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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

FALL 2003

California State PTA Continues to Work to “Bring Back The Arts”

Three years ago, the California State PTA launched a campaign to bring the arts back into our schools and back into the lives of our children. All students in California public schools should have high-quality arts education programs from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.

The California State PTA remains committed to advocate for quality education. Bringing the arts back into our schools remains a top priority for one very simple reason: The arts help children do better in school and in life. Therefore, the arts are fundamentally linked to PTA’s commitment to all children.

Recent arts research from “Critical Links” points to the “strong relationships between learning in the arts and fundamental cognitive skills and capacities used in mastering other school subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.” According to the report, “Of great importance to schools struggling to close achievement gaps are the indications that for certain populations—including students from economically disadvantaged circumstances and students needing remedial instruction—learning in the arts may be uniquely able to boost learning and achievement.” Additionally, “skills important to social interaction—including empathy, collaboration and tolerance for others—are nurtured by the arts.”

Currently, the California State PTA has in place the major components of a statewide Public Education and Advocacy campaign that supports the arts even in times of budgetary crisis. The campaign includes:

- 1. Communication**—The California State PTA Web Site <www.capta.org>, the *SMARTS eNewsletter* and *PTA in California* help create an understanding of the positive impact of arts education at the PTA unit, council and district level. PTA members are encouraged to subscribe to the *ArtsEdMail Bulletin* <www.artsed411.org/newsevents/artsedmail.stm> for up to date news and analysis of arts and education information in California.
- 2. Leadership Training**—Information about **SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts** campaign was provided this summer at the PTA university leadership workshop. Follow-up workshops for unit, council and district leaders will take place throughout the year.
- 3. Advocacy: Grassroots**—District and statewide advocacy continue to be central to PTA’s efforts to *Bring Back the Arts*. This year, the California State PTA will enter Phase II of the Community Arts Education Project, bringing trainings to districts and school sites. This project, created by the California State PTA and the California Alliance for Arts Education

(CAAE), is designed to help parents, school districts and their school community work together to determine the current status of arts education in their local schools. It provides communities with accurate information about arts education and enables parents to advocate for quality arts programs in their schools.

At the state level, the PTA will continue to work in the legislative arena with the CAAE to generate support for the arts. A more detailed look at the major components of the PTA’s legislative proposals in the arts can be found at the Web Link:

<www.artsed411.org/involved/jtcommitteetestimony.stm>

If you would like to be an active member in the **SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts Campaign**, go to the PTA Web site at:

<www.capta.org/sections/tools/contactus.cfm>

or Email us at

<specialprojects@capta.org>.



105th Annual PTA State Convention

The annual California State PTA convention is scheduled for May 3-6, 2004 in Long Beach. Convention is a great opportunity for PTA leaders to meet and share ideas, improve leadership and parenting skills, increase their knowledge and work toward ensuring that California’s children thrive in our public school system. The 105th Annual Convention will feature over 70 conferences as well as pre-convention conferences at the Parent Symposium. General meetings will include interesting speakers, business of the organization, and recognition for Reflections Program, Membership and My PTA/PTSA award winners. Watch for registration books in the mail or visit the California State PTA Web site at <www.capta.org>. Start planning now to attend this convention!

Convention Commission

Scholarships and Grants Now Available

The California State PTA offers scholarships for credentialed teachers, school counselors, school nurses, PTA volunteers, and graduating high school seniors. In addition, grants are available to assist units to develop and implement cultural arts programs and to translate PTA materials into languages other than English.

Applications are available in the *Toolkit* updates sent to all unit presidents in the California State PTA Summer Service Mailing. Applications may also be downloaded from <www.capta.org>. Available scholarships and application due dates are listed below:

Due February 1, 2004

Graduating High School Senior Scholarships
Summer Session Scholarships for
Credentialed Teachers and Counselors

Due November 15, 2004

Continuing Education Scholarships for Credentialed
Classroom Teachers and Counselors
Continuing Education Scholarships for School Nurses
Continuing Education Scholarships for PTA Volunteers
Cultural Arts Grants for Units, Councils and PTA Districts
Parent Education Grants for Units, Councils and PTA Districts
Outreach Translation Grants for Units, Councils and PTA Districts

Tips for Promoting Available Scholarships

- Provide applications to all eligible teachers, counselors, school nurses, PTA volunteers, and graduating high school seniors who are members of your PTA.
- Ask your principal to inform school staff about available scholarships at faculty meetings and in faculty communications.
- Include information about scholarships in your PTA newsletter.

