

Celebrating PTA's History of Advocacy for Children

The roots of PTA advocacy lie in the early “mother-child study groups” that began to organize in the late 1800s. “The necessity for securing adequate legislation was apparent from the start,” noted PTA historian M. H. Strong. In every local association, the ‘Parent-Teacher’ program was based on child study to promote good child rearing skills and on cooperating with educators to help the schools and the children.

Early PTA advocacy

- Laws governing sales of liquor and tobacco products to minors
- Prevent liquor licenses from being issued for premises near schools and playgrounds
- Child Labor Amendment
- ‘Free Textbooks’ bill
- State aid for dependent children
- Oppose the “sale of salacious literature to our juveniles”

While studying the best way to care for their own children, they found that many children had no such care available. “They saw sickly children, insufficiently clad children, hungry children. And something had to be done about it.”

Information sharing, cooperating with schools in a variety of ways, influencing public attitudes, and action on legislation were typical components of the early parent-

teacher associations. Then known as the California Congress of Mothers, the organization was instrumental in promoting and securing passage of many important laws. Notable accomplishments in the early 1900s include legislation to provide kindergarten in the public schools, finally enacted in 1913; and a landmark Birth Registration law in 1915 that provided for the complete and accurate registration of all births within 36 hours and omission of the words ‘legitimate or illegitimate’ from birth certificates.

School cafeterias, an outgrowth of the PTA “Penny Kitchens” that began in 1910, was among the most significant PTA accomplishments. State law at the time did not allow schools to establish and maintain cafeterias with public money, so PTA began an effort to change the law. Finally enacted in 1925, the Cafeteria bill authorized local school boards to install cafeterias in the schools and provide meals at cost.

Much of PTA’s activity on legislation has been in support of improved school services and funding. In 1920, PTA proposed increased support of elementary schools, consolidation of rural schools, and an emphasis on the teaching of

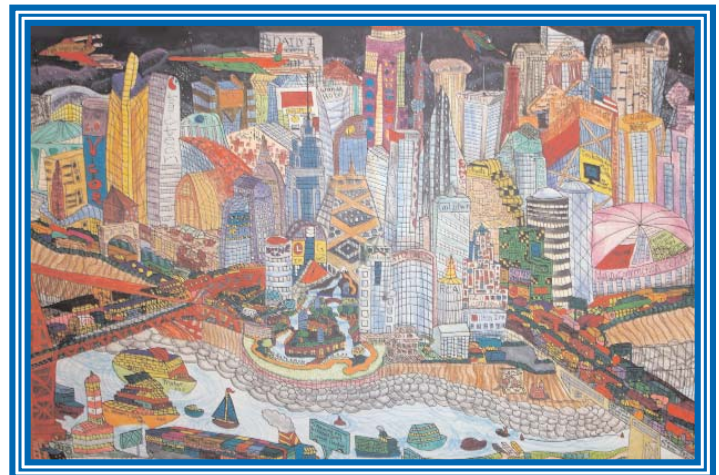
music, art and physical education. And PTA has opposed many moves to decrease school funding. When a cut in state appropriations was proposed in 1923, the state organization called on its units to protest and the result was “an avalanche of communications” to legislators.

In 1933, the State Legislature sought to place on the ballot a constitutional amendment to repeal the section of the State Constitution that guarantees the maintenance of public schools by giving them first call on public funds. The ensuing battle pitted supporters of public education against the tax cut advocates who claimed that educators were concerned for their own selfish interests. But the PTA had no paid representative and could testify that “our interest was solely in the welfare of the children.” Legislators were flooded with letters and telegrams from PTA members vigorously protesting the repeal of constitutional guarantees of

Continued on page 7

Reflections Program Finalist 2006-2007

Intermediate Division: Grades 3-5



Christopher Theung

Grade 4, Longley Way Elementary PTA, 1st District
I love Los Angeles

A Message from Pam Brady, President

Governor Calls for the *Year of Education* PTA Believes *Every Year is an Education Priority!*



For almost 111 years, PTA members have raised their voices and advocated for education to be a priority in California. Since the 1980s, California has spent less per student than the national average — at times by more than \$1,000 per child.

