for ALL children. Did you know around the world over half of school-aged children do not attend school? I believe that while there are things that we could improve on, the United States is a beacon of light in terms of ensuring the education of all our children.
8. PTA volunteers - I know the hours and commitment given freely for the benefit of our schools and children!
9. Teachers and staff who really are preparing the future for all of us.
10. Our partners in education - the work that is done collectively ensures the best education for the children of Missouri.
11. Each of you - I see commitment and hours you give freely for the benefit of our schools and children. THANK YOU!!

This year I find myself reflecting more on the blessings of the year, maybe more than ever before. My family is safe and healthy. We have spent more time together than we have in any other year. I have learned that I am a lot more resilient than I thought. I am thankful for PTA and the advocacy that takes place for all children. I am thankful for my PTA family and I am thankful for you!

As 2020 winds down and we look forward to the promises of 2021, I hope each of you are surrounded by those you love and your hearts are filled with the magic of the season. Take a few moments to count your blessings and know how valued you are. Come back in 2021 with a renewed purpose and commitment to every child... one voice!

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JC/DC Action Alert

Schools Need Resources Now!



#MOPTALoud #MOPTAAvocates

TO SIGN UP

Click here

TO GET THESE
ALERTS IN YOUR
INBOX!

It is imperative that Congress acts now to come to an agreement on a COVID relief package. Despite the record-breaking numbers for new COVID-19 cases each day, public schools continue to do the hard work to deliver education in virtual and in-person settings.

There are numerous critical needs that children, families, educators and public schools are facing which must be addressed in the next COVID relief package.

National PTA continues to ask Congress to address five key areas:

- 1) funding to reopen schools safely,**
- 2) increased support for Title I and IDEA,**
- 3) dedicated funding for remote learning,**
- 4) more resources for family engagement in education, and**
- 5) increased funding for child nutrition programs.**

Public schools need resources now!

Please contact your Members of Congress today and ask them to provide the critical funding needed to reopen schools.

[Click here to find contact information for your Representative](#)

National PTA presents Notes from the Backpack

a PTA Podcast by parents and for parents

Every Wednesday, National PTA releases a podcast on various topics that align with the PTA's mission, called *Notes from the Backpack*. *Notes from the Backpack* features real conversations with real parents, experts and educators who offer real-life advice, ideas and strategies parents can use to help their children succeed in and out of school.

Recent Topics



You may not be aware, but every school has LGBTQ youth and families. Is your PTA using inclusive language and offering affirming programs and activities? We sat down with two guests from the Human Rights Campaign Ellen Kahn, senior director of programs and partnerships, and Jodie Patterson, board chair of the HRC Foundation, to learn how to become better allies to the LGBTQ community.

[Click the image to learn more!](#)

Do you want to talk to your kids about race and racism, but not sure where to start? We spoke to Melissa Giraud and Andrew Grant-Thomas, founders of EmbraceRace, to learn how to approach these conversations with young children. Using their professional expertise, and their own parenting experiences, Melissa and Andrew also share advice on raising advocates for racial justice.

[Click the image to learn more.](#)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



LEADERSHIP SERIES #3 A NOMINATING COMMITTEE WITH 2020 VISION

DECEMBER 12th
9:30 AM

Online recordings are available to view for anyone who missed these amazing Leadership Series workshops. Visit mopta.org (or by clicking on any of the photos) Stay tuned for more in this series after the holidays!



[*click here*](#)



Online Informational Meetings

Missouri PTA / Matt Hendel



HERE
For Healthy Schools

LEADERSHIP SERIES
Special Session Wednesday Nov 4th at 7:00 pm

Back to School and Germ Prevention in the "New Normal" with Lysol.

Special Guests:
Joe Robino, Lysol
Dr. Vincent Hill, CDC
Dr. Jen Zubler, pediatrician



PTAing
\$afe and \$ecure

November 12th
10:00 am or
7:00 pm

Connecting Virtually with Families

SPOTLIGHT ON THREE PTAS WHO TEAMED UP FOR SUCCESS!

The 3 elementary PTAs in Hazelwood School District teamed up to bring virtual events to all of their students to maximize their reach. Check out how they pulled this off, their tips for a successful event and why they encourage other PTAs to try similar events and partnerships!