California State PTA Leadership Development Grants are available through your district PTA and must be used by new PTA leaders to attend the California State PTA Convention in May. For details, contact your district PTA president.

Scholarship and Grant Committee

How Can I Get the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences?

1. Set up a conference early in the school year. Let the teacher know that you are interested in your child's education and that you want to be kept informed of his progress. If English is your second language, you may need to make special arrangements, such as including in the conference someone who is bilingual.
2. If possible, also arrange to observe the teaching in your child's classroom. Afterward, talk with the teacher about what you saw and how it fits with your hopes for your child and your child's needs.
3. Before a conference, write out questions you want to ask and jot down what you want to tell the teacher. Be prepared to take notes during the conference and ask for an explanation if you don't understand something.
4. Talk with the teacher about your child's talents, hobbies, study habits and any special sensitivities he might have, such as concerns about weight or speech difficulties.
5. Tell the teacher if you think your child needs special help and about any special family situation or event that might affect your child's ability to learn. Mention such things as a new baby, an illness or a recent or an upcoming move.
6. Tell the teacher what kind of person you want your child to become and what values are important to you.
7. Ask the teacher for specific details about your child's work and progress. If your child has already received some grades, ask how your child is being evaluated.
8. Ask about specific things that you can do to help your child. At home, think about what the teacher has said and then follow up. If the teacher has told you that your child needs to improve in certain areas, check back in a few weeks to see how things are going.
9. Approach the teacher with a cooperative spirit. If you disagree with the teacher about an issue, don't argue in front of your child. Set up a meeting to talk only about that issue. Before that meeting, plan what you are going to say. Try to be positive and remain calm. Listen carefully. If the teacher's explanation doesn't satisfy you, and you do not think you can make progress by further discussion with the teachers, arrange to talk with the principal or even the school superintendent.
10. Many teachers say that they don't often receive information from parents about problems at home. Many parents say that they don't know what the school expects from their children—or from them. Sharing information is essential, and both teachers and parents are responsible for making it happen.

Parent Involvement Commission

*U.S. Department of Education Office of
Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs*

*Educational Partnerships and Family Involvement Unit
No Child Left Behind*



Our Children Newsletter Now in Spanish

Our Children Newsletter is now available in Spanish on the Members' Web site along with each issue of *Our Children* magazine in its entirety. This is just another way National PTA is working to reach out to Spanish-speaking individuals and to provide local PTAs with ready-to-use Spanish resources.

For Spanish PTA resources visit the "Parent Involvement" area of National PTA's Web site at <www.pta.org> and click on the link on the left-hand side for "Resources in Spanish" or enter the Web link <www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/spanish/index.asp>. PTA members have exclusive access to additional resources online. If you are a PTA member, use the Internet user name and password on the back of your 2003-2004 National PTA membership card to enter the "Members" area. There you'll find a wide variety of parenting resources in Spanish; see the "Resources & Publications" section.

Visit <www.pta.org/members/respub/OurChildren/ocnewsletter.asp> for tips on distributing the English and Spanish language versions of *Our Children Newsletter*.

Parent Involvement Commission



President's Message...

Diversity is our strength. I know that you, like me, want the best for your children, for all children.

It is vitally important for parents to participate in their children's lives. To ensure the quality of schools, teachers and principals need to recognize that parents must not only be involved in their children's lives at home, but also must be involved at all levels in the school. We cannot look at the school and home in isolation from one another.

It is not a lack of interest that keeps parents and families from becoming involved. Despite our good intentions, barriers can make even simple parent involvement activities difficult to carry out. How well do you understand the significant barriers that prevent families from becoming involved?

We talk about common courtesy, but courtesy is not common—it is culturally determined. Mannerisms, practices, and habits of one culture can easily embarrass or offend parents from different cultures.