Year after year, PTA members have fought to ensure that the legislature understands that investing in children will benefit our local communities and the state in the future. Paying for education costs far less than paying for a multitude of government-subsidized social programs in the future. In fact, it is estimated that it costs as much as twenty-fold to rehabilitate a person rather than to educate a child in the first place. Just doing the math should be enough evidence for our legislators. But each budget year the legislature starts the old argument about what money to add and cut from the educational budget. Or they pit one program against another, as if we don't realize that a healthy, safe and well-fed child will do better in school.

The better question for our legislature to ask is, "How much does it really take to educate a child in California?" — and then find a way to fund it. If it can't happen in one year then at the very least they need to develop a process to get us there. California has already defined a quality education as demonstrated in the adoption of our rigorous academic standards. Our academic standards far exceed any other state and even the national standards. However, PTA knows that these standards are not enough. We expect our children to be educated in a way that develops them into critical thinkers. We expect an education should include the arts, sciences, literature, technology, physical well-being, and exposure to career opportunities. We expect this because we know that this is the kind of education we should expect from a state that is ranked as the eighth largest economy in the world. We expect this kind of education for our children because we know it is the only way to create adults who will have the abilities and skills to solve the complex problems of the future.

The challenge of creating a first-class education in California lies partly in the disconnected message between what our elected officials believe Californians are willing to fund and what our children need to ensure they reach the expected educational outcomes. We need to articulate our message so that each person understands the short- and long-term consequences of underfunded, unfocused plans. We really don't have a lot of time to keep changing the direction of education without losing our children in the process. We can't afford as a state or a nation to lose generations of children. We should advocate for staying the course when we know what works in education.

The better question for our legislature to ask is, "How much does it really take to educate a child in California?" — and then find a way to fund it.

With 29 PTA districts in California and almost 4,000 units giving us one-million volunteer members, we have a huge opportunity and the power to make a difference. We know what needs to be done. We need to join together and speak with one voice and not be willing to take the road of acceptance so quickly. This year, the Governor's "Year of Education Reform," I challenge each of you to do more than you have ever done before. Reach out into your communities and raise your voices and accept no excuses from your legislators. At the time of this writing (November), we are already hearing that there is not enough money. This year, we cannot allow the conversation to turn to what we don't have; we need to speak to what we know we need to give every child a quality education.

We must build the will and lead the way. California used to be the educational leader of the nation; we can be that way again! It will take each of us working together, reminding our communities and legislature about the real cost of not educating our children. Let's advocate to our legislators to solve the problem and be part of the solution for *everychild.onevoice*.

Pam Brady, President

Craig Scott, “A Story of Inspiration, Courage, and Kindness” Third General Meeting – May 2nd – 4:00 PM-6:30 PM



Craig is the younger brother of Rachel Scott, a remarkable young lady who believed her life would have an impact on the world with her acts of kindness and compassion. Craig Scott was in the library the day of the Columbine tragedy, where he witnessed 10 of his schoolmates killed, including two of his close friends. Since then, he has gone on to speak out and educate children and adults alike with his inspiring and life-changing story. Craig has shared his story with people all across the country, appeared on shows such as *Dateline*, *Oprah*, *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *CNN*, and actively participated in the School Safety Summit with President George W. Bush in the fall of 2006. He has been featured in *Teen* magazine as well as in numerous newspaper articles around the nation. Rachel’s Challenge is a school assembly and training program created following the 1999 shooting tragedy at Columbine High School.

Erin Gruwell, *Educator and Catalyst for Social Change* Sixth General Meeting – May 4th – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM



Erin’s story tracks an idealistic young woman who **actually believed** in her high-school English students, most of whom had been written off by the education system. Aside from Erin, nobody thought these “troubled” kids would even graduate from high school. But Erin encouraged them to become much more. She forced them to question long-held racial stereotypes, address their deepest struggles, and — ultimately — re-chart their futures. With Erin’s support, they chose to forego teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol, and violence to become friends, storytellers, published writers, college students, and hopeful young adults. Their story earned Erin and her students dozens of awards, including the Spirit of Anne Frank Award. In January 2007, Paramount Pictures released the feature film *Freedom Writers* to national acclaim, starring two-time Oscar winner Hilary Swank as Erin.