Details on how to organize a similar virtual event

- Reach out to people you know to lead
- Create a google form to track registration
- Buy supplies in bulk to keep costs low
- Include everything needed for the event so everyone has the same tools
- Send meeting link as close to the event as possible to avoid hackers
- Continuous promotion and reminders (helped us achieve nearly 100% participation of registered attendees)
- Many forms of communication is vital - Facebook, Instagram, twitter, emails, announcements during school, etc.

Each PTA hosts an entire event that is open and advertised to all the students at each of the 3 schools. That means each school has the chance to attend 3 events but each PTA only does the work for one of those events.

Tips for Success!

1. **Have a leader who is excited & knowledgeable (like the Cold Water art teacher Sara Cantrell)**
2. **Keep your audience and their skill level in mind -- this project used basic art skills and allowed the kids to get as creative as they wanted**
3. **Paid events or free of charge? *"We decided to provide our families with supplies for free because having as many families participate was more important than raising money. We wanted to encourage school spirit and boost morale."* - Donielle**
4. ***"Don't get discouraged when trying to plan events, just push through and if it touches just a few, then it's worth it!"* - Lacesha**
5. ***"Working together is such a simple idea, but it can be difficult if you don't already know other units or feel comfortable making cold calls." But you won't know what you can accomplish together if you never ask! -- Sarah***

**MORE ON THE
NEXT PAGE**

Connecting Virtually with Families

SPOTLIGHT ON THREE PTAS WHO
TEAMED UP FOR SUCCESS!

Check out these amazing PTA's Facebook
pages for more ideas:

[Walker Elementary PTA](#)

[Barrington Elementary PTA](#)

[Cold Water PTA](#)

Organizing Presidents

Donielle Grooms

**Cold Water
Elementary PTA**

Lacesha Jeffers

Barrington PTA

Sarah Schroeder

**Ruth Oliver Walker
Elementary PTA**



December 10 is Human Rights Day

This is in honor of the day that the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is a milestone document securing the inalienable rights which every human being is entitled to - regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

For more information, check out
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

FOR THIS MONTH, WE ASKED SOME PTA MEMBERS TO SHARE THEIR RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION: (CHECK OUT THEIR RESPONSES!)

WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR PTA JOURNEY, WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF YOUR STORY? WHAT IMPACTS YOU? HOW HAVE YOU WITNESSED LOVE AND COMPASSION AT WORK THROUGH PTA?

Jessica Broadway

Programs & Resource Development Chair



Someone once asked me, what's PTA? I said it would be a shorter list to say what it's not. So many people think we only do school hospitality and fundraisers. There is a gap in what people see and what we actually do. PTA exists in one of the most unique ways: to advocate and to serve; to enrich what is and to challenge the status quo. This unique way of being lets us serve a diverse group of families.

There is no wrong way to PTA.

PTA stepped in to support a family during the holidays when a parent unexpectedly lost their job, by hosting grief support during COVID-19. PTA advocated in the district to have access to buildings so we can continue to serve our families and support our teachers. This year has taught me many lessons. The important lesson is It quite literally in the same breath forced me to see all that I could lose while gifting me everything I wanted: community, family, and time. I got clarity in what is important and what is worth showing up for. Temporarily seeing what a world looked like without PTA, made me love what we do even more. PTA is a home you belong to if you see the world not for as it is, but as it could be.



Donna Petiford

MOPTA Past President 2011-13
Springfield Council of PTAs
Parliamentarian/Legislative Chair

As I continue my PTA journey, I try to find ways to be helpful and relevant to the PTA leadership in Springfield, MO. PTA continues to be an important association in our community and worthy of my volunteer efforts. Through the years the vision of PTA has remained the same, but the way we do PTA has not. We've always been an organization that has carried out our mission in terms of ever-changing trends and the demands of our times. This year has been exceptionally challenging. We must constantly bring new vision and new enthusiasm for our work.