Some parents are not sure they have anything of value to contribute. Some feel they have talents but don't know how to contribute. Some parents may feel intimidated by principals, teachers, and PTA leaders. Some may have had unpleasant experiences when they were in school, or they may have limited education. Parents who cannot read may not understand the newsletters and brochures that are sent home.

Parents may feel they are not welcome in the school. Many parents have met a principal, teacher, or school employee who sends the message, "Parents need not interfere." Many parents feel put-down, confused, and left out when school staff and PTA

leaders use jargon or expressions they do not understand. Highly specialized language promotes insider/outsider groups.

Many parents do not understand the system or how to be involved at their children's school. Many people from other countries have been taught to treat educators with the greatest respect. As a result, they may find it difficult, or impossible, to question or provide input about their children's education.

Many parents view PTA as an established clique that excludes others. This image of PTA can be a turn-off to new parents and to many groups from cultures that are different from the dominant norm in the school community.

It is hard for parents to find enough time to volunteer, attend meetings, and join decision-making committees when these activities are scheduled at times that interfere with work or other obligations, such as religious observances.

Diversity is our strength. I challenge you to overcome the barriers that restrict parent involvement at your schools. Think about the many backgrounds that exist in your school community: race, ethnicity, ability, family structure, religion, education, and socio-economic status. Then think about building successful programs to include parents and families. Remember the value of parent and family involvement. Open your mind to new ways of thinking about meaningful parent and family involvement. Explore new ways to effectively engage parents and families on behalf of children. Create a policy that will work in your school community.

Diversity is our strength. Together, parents, families, teachers, and principals can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Carla Niño, California State PTA President

New Resources Help Members Become Valuable Source for Schools and Communities

National PTA provides members with support and guidance as they serve the nation's children. Through brochures, print and electronic newsletters, special mailings to local PTAs, *Our Children* magazine, and the PTA public and Members' Web sites, you have access to timely and important information on issues affecting children and youth.

Recently, we introduced three resources that are, as always, backed up by a considerable amount of knowledge and expertise. Are you taking advantage of these materials? Following are a brief overview of each, as well as suggestions for using them.

- After-school programs serve a vital need in every community by helping to keep children safe, promoting academic achievement, and helping children develop social skills. National PTA developed a *Local PTA Planning Guide*, in partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, that provides event ideas; downloadable postcards, flyers, and posters; sample press materials; talking points; and a public service announcement. For after-school week and beyond, access your PTA planning guide at www.pta.org/after-schoolcare.
- Through a grant from the University of Arizona, National PTA developed a *Talking with Kids About HIV/AIDS*

- brochure that advises parents on how to discuss HIV/AIDS with their children. Available in both English and Spanish on the public site at www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety, the brochure is perfect for handing out at meetings and community events, and excerpting for PTA/school newsletters and Web sites. The brochure and other training materials to help PTA leaders present a workshop are available on the Members' Web site in the Planning Your Year, Program & Event Planning section along with other PTA programs.
- You know how important parent-teacher partnerships are to your child's success. National PTA, with the National Education Association, has developed a series of guides (some of which are also available in Spanish) to help parents and teachers work together. Order these guides, build your parent involvement library, distribute the guides to all school staff and parents, use excerpts in your PTA/school newsletter or on your Web site, and pass them out at community events. National PTA's Customer Service Department is standing by to help you at (800) 307-4PTA (4782).

Linda Hodge, National PTA President



PTA vs. PT Others

PTA versus PT Others, a recurring theme. Usual comparisons discuss insurance, nonprofit status, national structure of support and leadership training opportunities. Lately, PTA leaders have been requesting additional talking points specifically listing ways PTA, not PT Others, benefit “my child” in “his/her classroom” at “his/her school.”

Supporting students, parents and school site needs at local levels through fund raising efforts appears to be the primary focus of PT Others. PTA addresses “bigger picture” issues by encompassing local, regional, statewide and national needs of all children and by offering support through child and parent-centered programs and advocacy efforts.