Erin has been credited with giving her students a “second chance,” but it was perhaps she who changed the most during her tenure as a high school English teacher. Today, her impact as a “teacher” extends well beyond the classroom. She serves as president of the Freedom Writers Foundation, a non-profit organization that impacts communities by decreasing high school drop out rates through the replication and enhancement of the Freedom Writers Method.

The Principal and the PTA President: Partners Working Together

The principal and the PTA president represent two important groups in the school: staff and parents.

For a successful year:

- Meet regularly at agreed-upon times. Discuss issues. Review plans for events. Keep each other informed.
- Work out problems or misunderstandings promptly in a direct and honest way – privately. Keep an open mind. Listen to each other.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about the school when working with parents and community.
- Develop a win-win attitude. Celebrate each other’s accomplishments.

A working partnership between the principal and the PTA, dedicated to the well-being of all children and youth, can strengthen family life and improve education for all children.

Excerpted from *California State PTA Toolkit*, “Partners in Education: The Site Administrator and PTA”

Leadership Services Commission

Arts Advocacy CAAE – PTA STRATEGIC ALLIANCE A TEMPLATE FOR LOCAL ADVOCACY

The coming year offers California's arts education advocates an important opportunity to build upon the successful passage of ongoing state funding for arts education (\$109.7 million) for the second successive year. This will be the first year when we can tell the story of the impact this important investment is having on the lives of California's students. Building on the PTA's past success in advocating for this funding in 2006, the California Alliance for Arts Education is working with California State PTA on a statewide strategic advocacy effort designed to send three clear messages to elected officials:

- The public strongly supports arts education as an essential component of quality education that all children deserve;
- The ongoing investment in arts education is making a difference in the lives of children and must continue in the years to come; and
- Local evidence from the schools and districts demonstrate the difference that arts education is making in preparing our children to meet the challenges of the future.

This advocacy effort will develop leadership skills of parent advocates and educate legislators and staff members about the importance of arts education. The statewide effort will include:

- Identification and coordination of PTA representatives to contact the offices of each of the state's 120 senate and assembly representatives
- Development of leadership/communication skills in those representatives that will enable them to deliver an effective strategic message
- Creating strategic 'messaging' documents that will articulate the position of CAAE/PTA in support of arts education
- Gathering local data about arts education related to the new funding, to ensure that legislators are provided with specific information related to their district's outcomes
- Assessment of impact of this effort in order to build an ongoing network of relationships between legislators and local parent advocates.

2008 TIMELINE

January – Training at the California State PTA Board of Managers meeting. This will include strategies on how to make an appointment with a member's office, how to prepare for the meeting, talking points, 'leave behind' documents, and appropriate follow-up procedures.

January-March – PTA representatives meet locally with elected officials or staff to discuss arts education funding and to extend invitation to visit school sites for arts education month in March.

March – Arts Education Month – visits to school sites by elected officials and staff.

May – Follow-up contact with district legislative offices to express support for arts education in state budget; assessment/evaluation to determine effectiveness of advocacy effort.

If you would like to participate, please contact communications@capta.org. Please send us your name, phone number, PTA information, and address with zip code.

California State PTA Resolutions – Call to Action

Five resolutions were adopted by delegates at the May 2007 California State PTA Convention. Adopted resolutions establish PTA policy and provide direction in taking action on issues of concern to PTA. PTA members from throughout the state, through the votes of their representatives at convention on resolutions and other PTA business, help to determine PTA's priorities.

Resolutions may originate from local unit, council or district PTAs, inter-district committees, or the California State PTA Board of Managers.

We urge unit, council and district PTAs to participate in the PTA actions called for in the resolved sections of the resolutions (see next page). We'd like to hear about your efforts on any of the issues addressed in these resolutions.

Make PTA's voice heard through your action on PTA's resolutions! For more information, contact the California State PTA resolutions chairman at resolutions@capta.org.