As part of my for-pay job, I've had to learn, grow, and stay relevant this year, too. We also had to turn what were traditionally in-person events into all-virtual delivery of our services. This meant learning to use Zoom and creating experiences for our clients that are as **engaging** and valuable online as in-person. I was glad to use these new-found skills to also help with the Springfield Council of PTAs. We are looking forward to an all-virtual school board candidate's forum in March and an all-virtual Legislative Town Hall later this spring.

I was honored to present the new officer installation for Springfield Council of PTAs in a simple, meaningful, virtual way. Instead of being able to give flowers or a token gift, I changed my Zoom virtual background to a field of sunflowers and offered them some sunny quotes:

"If I were a flower, I would be a sunflower. To always follow the sun, turn my back to darkness, stand proud, tall, and straight even with my head full of seeds!"

As a group, we shared a virtual "thumbs up" for the past and current Council leadership.

This has and continues to be a crazy and interesting year. I am sad that many of our PTA traditions will have to be put on hold or even canceled, yet I am inspired by the creativity and the spirit of our current PTA leaders. I see them stepping up to the challenges and sharing ideas with each other on Facebook groups and Pinterest.

I encourage all of you to **"be like a sunflower; so that even on the darkest days you will stand tall and find the sunlight!"**





Susan Rupert

MOPTA Immediate Past President

When my teachers asked for volunteers, my hand always shot up in the air as fast as I could get it there. Being the class helper was what I lived for! Volunteerism runs deep in my veins and, even now at 55+, it is very hard for me to contain my enthusiasm. Volunteering in my children's school was probably the hook that reeled me into joining PTA. I was able to help my school

community while learning about the difference PTA made. This passion was something I was able to share with my own children and other Cameron students when we became a PTSA. It was awesome to watch our student members as they learned about PTA basics and advocacy. They were amazed by the power their voice had and looked for ways to make a difference.

Each year our student members collected new and gently loved books for their annual Book Bingo. This family fun night helped first grade families build home libraries and develop the love of reading. They were hands-on when it was time to be holiday shop personal shoppers or gift wrappers and door decorators for Teachers Appreciation Week. Student members also volunteered with the Relay for Life events held in our community. These are just some of the ways the Cameron PTSA students coordinated and participated in different events that gave them the opportunity to give back to their school and community through their volunteerism. Sharing the PTA way and the importance of volunteering in their school and community with our youth has been very rewarding. Seeing them continue this culture into adulthood and be a PTA parent – priceless!

Virginia Pennington

Regional Director - Three Trails



When I look back on my PTA journey over the past ten years, at the heart of my story is **advocacy**. Education has always been important to me, from the days when I was in school growing up. So as I had my own children and they began their educational journey, I knew I would be their strongest advocate for them to get the best education they could. For me, that advocacy began at the local level and as I got more involved with PTA and learned more about the **Mission of PTA**, I came to understand the importance of advocacy at the state and national level as well. I also learned that Advocacy in PTA encompasses more than just education as we work to make every child's potential a reality. I also learned about the power of numbers and how being part of an organization like PTA can have an impact through the united voice of its members. I am particularly impacted when I see the work of advocacy yield results that greatly impact the education and welfare of children. It is also impactful to me when I can share with someone else what PTA is really all about and see a lightbulb go on when they gain an understanding that PTA is about so much more than just Classroom Parties and Fundraisers. It truly is about making a difference for my children and ALL children.



Lori Prussman

MOPTA 2000-Present St. Joe Council 1997-Present
MSBA 2016-2020 St. Joe School Board 2014-2020
PTA member since 1993

This time of year one seems to always reflect on life's journey. As I reflect on my PTA journey I remember the questions that were once asked of us at back-to-school convocation in our district. What's your why and who's your who? My answer always comes back to the same thing... kids!

When I started this journey so many years ago, I began because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of kids at my daughter's school. It was not about making my daughter's personal school experience better. When making the choice between public or private school for our daughter (after much prayer) the answer was pretty clear; the kids in private school have people looking out for them, many of the kids attending public school don't. The 'why' was to make a difference in those kid's lives!

Having active parents in the public school setting really makes a difference to those kids who don't have a role model to look up to. The need is so great for some kids it can be overwhelming, but a little love goes a long way. PTA parents who volunteer in their child's schools are role models for these kids. They begin to trust adults and learn new behavior. They see a life outside of their own four walls of wherever they call home. When their life in those four walls is not ideal, they can get caught in a generational cycle of poverty but with influences from outside, it can be life-changing. Remember: behaviors are learned so we must help in teaching children by example to open those eyes to a new way of responding to situations.