How does PTA make a difference for my child in his/her classroom at their school? A review of PTA’s position statements on child-related legislation, local issues and resolutions passed at the state PTA convention might reveal some interesting answers:

1. In your child’s school, K-3 classrooms have a cap of 20 pupils per class. PTA is a strong proponent of smaller class sizes for optimum learning. Advocacy efforts played an important role in passing Class Size Reduction legislation that provided program funding for reducing class sizes.
2. In your child’s school, classroom and school facility renovations and construction are underway. Many local school bond measures to provide funding for school repairs and maintenance have been passed with support from local PTA volunteers. Statewide PTA efforts helped pass Proposition 47, a state bond measure to provide continued funding for school facility modernization and construction plans.
3. In your child’s school, music, visual and performing arts are part of the curriculum. PTA is a strong advocate of the arts in education and advocacy efforts for inclusiveness of the arts in the curriculum are ongoing.
4. In your child’s school, healthier snacks and lunches are offered. PTA efforts nationwide to support healthier nutrition and physical fitness programs for children at school have helped to effect positive changes.

National PTA advises leaders to avoid making comparisons when asked to discuss PTA vs. PT Others; just promote PTA. A review of advocacy issues PTA supports and opposes offers a plethora of interesting information and material to use to promote PTA in your child’s school.

Leadership Services Commission

Meet Our Historian

My name is Kim Dickenson. I am a senior in a large high school with an enrollment of almost 3,500 students. I am very involved in the marching band at my high school. I am also the California State PTA Historian.

I want to impress upon you how important it is to keep track of all of the activities and things that go on in your units, councils, and districts. PTAs/PTSAs do many things at their sites. Other units, councils, and districts would love to know about them.

On every campus in California, when you enter the office, you are greeted and asked to please sign in and state your purpose. This is one resource units may use to tally volunteer hours. These hours can be anything from parents helping out in classrooms to the many hours you volunteered at the annual carnival.

At the council level, your historian hours are usually taken from a sign-in sheet that is passed at each meeting. These are any and all hours that you, as an individual, have volunteered working for the council. This includes all of those long hours you spent at the school district office waiting for the judges to show up to judge all of the Reflections Program entries, as well as all of the long hours you spend collating all of the artwork and paperwork. Also, all of the time you spent on your HSA function, planning and the actual activity is time you may count.

At the PTA district level, it gets a bit more complex, but not much. Your president and all of the new unit organization team can count all of the endless hours on the road, driving to schools, meeting attendance, telephone time doing PTA business, running PTA errands, etc.

The California State PTA would also love for you to tell us what creative things you have done at your PTA unit, council or district. The “Unit Annual Report Form” (page 447 of the *California State PTA Toolkit*) has space provided for you to tell us all about your amazing students and projects. If you have any questions, you can Email me at <historian@capta.org>.



Membership Dues

Dues collected by PTA units are generally tax deductible. The services that a PTA provides to members are intangible and do not provide any direct benefit to specific members or groups of members. Such intangible services include leadership and legislation. These services are generally a benefit to the entire community, regardless of whether or not all members of the community become members of the PTA.

There are of course exceptions. Specifically, if a significant portion of the PTA unit’s programs were for lobbying or political action committee services, there would be not only an issue of tax deductibility, but also of the unit’s adherence to California State PTA guidelines.

Also, if a significant product is received or if the member receives benefits not available to the community at large, the PTA dues would then not be deductible.

PTA dues are generally so small that the question of whether the dues are 100% deductible would be a rare one. It is however, always the taxpayers responsibility to report income and deductions appropriately. PTA units are not in the business of dispensing tax advice. If a unit believes that it has an issue regarding deductibility of its dues, it should consult directly with a tax person who can address their specific circumstances.

*Resource: Cynthia Sanchez, CPA
Finance Commission*



Fund Raising— Why or Why Not

Recently, I ran across an article from Thirty-Third District PTA's "Briefs for Busy Leaders" that was written in October 1984, and as I read it I realized the information it contained is just as relevant today as it was then.

Me and My Shadow

Has fund raising become such an important part of your PTA that it overshadows everything else? Stop and think about it. Where on your PTA membership card or in your PTA bylaws does it state that "PTA shall be the fund raiser for the school?"

Every organization needs funds to operate. That's a fact of life. However, if fund raising has become the "star of your PTA show," overshadowing its goals, perhaps you need a new "performance." Has your PTA board met and evaluated your PTA objectives for the year? Are you focusing on programs or projects for students, or do you spend so much time and energy on fund raising that there's little time for anything else?