*(Resolutions for 2008
are already being
prepared; the due date
for final submittal is
January 15.)*

2007 California State PTA Resolutions – Call to Action

Printed are the resolved portions (action steps) of each of the 2007 resolutions. (Go to www.capta.org for the complete text of the 2007 resolutions including a background summary and information about taking action on resolutions.)

Comprehensive Waste Reduction in Schools

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to support implementation of effective waste reduction programs at their schools by helping to create partnerships with parents, teachers, students, district and city personnel, and waste management companies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts, promote local school and school district waste reduction practices such as paper, glass, aluminum, and plastic recycling, composting of food waste and other organic materials, use of recycled and recyclable products, and reduction or reuse of paper and packaging; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA educate, encourage, and empower its units, councils and districts to educate its membership and school communities about waste reduction strategies and the environmental and monetary benefits of waste reduction.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Underfunding

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for the committed maximum authorized allotment from the federal government of 40% of mandated IDEA program costs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to educate public policy makers (local, state, and federal), PTA members, community members and the media about the funding shortfall of IDEA mandates and its encroachment on the school districts' general education budgets.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in Schools

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to inform students, parents, school boards, district and school staff, and the community about the importance of healthy IAQ and its relationship to student and staff health, academic achievement and absenteeism; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with local school boards to promote good IAQ when building or renovating facilities or when using portable classrooms, athletic activity rooms and locker rooms by following guidelines that provide for healthy IAQ, including techniques such as reducing the use of toxic construction materials; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with local school boards to adopt policies and practices that promote healthy IAQ, including but not limited to the use of IAQ management plans, proper maintenance techniques such as adherence to heating, ventilation and air conditioning system standards, protocols to reduce pesticide use, and the use of low-toxic classroom materials and cleaning supplies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts support legislative and regulatory efforts to reduce IAQ pollutants in schools, including securing full funding for IAQ-related assessments, construction, maintenance and repair of school facilities, creating IAQ standards and guidelines for schools, and providing incentives for IAQ-friendly school construction and renovation.

Financing California's Public Schools

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to educate public policy makers, PTA members, community members, and the media about the shared responsibility in the continuing need for the necessary resources and funding for California's public school programs and facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for adequate funding for every student; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support the ongoing efforts to explore new models of public school funding to ensure a quality education for every student; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts continue to make financing our public schools, both programs and facilities, a top priority in order to ensure a quality education for every student.

Public School Governance Authority

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts, reaffirm and recommit themselves to the separation of powers between municipal government and local school district governance and to the constitutionally established independence of locally elected boards of education, directly accountable to the voters, taxpayers, communities, parents, and students of their district.

Putting Parents into the Education Equation

Education research over the past three decades has established a direct correlation between increased parent involvement and increased student achievement. Children are better able to handle challenges at school when their parents and guardians are engaged. This contributes to a school environment more conducive to learning and a home more connected and enjoyable.

One of the most comprehensive parent involvement studies done to date is *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. This study found that “students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs.

Students with involved parents were also more likely to be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits; attend school regularly; have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.”

The study also discovered that schools that succeed in engaging families from very diverse backgrounds share three key best practices:

1. They focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members;
2. They recognize, respect and address families’ needs and any class and cultural differences; and
3. They embrace a philosophy of partnerships where powers and responsibility are shared.”

Ensuring success for all students is a monumentally important task that requires the cooperation of those with the greatest influence in children’s lives – parents and teachers.

PTA can help by sharing best practice strategies for increasing effective parent involvement.

Many effective strategies for involving parents can be located in the California State PTA resource, *Parents Empowering Parents*, now available on the PTA website (www.capta.org) in English and Spanish. (Look under Programs/Parent Involvement.)

By following these and other strategies, PTA’s can nurture strong parent-educator partnerships, helping to ensure that parents and educators understand parents’ roles in their children’s education and that parents are prepared to work together to achieve greater student success.

