

District 37 Dialogue

National Congress of Parents and Teachers
Illinois PTA – District 37 Publication – Winter 2008

Michele Sheppard, Director

Nicole Fentem, Editor

From Our Director

The District 37 Annual Meeting was held on October 20th. Thank you to the many of you that were in attendance. It was an enjoyable evening to honor the units that reached their membership goal for 2007-08 and the Local Unit Honor Award winners. Debra Strauss, Illinois PTA President Elect, talked to us about the future of PTA. Have you put her ideas into action? The evening also involved the election of the District 37 Director for 2009-2011. It is my honor to announce that Nicole Fentem was elected and her term will begin on July 1, 2009. Congratulations, Nicole!

Congratulations to the many award recipients. Awards were given to the 2007-08 2% Membership Increase Winners. Kudos to the Outstanding Local Honor Unit, Fairview PTA in Hoffman Estates as well as those who received Local Unit Honor Awards. Keep up the great work.

As the weather turns colder and the holidays quickly approach, it is good time to evaluate how your PTA is doing. Have you met your goals for membership? Are you developing leaders? Have you involved the parent community in the activities of your PTA? Are you on track to achieve the goals of your PTA? Take a moment to think about what your PTA is doing. The PTAs in District 37 host wonderful programs and activities that couldn't be accomplished without planning and hard work. Thank you for all the work that you do for the children!

Just a reminder, that a majority of the local units in District 37 are required to update their bylaws this year. Twenty-six units have completed the review process. Has your PTA begun the process? Please remember that bylaws need to be reviewed,

submitted to the district director, posted, and approved by your general membership. If your PTA wants to make changes to the number or duties of officers that must be completed before the nominating committee can slate those positions, otherwise, the old bylaws will still be in effect. Please plan ahead! It takes about a week for the director's review and approval. Then the bylaws must be posted for 30 days prior to vote at the general membership meeting. There are twenty-nine more units that must complete this process this year. If approved bylaws don't exist, the *Illinois PTA Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* are in effect.

Lastly, the Illinois PTA 107th Annual Convention will be held on March 13- 15, 2009 at the Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Conference Center in Naperville, IL. Friday will feature a vendor exhibits and the dinner event. There will be leadership-training opportunities at various times through the weekend. Hotel reservation must be made by February 23 to receive the even rate of \$99 plus tax. This is a great opportunity to learn from and network with other PTA from throughout the state. Naperville is a quick twenty-minute drive from most areas of District 37. It is an appropriate use of PTA funds. Please plan to attend and have your PTA represented. Watch the Illinois PTA website (www.illinoispta.org) for updated information.

Remember that my board and I are available to help at any time.

Have a Happy Holiday!
Michele



TREASURER – Barb Quinn

INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

It's hard to believe that our PTA year is just about at the half-way mark. You are probably gearing up for a flurry of winter activities, and beginning to plan for future events—leadership, student programs, parent programs and . . . the list goes on!

Have you reviewed your budget recently? Are you where you thought you would be at this point in the year? Have you met your financial goals? Are you short of your financial goals? Do you need to amend your budget? Are the procedures you have in place working?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, now is the time to start planning on preparing your leaders and future leaders to steer a course that keeps you on the Road to Success. The 107th Illinois PTA Annual Convention will be here before you know it—how many delegates will your PTA be sending? Convention is an opportunity for your PTA leaders to learn more about making your PTA the very best that it can be. The Illinois PTA will be offering workshops on a wide variety of topics, including finances, leadership skills and techniques, educational issues, networking with leaders from all over the state.

Plan to invest in your PTA leadership by sending delegates to the Illinois PTA Convention, March 13 – 15, 2009, at the Holiday Inn Select in Naperville—just a short ride from the Northwest Suburbs!

This is also your opportunity to conduct the business of the Illinois PTA—election on new officers, adoption of a budget and amendment of the bylaws. I look forward to seeing many of you in Naperville.



MEMBERSHIP – Liz Chlopowicz

Season's Greetings Everyone! By now you probably consider our membership campaign over, right? Not at all! You should continue recruiting memberships all year long. Families tend to be in a more "giving" spirit during the holidays and might consider joining and helping more – there are also new families and business moving into the area all the time. We are asking you to evaluate your goals, continue your campaign, and think about what remains to be done.