Of course, you are concerned that the students in your school not do without essential material things. And you are to be commended for such an attitude. Yet, with today's budget crunches in local school districts, it's easy to fall into the routine of raising money to buy equipment at the request of well-intentioned school personnel. Do remember, no matter what is suggested, the PTA board has the power to reject and to reflect on your PTA's established priorities.

Before your association approves a large-scale financial undertaking, have you investigated the costs in terms of people power, time, energy or initial investment? Have you considered the possible liability if contract promises are not kept?

The principal and the PTA should work as partners in setting goals that will directly affect students, preparing them to be responsible citizens. Instead of focusing exclusively on fund raising, why not help to bring important information programs on vital issues to students and parents alike?

Today's issues are many: substance abuse, child molestation, traffic safety, parenting, teaching human values, etc. The resources for these subjects are everywhere. Taking advantage of them is truly being responsive to the educational need of helping families learn and grow together. That's a basic objective of PTA!

Isn't it amazing that 19 years ago PTA faced the same challenges and concerns that we share today! *National PTA's Annual Resources*, Money Matters, page 14, says, "PTAs should use the 3-to-1 rule. For every fund raising activity, there should be a least three non-fundraising projects aimed at helping parents or children or advocating for school improvements."

Michel Opher, Treasurer

The Value of Membership

Does your membership campaign last only two or three weeks? Is your membership campaign an isolated event at the beginning of each school year? Do you invite your members to join and then abandon them once you receive their money? Membership is an ongoing, creative attitude that should encourage continuing enrollment. How do you value your membership?

Members should be, and are, the primary asset of our organization. How do we keep them involved? Are you delivering the message about their importance to the organization? We can not tell people how much or even whether they'll value being a member. However, we can deliver a powerful message about PTA that will enable them to weigh the benefits and decide if PTA has enough value for them to commit not only their dues but their time. How do we deliver this message to our members?

- 1. Let your members know at least three recent accomplishments of your PTA.** By providing information about your PTA's accomplishments, you will appeal to a prospective member that is mission-driven and wants to see results that have significant impact on children and communities. You will also appeal to individuals on an emotional level, those who feel passionate about what they give their time to and want to make a difference through their personal involvement.
- 2. Develop a list of state and national accomplishments.** Explain the accomplishments of National and California State PTA. Explain the differences between PTA and other parent groups. Talk about parent involvement and advocacy for all children.
- 3. Describe your PTA's current goals and expected outcome for the upcoming school year and beyond.** Explain the need for PTA programs. Let your new and current members know they can contribute to the goals that have been established. Do you continue to expand your programs? Are you asking your members for input? Explain how your PTA's priorities were established. Involve your members in the decision-making process. Involvement brings forth new ideas and shapes the future of PTA.
- 4. Highlight the value of being a member of your PTA!** When talking to your members include both the tangible and intangible benefits of being a member. Tangible benefits can include parenting materials/resources, leadership training, programs and activities. Intangible benefits can include support the mission and purposes of PTA, and becoming part of a network of local, state, and national advocates for all children.

Now, you have the members. What are you going to do with them? A large membership does not necessarily mean large attendance at meetings. However, if your members are informed, involved and are partners in planning the programs/projects, increased attendance at meetings will follow.

Members' success is the purpose of our existence. We are responsible for the development and delivery of programs and services that are timely and responsive to the changing needs of our members.

Membership means marketing, selling, and producing. Don't stop your membership enrollment efforts in the fall. Keep marketing, selling and producing meaningful PTA programs/projects all year long. As they say, build it, and they will come! Your unit will grow and prosper. Membership is the future of your unit; it is your volunteers, your idea-makers, and your future leaders.

*Sources: Beyond Membership Marketing
Patricia A. Siegel, James S. Delicia. 1999.
The Value of Membership. National PTA.
Membership Committee*



Excellent Web Sites and Resources for Exploration on Bullying

<www.Sopriswest.com>

Source for the “Bully-Proofing Your School” and many other educational publications and resources.

<www.tolerance.org>

Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. It has a kid’s section, a teen page with advice on how to start a “Mix it Up Dialogue” at school and resources for educators and parents.