**PTA
Take Your
Family to
School
Week**

February 10-16, 2008

**PTA Founders Day
February 17, 2008**

PTA offers various resources and programs to assist parents. **PTA Take Your Family to School Week** on February 10-16, 2008 is designed to help build family-school partnerships to support the success of all students. In many schools, parents and teachers are joining together to plan this special week. This event can teach every-

one more about academic content and learning strategies. It can also provide a safe and respectful way for schools and PTA’s to reach out and get to know those families that have been hesitant about getting involved in other school activities. Organizers can brainstorm a range of ideas for family nights. Some ideas include events at which families play games that emphasize math skills. Teachers can help parents and guardians learn strategies or concepts, and can also have a chance to learn from families. Consider making a “welcome wall,” developing reading circles, showcasing student talent, implementing a Dad’s Club, planning a family-student-faculty sports event or other events that focus on learning *from* as well as *with* families.

Maximize the benefits for the children in your school community during this special week and throughout the year. Welcome all families by making your school a place where all families feel welcome, valued, and connected.

Parent Involvement Commission



**Visit the
PTA website for
more ideas!**

**www.CAPTA.org
www.PTA.org**

Celebrating PTA's History of Advocacy for Children *continued from page 1*

funding for schools. "It is probably no exaggeration to say that these telegrams were largely responsible for the defeat of the proposal," reported the State PTA's legislative chairman. Another attempt was made to jockey school funds in 1937; but PTA got the word out and letters were coming in by the basketful. One Legislator who favored the school cuts is reported to have said: "By the papers on my desk – and considering the visitors we have, I suppose it is little use to present my case." It was. The measure failed.

Pursuing the PTA objective "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children" has always been a vital part of the PTA mission.

"Methods of taxation might seem outside the (PTA) field. But school appropriations come from taxation. Anything which threatens a sound tax structure threatens the educational system," wrote PTA historian M. H. Strong in 1945. PTA has supported a number of tax provisions, including the state sales tax adopted by legislature in the 1930s to pay for school costs that had been transferred to the state. PTA repeatedly has opposed tax changes that would have a negative impact on schools, including Proposition 13, and more recently, the elimination of state income tax

brackets for incomes in the top one percent.

The PTA advocacy record reflects numerous other successes throughout its 100-year history: the PTA sponsored state legislation in 1939 to provide better school facilities and education services for mentally handicapped children; the California Recreation Act in 1939; the Youth Correction Authority law in 1941, and the Child Care Center Act in 1943. More recently, PTA has supported or sponsored several bills to promote increased parent involvement, reduce class sizes, improve teacher preparation, and restore funding for education in art and music.

Pursuing the PTA objective "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children" has always been a vital part of the PTA mission. In keeping with its strict non-partisan policy, PTA takes positions only on legislative and ballot measures, and never supports or opposes any candidate for public office. A PTA Legislation Platform that guides all PTA action on legislation is adopted biennially by delegates to the California State PTA Convention. Our PTA advocacy program continues to address the same kinds of issues it has from the beginning: public schools; nutrition for hungry children; safety and protection of children at risk of injury or abandonment; high quality educational programs and parent involvement.

Legislation Team

It's All About Teaching Performance!

As a result of legislation supported by the PTA [SB 1209 (Scott), 2006], beginning July 2008 all teacher candidates need to pass a new Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) to demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of a beginning teacher in California public schools. SB 1209 charged the Commission on Teacher Credentialing with developing a model teaching performance assessment for California, (CalTPA).

The CalTPA provides the teacher candidate with a series of four performance tasks, each of which increases in complexity. All but one of the tasks includes work with actual K-12 students. Taken as a whole, the four tasks measure teaching performance in multiple ways. The tasks are embedded within the teacher preparation program sequence and are administered and scored by trained faculty and other educators.

If your child's class has been served by a student teacher or intern, the school will be requesting parents' permission to video the lesson performed as the final task of the TPA. Although the video would show both the teacher and students, the primary focus is on the teacher's instruction, not on the students in the class. A process and protocol are being developed so that the video TPA is protected to the same degree as any other student teacher record.

The CalTPA brings the entire education community—parents, teachers, administrators, and universities—together to take part in the growth and development of our new teachers. Parents have an important role in this new teacher performance assessment by understanding and supporting this assessment.