PTA work is not all about fundraising. It's about advocating for each student where they are. That doesn't mean that we all should march to Jeff City and bang on doors (though we do need some people to do that, too!). It means that you get to know the kids in your school and get to know their stories. Help in ways that you can. Small things can be just as important as grand gestures. I have so many stories, but not the space to tell all of them from all the years I have spent in PTA service. I have marched to Jeff City, contacted my elected representatives, even served on my local school board (more PTA folks should do that). It's not about me or you, it's about kids and the brighter future that we want for all kids! Be the voice, be the face, be present and you will touch lives in so many ways that you will never fully understand how deeply it will touch lives.

So... What's your why and who's your who?



Wellness Wednesday

Missouri PTA is proud to feature #WellnessWednesday tips on facebook each week! Check out this tip from earlier this month and visit www.facebook.com/MissouriPTA for more tips each Wednesday!

Happy #WellnessWednesday!

Today's wellness topic is mental health and safety online. National PTA recently teamed up with TikTok to discuss Internet safety and educate parents on online safety.

Here are some quick tips when navigating online with your child:

Tip #1 Never give out personal info. This includes: real address, birthday, name, email address, or phone number. If possible, create an online nickname for your child or teen.

Tip #2 Use parental controls. Children and teens want their freedom, but it's important to have open conversations and teach them how you are keeping them safe.

To learn more, click the link or the photo below to read through TikTok Tips for Parents Guide.



Programs at Home Grantees Announced!

We are proud to announce the Missouri PTA recipients of the National PTA Programs at Home grants!

**Healthy Hydration Grantees,
Sponsored by Nestlé Waters
North America**

Eugene Field PTA - Springfield
Hawthorn Hill Elementary PTA - Lee's Summit

**PTA Connected Smart Talk
Conversation Grantees,
Sponsored by TikTok**

Park Hill Prairie Point Elementary PTA -
Kansas City

**STEM + Families Science Festival
Grantees, Sponsored by Bayer**

Barrington Elementary PTA - Florissant
John W. Luff Elementary PTA - Independence
Northwest Middle PTSA - Florissant

congrats!

Good Standing Deadline was December 1st

These items are now past due! Reach out to your MOPTA Board of Managers if you need help completing these items.

Send all of the following to Missouri State PTA:

1. Membership dues (submit regularly!)
2. Unit annual financial review (formerly referred to as Audit)
3. Fiscal Year-End Report (think: budget)
4. Copy of 990 submission to the IRS
5. Bylaws submitted and approved within the last 3 years
6. Current term Officer's list (even if things didn't change from previous term)

Answers to many questions may be found with your Missouri PTA Regional Director or found [here](#) or by emailing office1@mopta.org

remember: Good Standing is a requirement for all grants, awards, scholarships and Reflections programs.

December Unit/Council President's Monthly Checklist

- Send in dues to State
- Plan for next general meeting
- E-learning - Quick Guide to Budget Basics
- Share legislative information (look for JC/DC Action Alerts)
- Share *CONTACT* email with your members and consider submitting article for publication to FeliciaB@mopta.org!
- Share MOPTA social media posts
- Complete all items on "Good Standing Checklist" by December 1

NOW HIRING!

Part-time Administrative Assistant Position
in Columbia, MO area!
Email resume and cover letter to:
President@mopta.org

Check out MOPTA's
new Calendar
feature found on
the right side of
our homepage!



It can be integrated with
your existing Google
calendar and has loads of
amazing resources and
reminders to help
your unit be
successful.



Missouri
PTA[®]
everychild. onevoice.

**JOIN OUR
BOARD OF
MANAGERS**

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED TO FILL
OUT TALENT
BANKS FOR OPEN
POSITIONS!**



HERE

For Healthy Schools

**Dedicated to Helping Curb the
Spread of Illness in Classrooms**



**Germ prevention lesson plans from Lysol and NEA
available at www.lysol.com/healthy-classroom**