<www.adl.org/prejudice/default.asp>

Barnes and Noble and the Anti-Defamation League joined forces to create “Close the Book on Hate” after the Columbine High School tragedy.

<www.pbs.org/noit>

“Not in Our Town” is a PBS film and web site that tells the story of how thousands of Billings, Montana, residents stood up to the bullies and declared their town hate-free.

<www.projectchange.org>

Project Change, sponsored by Levi Strauss, is an online network supporting a variety of anti-racism groups. Some menu items are Symbols of Hate and Oppression, AntiRacism.Net, and Publications.

<www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html>

The Web site for the University of Colorado Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

<www.cfchildren.org>

This is the Web site for the Second Step and “Steps to Respect” programs.

Community Concerns Commission

California High School Exit Exam Resources in Spanish

In order to assist schools and districts in notifying Spanish speaking parents and guardians about the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), the California Department of Education has posted a number of resources in Spanish. These resources include facts about the California High School Exit Exam, sample student and parent reports, newsletter inserts, and information about special education accommodations and modifications. The most recent publication is a parent brochure regarding the postponement of the California High School Exit Exam.

<www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee/versions/spanish/spanish.html>

Parent Involvement Commission

EdSource Video Explains California School Reforms

Parents who are confused or simply want more information about California’s new standards-based reforms can benefit from a new 15-minute video from EdSource. The video offers an up-to-date overview explaining the basics and recognizes the importance of maintaining high expectations for students from all backgrounds.

Parent leaders preparing parent education programs will find the video, California’s Commitment: Raising Academic Standards for All Students, the perfect tool for explaining California’s standards-based reforms to parents. Available in English and Spanish, the video can help clarify the purpose behind these reforms, the related state testing and accountability programs, and how these new initiatives will affect students and schools.

EdSource also offers accompanying moderator guides in English and Spanish that parent leaders can use to help begin conversations with parents after they’ve viewed the video.

In developing the video, EdSource convened focus groups to discover what parents understood about standards-based reform, with special attention to the needs of Spanish-speaking parents. PTA, a founder of EdSource in 1977 and an on-going EdSource sponsor, was instrumental in setting up these focus groups.

Thanks to foundation funding from Washington Mutual and the Stuart Foundation, all PTA districts were given English and Spanish copies of this video. Thanks to the Pacific Life Foundation, preparations are being made to send English and Spanish videos to all council presidents as well.

A complete packet in either English or Spanish costs \$16 and includes the video, moderator guides, and four short publications in a question-and-answer format. Additional tapes with the accompanying publications in either language are \$9. To order, call EdSource at 650-857-9604 or go online at: <www.edsource.org>. Or contact your PTA district or council president to inquire about borrowing the videos.



27th Annual EdSource Forum

*Overhauling School Funding in California:
The Push for Greater Adequacy, Equity &
Accountability*

Across California, conversations about mobilizing political will for a model of school funding based upon “adequacy” have started to take place among opinion leaders, policymakers, educators, and advocacy groups. This Forum will focus on the need to radically restructure California’s school funding formulas and assumptions. Don’t miss this important and timely event!

Thursday, March 18, 2004

Manhattan Beach Marriott, Southern California

Friday, March 19, 2004

San Ramon Marriott, Northern California

\$60 for PTA members

Register by February 3 and pay just \$50!

Call the EdSource office at 650-857-9604 or visit EdSource’s Web site at <www.edsource.org> for more information on the program and speakers.

Junk Food Out, Profits In At San Francisco Middle School

At a time when lawsuits and controversy are shaking up the junk food industry, a San Francisco middle school has replaced unhealthy menu items with wholesome choices—and in the process has become one of the most profitable middle school cafeterias in the San Francisco Unified School District. Aptos Middle School's "a la carte" cafe eliminated junk food and replaced it with a healthy menu beginning in January 2003.

During the last full month of food sales before the transformation, November 2002, the school's food service lost nearly \$1,000. Within weeks after soda, chips, and entrees like mega-colossal burgers (58% calories from fat), chicken wings (61%) and hot links (77%) were removed, revenues were up. By March, the program had become profitable, and it finished the year more than \$6,000 in the black.