For more information on the CalTPA, visit the Commission on Teacher Credentialing website at: www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA.html

Putting the “S” in PTSA

The PTSA is a magnificent way to unite the parents, teachers, and students of America. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of student involvement, especially in California. That is why I was motivated to become a much more active student member of the PTSA, and, in addition, I encouraged my fellow students to do the same. Initially, I thought the best way to do this was to form a student group that would put emphasis on the “S” of the PTSA, so I founded the PTSA Club at my high school. The main purpose of the PTSA Club is to participate in community service and volunteer in different events around the city. Members also contribute to PTSA-specific activities, such as book cover sales, membership drives, and more. The club has been in existence for about a year now, and has run very successfully.

Seeing the club that I started thriving was a remarkable experience, but little did I know what was in store for me. A few months after I created the club, the PTSA President of my school offered me an application that would allow me to be a Student Representative under the California State PTA

Board. Without hesitation, I completed the application, and after waiting another few months, I received the acceptance response from the California State PTA President herself. I was extremely excited and happy to have been accepted onto the prestigious California State PTA Board of Managers, and I felt very grateful at the same time to have been given the opportunity to be one of the two Student Representatives for the California State PTA.

Although I am only a student in high school, I have discovered that I am already capable of making a difference in our society. I believe that any person at any age can impact the world if he tries hard enough, and there is no task that is too large or too difficult to complete. The PTSA has been great to me, providing experience, knowledge, and skills that I will be able to use for the rest of my life. I don't have any regrets about joining the PTSA, and whether you are an adult or a child, I assure you that joining the PTSA is a great way to make a difference in our society.

Joey Apikian

Student Involvement Committee

Show Your Appreciation to Those Who Serve Your PTA/PTSA

Have you thought of recognizing the commitment and dedication of individuals or organizations who have willingly given their time and resources to benefit the children in your school and your community? The Honorary Service Award (HSA) is a wonderful way to honor them. Not only do you present the volunteer with a pin and a certificate but you donate to the California State PTA scholarship and grant fund in the volunteer's name.

The Honorary Service Award program includes the Honorary Service Award, Continuing Service Award, Golden Oak Service Award, Very Special Person Award, and donations to the HSA program. An individual may receive more than one of any of these awards. The HSA order form can be found on the California State PTA website at www.capta.org.

The funds contributed to the HSA program provide resources for the California State PTA Scholarship and Grant program. By ordering one of these awards, you are not only helping to recognize the efforts of individuals, you are also helping the California State PTA award scholarships and grants to deserving recipients. What a terrific way to show your appreciation for volunteers' time and efforts!

New for 2008 Convention!

We have divided our general meeting sessions from four to six meetings in an effort to decrease the length of time per session.

- Student entertainment performances will occur during the general meetings so children will have full attention of delegates when performing.
- PTA Store & exhibit hours increased.
- The California State PTA event this year will “kick-off” convention on May 1 with a private party at the famous Aquarium of the Pacific which will include admission to the aquarium, B-B-Q dinner and dancing. Tickets will be available when you register for convention and will not be available onsite. Buy your tickets early!
- Registration will provide express lines for those with NO registration changes.
- Proof of membership available via online, faxed or mailed registrations.
- Registration fees remain one price from Feb 4-April 17; next time to register will be onsite, May 1-4, where onsite rates apply.
- Join us as we celebrate Students, Arts and Educators at our various General Meetings.
- Why I Joined PTA! Share with us the reason(s) why you joined PTA by bringing no larger than a 3 x 5 photograph of your child (children) to post on our bulletin board.

Convention Commission

PTA in Action:

Thirty-Third District PTA's Juvenile Camp and Court School Support Program

A program of which Thirty-Third District is very proud is our ongoing support of the Santa Monica Mountains youth camps and community court schools run by Los Angeles County Juvenile Court System and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. In the early stages, we simply provided baked goods for the youths incarcerated in the camps. Later, units would forward to district monetary donations that had been collected, which were then used to purchase sports equipment for the camps, and individual gifts of toiletries and personal items for the boys around the holidays. Now, our support is more focused on life after camp.