This year we are continuing to challenge each of you to grow your PTA by 2% over last year – you still have until December 31 to qualify for this first part of the challenge. Once you achieve that, you can move on to the additional 2% (the second part of this year's 2+2 challenge). Can you say you are there? Here are some helpful hints from the PTA National President, Jan Harp Domene that will help you in reaching that goal:

- Back to School – students and families are returning from the winter break refreshed and resolved.
- New Year ~ New Opportunities – resolutions create optimism so encourage your families to resolve to do more for children by being more involved in their children's education.
- Lay the groundwork for success! Plan a campaign, evaluate your goals, promote the good work you are doing, share your ideas with other PTAs.



ARE YOU THE MISSING LINK?

For more helpful hints, visit www.illinoispta.org.

Please join us in making PTA bigger and better than before!

SCHOLARSHIP – Lynn Topp

The student application deadline for this year's Lillian E. Glover Scholarship has past. Good luck to all applicants within District 37. Each year 2 scholarships, \$1000 and \$500, are awarded to high school seniors residing in Illinois PTA District 37 that are planning to go into an education field of study.

As PTA members and PTA units, we can help fund this worthy Scholarship through memorial gifts and direct donations via the Illinois PTA office or by purchasing any of the following:

- Illinois PTA Life Memberships
- Book of Recognition
- Distinguished Service Scroll
- Certificate of Recognition
- Local Unit Educator of the Year
- Scholarship Gift Cards
- PTA Note Cards
- In Memoriam Cards
- Scholarship Charms/Jewelry
- Past District Director's Pin
- Convention Promotional Items
- Gifts of T.H.A.N.K.S.

These awards are great ways to recognize the people in your community. The Illinois PTA yearbook gives more details on each of these awards. You may also find information regarding them and ordering information at www.illinoispta.org.

Especially with money being tight for everyone these days, think about purchasing a gift that actually gives twice this year.

NEWSLETTER – Nicole Fentem

In reading the newsletters that are sent to me, I've noticed that most of you are following the guidelines and suggestions I have made in the past. Please continue to keep this information on hand when creating all of your newsletters.

Presidents; be sure you have a message to your membership in every newsletter. It doesn't have to be long if you really don't have much to say, but

you should address your audience and show them the importance the newsletter has to you by doing so. Speaking of length, don't be wordy and repeat yourself that is a sure way to lose your audience quickly. If you have a large amount to write, do so. You may also think about whether part of the article can be separated out to create an additional message from the PTA in general.

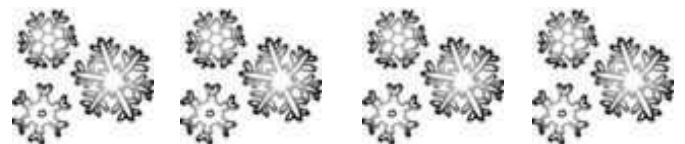
Taking the time to write an article for each newsletter also shows your board the importance the newsletter has to you as a means of communication. When you "lead by example", it is much easier to expect the same of others.

Each committee chair should contribute to the newsletter as well. Let the chairmen know it is an expectation of them. If the community does not get the information about all the great things the PTA is doing, then it is hard to expect them to participate in the efforts.

A newsletter with consistency of content is a newsletter that the community will read. If all events are always discussed before, during and afterward in the newsletter, the community will begin expecting to find the information here. It will be a means of communication they can count on and won't want to miss out on.

Try not to repeat the same committee article over and over. The readers notice and start skimming the information and eventually the whole newsletter. If a small part of the article is changed but the rest remains the same the community will surely miss the change. Again, if the chairman is short on time and cannot create an entirely new article, have them create a short update of what is new. Better to be brief than have the message lost.

For more ideas as to what should be included in a PTA newsletter, watch for upcoming articles and in the meantime check out the State and National PTA websites.



HEALTH & SAFETY – Linda Millar

Children's Health & Wellness

The Child Nutrition and WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) Reauthorization Act of 2004 required school districts throughout the nation with federally funded school meal programs to look at what steps they could take to improve physical activity and nutrition in their schools. All school districts were required to establish wellness policies before the 2006-2007 school year.

This law requires schools to include parents in the development and implementation of the district wellness policy. The wellness policy must include: nutrition education goals, nutrition guidelines for all food available on school campuses, physical activity goals, school-based activities designed to promote student wellness, and plans for evaluating the policy. If you have not seen your school districts policy, please contact your district office for a copy.