After students were surveyed about favorite choices, the Aptos Café added such popular items as sushi, deli sandwiches, baked chicken with rice, freshly made soup, salads and fruit desserts. All drinks with added sugar were eliminated, including those in vending machines, and replaced with water, 100% fruit juice and milk.

The fear that selling junk food is the only way to make money has deterred school food operations nationwide from getting rid of unhealthy food, despite widespread parent concerns about junk food available to their kids. Children's health advocates, alarmed about soaring childhood obesity and related deadly health problems, are pitted against school activities directors raising money by selling soda and candy.

Yet not only has converting to healthy food increased Aptos' profits, but the profits also compare favorably with those at far larger schools. Aptos, with 860 students, generated more than \$2,000 in May, while the district's largest middle school, A.P. Giannini—with 50% more students, or 1,280—made less than \$90 for the month. Giannini still sells soda and junk food.

At Aptos, getting rid of junk food also significantly improved student behavior after lunch and reduced litter, teachers and administration report. Many parents who previously insisted on packing their kids' lunches are relieved of that task, feeling confident their children's lunch money will be spent on a healthy meal.

At Aptos, a committee of parents and faculty overhauled the menu by scrutinizing every item. The committee relied heavily on Email and "cyber-meetings."

"We tried to make sure that every choice we offered contained nutrients, not just empty calories," explained Dana Woldow, chair of the Aptos PTSA Student Nutrition Committee, which worked with the school district's Student Nutrition Services (SNS) Department to develop the new food program.

"It is not enough that our food be less bad for the kids," Woldow added. "We want the food to be good for them. Our turkey and roast beef sandwiches are made with lots of fresh lettuce and tomato. The homemade soups are loaded with vegetables. All the juices are 100% fruit juice, not 10% juice with added sweeteners. No matter what kids buy for lunch, they are getting something healthy."

Now the model that brought nutritional and financial success to Aptos is poised to spread district wide. In May, a school district nutrition and physical activity committee recommended, among other things, that the Aptos model be rolled out to every middle and high school by Fall 2003.

"We must move forward with the healthier choices at all schools," says Ed Wilkins, the SNS supervisor who worked with Aptos to develop the program. "It's the right thing to do, for the children."

Second District PTA

National PTA Convention Resolutions

The authority for National PTA's legislative activities in the third PTA Purpose: "To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

Since its inception in 1897, National PTA has recognized that an organization dedicated to the welfare of children and youth must concern itself with the laws that affect children or those that may be needed to protect them. For information on National PTA's legislative activities, see National PTA's Annual Resources for PTAs, Legislative/Advocacy section. Position statements, legislative policy statements, specific items and resolutions are used to establish the National PTA Legislative Program.

National PTA convention resolutions seek to address problems, situations, or concerns that require nationwide action for solution. Delegates at the National PTA convention debate and vote on resolutions submitted by local, council, district, state PTAs, or by the National PTA Board of Directors.

Resolutions adopted by the convention delegates must be considered by the board of directors, and only those ratified by the board constitute official position of National PTA (as required by the articles of incorporation) unless or until they are amended or rescinded by National PTA's Board of Directors.

Existing resolutions may be reactivated by the convention body. Substitute resolutions may be considered to update a position or even secure an opposing position. If the substitute resolution is adopted by the convention and ratified by the board of directors, the existing resolution is rescinded and the substitute becomes the position of National PTA.

All resolutions adopted by convention delegates and ratified by National PTA's Board of Directors since 1957 are accessible on National PTA intranet by members of the California State PTA Board of Managers. Further information about resolutions can be obtained by contacting National PTA's customer service desk at (202) 289-6790 or by Email at info@pta.org.

Resolutions Committee

Circulate and Celebrate

Don't let negative talk such as gossip or complaints infect your organization. Circulate and celebrate positive stories and facts. Make it a point everyday to share a story about a great board member, a terrific idea, or someone's excellent efforts in your organization or on staff. Turn negative into positive by relating how well a member handled a difficult situation.

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**If you are no longer a PTA president,
 please forward this and all mailings
 immediately to your successor.**

Articles appearing in this newsletter may be
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The mission of the California State PTA is to repre-
 sent our members and to empower and support
 them with skills in advocacy, leadership and commu-
 nication to positively impact the lives of all children.
Adopted March 1999.

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