Several years ago, in response to people's inquires about doing more than donating money, we met with the directors, teachers and correctional officers who are assigned to the individual camps, to see if there was something that might be more beneficial in helping the boys prepare for life after the youth camps and court schools. We learned that many of the boys in the camps had never owned a book of their own, never read a book from beginning to end, and in some cases had never learned to read. At that point, we changed the focus of our donations. Guidelines given by the camp directors determined what types of books were donated: new and slightly used, soft-cover books geared to reading levels from primary through high school. We had learned that several of the older boys had children of their own who would visit them and so we made sure to collect books that would be appro-

priate for reading to young children. Donation boxes were set up at association meetings, drop boxes were put in school offices, local book stores were asked to contribute, and through the efforts of our units and councils, thousands of dollars worth of books and book carts were delivered to the camps: sets for use in the classrooms, individual titles for the boys to read on their own.

Two years ago, at the request of the camp directors and teachers, we added fully stocked backpacks to the items being contributed to the camps. The backpacks are stocked with typical school supplies such as paper, pens, pencils, rulers and small calculators. Several

units approached local office supply stores and received the backpacks and supplies as donations. These backpacks are given to the boys when they return to their community day schools to help them feel more prepared to participate in school. This term, in addition to continuing to collect books and backpacks, we have added arts supplies and photography equipment to the items we are collecting. We are also working with the camps and the community day schools to encourage the boys to participate in the National Reflections Program.

For many, the time spent in the camps is a temporary escape from the life to which they will return. For others, it is the chance for a fresh start. To think that we are helping to make just a small difference in just one of these boys' lives is one of the most rewarding experiences I have had with my involvement in PTA.

“To think that we are helping to make just a small difference in just one of these boys' lives is one of the most rewarding experiences I have had with my involvement in PTA.”

Reflections Program Finalist 2006-2007

Middle-Junior Division: Grades 6-8



Drew Kivlen

Grade 8, Mary Putnam Henck PTSA, 5th District
Untitled

Get the Word Out — At the Speed of Light!

Does your PTA have an *eNews Bulletin*? It's a great way to reach your members quickly and easily, by e-mail, to publicize upcoming events, opportunities, and deadlines. It's not a newsletter – it's more like a cross between a calendar and a collection of classified ads.

eNews can be very effective! At some schools, it has become the primary communications vehicle for the entire school. After Hurricane Katrina, one PTA sent a message that, in under 24 hours, generated 30,000 pounds of relief supplies, enough to fill a 53-foot moving van that would otherwise have traveled empty from California to the Gulf Coast.

What does an eNews item look like?

- a headline and enough info so people know whether they're interested;
- the date, time, and place of an event;
- a Web link, and/or a phone or e-mail contact, for information and questions;
- possibly a link to a map, to help people find an event.

Who?

Who reads eNews? Parents, high school students, teachers, and administrators. How do they sign up? Make it easy. Distribute a signup form. Tell them at meetings, in newsletters, on web sites, and in casual conversations – and ask them to spread the word. They may be able to subscribe themselves, or they can give you their e-mail addresses.

What?

What can you publicize? Items about PTA, school, activities for kids, volunteer needs, fundraising, etc. – anything you could publicize in your newsletter. But eNews lets you put a specific announcement in front of your members at just the right time.

What's not allowed? As in your printed newsletter, items can't be partisan, sectarian, or commercial. No "personal ads," either.

The content should be reviewed (e.g. by the PTA President and the Principal) for timeliness and accuracy before it goes out.

Keep your eNews simple, brief, easy to read, and easy to navigate. Make it easy to see where one item ends and the next begins. Make sure all information is accurate!

When?

Many PTAs publish weekly, adding a "special issue" when needed. Keep people informed, but don't clutter their inboxes.

Last-minute notices are better than nothing, but they're not ideal. Some readers check e-mail every five minutes – but many people check it once a day or less frequently.

How?

You can send e-mail directly from the editor's computer, but it may be better to use a (free) list-serve program such as majordomo or mailman, or a (free) service such as Yahoo Groups or Google Groups. There are also commercial services, but you can do it all without spending a dime!

Respect your subscribers' privacy: their addresses should not be visible to other readers – and they should not be able to "reply all."

What you need to get started

- subscribers, and a way to manage the list;
- "news" items, and an editor;
- an e-mail distribution mechanism.

For more details, guidelines, tips, and samples, please visit www.capta.org/sections/communication/pub-guidelines.cfm.

Standing Rules

Standing Rules outline the procedures of the organization that are not included in the bylaws and must not restate or conflict with the bylaws.

Some examples of the differences are:

- *Bylaws* state when the meetings of the association are held.
- *Standing Rules* tell the day of the week meetings of the executive board are held, where and what time these meetings are held.
- *Bylaws* give the primary responsibilities of officers and chairmen.
- *Standing Rules* give the specifics.

Standing rules may be adopted by a majority vote at any association meeting. Amendments to standing rules require a two-thirds (2/3) vote without previous notice, a majority vote with such notice. Standing rules must accompany bylaws when submitted to the California State PTA parliamentarian for approval.

*Adapted from California State PTA Toolkit,
Section 2.4.2, Standing Rules
Bylaws Committee*

If the organization has supplies and equipment, the *Standing Rules* should state who is responsible for these items and where they are kept.

Standing Rules might also list:

- The officer who is responsible for securing the outgoing president's pin and its inscription.
- Any assessment paid to the council (if in council)
 - Example: This association shall pay an annual assessment of \$XX.XX to the Sunshine Council of PTAs by November first.

Where California Ranks: Important Facts About School Funding in California

According to a recent analysis of national data on state education budgets issued by the non-profit California Budget Project:

- California spending on schools continues to trail the national average. Per-pupil funding in California is roughly \$1,000 per pupil below the national average.
- California ranks 34th among the 50 states in per-pupil spending, based on 2005-06 data from the National Education Association and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. California would need to spend \$5.9 billion more than currently provided in order to increase per-pupil spending to the national average of \$9,566 – that's an increase of \$959 per pupil, or 11.1 percent.
- California also ranks 34th in spending on education as a percentage of personal income. California spends 3.82 percent of personal income on education compared to the national average of 4.17 percent. Schools would receive an additional \$4.8 billion per year if we devoted the same percentage of personal income toward education as the national average.
- California ranks 48th among the states in the number of students per teacher. On average, California teachers serve 4.4 more students than nationally (19.1 students per teacher in California, compared with the national average of 14.7).
- While California spends less per student than school in the nation do as a whole, a larger share of each dollar spent in California goes toward instruction and student services. In 2004-05, California schools spent 4.7 cents of each dollar for K-12 education on administration, food services and other expenses, while schools in the U.S. as a whole spent 6.1 cents of each dollar for these purposes.

The California Budget Project was founded in 1994 to provide Californians with a source of timely, objective and accessible expertise on state fiscal and economic policy issues. For more information, visit the California Budget Project website at www.cbp.org.

Reflections Program Finalist 2006-2007

Primary Division: Preschool-Grade 2



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for specials and new items**

This Issue

Celebrating PTA's History of Advocacy
for ChildrenPage 1

Message from Pam Brady, PresidentPage 2

Convention SpeakersPage 3

The Principal and the PTA President:
Partners Working TogetherPage 3

Arts Advocacy
CAAE – PTA Strategic Alliance 2007-2008
A Template for Local AdvocacyPage 4

2007 California State PTA Resolutions –
Call to ActionPage 4-5

Putting Parents into the Education Equation ...Page 6

Celebrating PTA's History of Advocacy
for Children *continued*Page 7

It's All About Teaching Performance!Page 7

Putting the "S" in PTSAPage 8

Show Your Appreciation to Those Who Serve
Your PTA/PTSAPage 8

New for 2008 Convention!Page 8

PTA in Action: Thirty-Third District PTA Juvenile
Camp and Court School Support Program ...Page 9

Get the Word Out – At the Speed of Light! ...Page 10

Where California Ranks: Important Facts
About School Funding in CaliforniaPage 11

Standing RulesPage 11

**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
reprinted in PTA unit, council and district
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The mission of the California State PTA is to positively
impact the lives of all children and families by repre-
senting our members and empowering and support-
ing them with skills in advocacy, leadership and com-
munications.

Adopted July 2007

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