This law provides a unique opportunity for PTA parents to get involved. Is anyone from your PTA on your district's Wellness Committee? If not, email your superintendent or a school board member and ask for a member of your PTA to be included. Let your administration know that your PTA wants children's health issues to be a priority.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Act is up for reauthorization again in 2009. Look for this reauthorization to be more comprehensive and more focused on improving educational achievement, nutrition, and overall health of our children. Almost daily it seems that new reports are released documenting the growing problem of obesity reaching epidemic proportions among America's youth. Both National PTA and Illinois PTA have made the childhood obesity epidemic a top priority.

One of National PTAs recommendations is "to promote overall healthy habits for healthy lifestyles." Whatever activities you and your board are planning for the upcoming year, keep the focus on children's wellbeing and safety. Ask your PTA:

- ☺ Are we planning enough physical activities for our kids?
- ☺ Are we serving healthy snacks at PTA events?

- ☺ Are our PTA classroom parties focused on games and activities and not food?
- ☺ Are we providing our membership with educational opportunities that involve children's health issues?
- ☺ Are we getting our parents involved in these activities?

Please discuss nutrition and physical education with your PTA. Consider ways that **your** PTA can begin to address these issues. Informed parents can lead the way to positive changes in our schools and communities.

LEGISLATION

GRASSROOTS EFFORT WORK

– Paddock PTA, Palatine

"This effort all started with a Brownie project my troop that I lead did back in February for Paddock Elementary. My girls did an anti-bullying campaign for the school that they promoted on the morning announcements with PSA's and posters. When I was researching things for their project with them I came across a website for PACER center in MN. They have a great "kids against bullying" site and lots of great information for parents. On that site I found the prompt to "get your state to proclaim Bullying Prevention Awareness Week"....so in May I contacted someone I knew in Springfield to inquire about how to go about having a Proclamation signed by the Governor...well after a few weeks I had a signed Proclamation Proclaiming October 5-11, 2008 as Bullying Prevention Awareness Week. This coincides with the nationally proclaimed week that is sponsored by both the NEA and the National PTA...

Anyway, from there, I got the Proclamation and in turn I secured sponsors for both the house and the senate to have the same thing made a resolution when they return to sessions in the fall.

In addition, the Mayor's office presented Paddock with the same Proclamation for Palatine, for the same week, at the Sept 15th Village meeting. . ."

Regards,
Jennifer DeFranco
Paddock PTA, Palatine

Article abbreviated from www.illinoispta.org

WAY TO GO!

REFLECTIONS – Joan Scovic

WOW! It's time for Reflections!

The deadline for the councils to submit their portfolios to Illinois PTA District 37 was December 5th. Councils should have delivered their portfolios no later than December 5th to Michele Sheppard, District Director, at her home.

Each council was allowed to submit the following maximum number of projects to District 37:

STC:	21 projects in each category
NWSC:	18 projects in each category
AHC:	15 projects in each category
MTP	5 projects in each category

Reflections Award Recipients of State Recognition will be mailed to the student address listed on the application form in February 2009.

Mark your calendars! The Illinois PTA District 37 Reflections and Scholarship Reception will be held on March 4th at 7:30pm. Please watch for more complete details in future issues of the D37 Dialogue!

Council Reflections Chairmen are as follows:

- NWSC: Joan Scovic / thescovics@hotmail.com
- AHC: Tricia Milligan / phmilligan@comcat.net
- STC: Mary Kay Prusnick / mprusnick@hotmail.com



For more information on the Reflections program, please visit www.pta.org.

Next Year's Theme

Beauty Is...

Start planning next year's promotion plan today. It is never too early to begin.



ROAD TO SUCCESS DISTRICT 37 AWARDS WINNERS FOR 2007-2008

2% Membership Increase Winners:

Addams Jr. High PTA	Armstrong PTA
Churchill PTA	Collins PTA
Dooley PTA	Dryden PTA
Einstein PTA	Eisenhower Jr. High PTA
Enders-Salk PTA	Fairview PTA (MTP)
Fairview PTA (STC)	Fox PTA
Greenbrier PTA	Keller Jr. High PTA
Kimball Hill PTA	Lake Louise PTA
Lincoln Jr. High PTA	Link PTA
Muir PTA	Nerge PTA
Olive-Mary Stitt PTA	Paddock PTA
Patton PTA	Sanborn PTA
Sandburg PTA	South PTA
Tarkington PTA	Thomas PTA
Westbrook PTA	Willow Bend PTA
Winston Campus Jr. High PTA	Arlington Hts. Council
Schaumburg Township Council	

Local Unit Honor Awards:

Armstrong PTA	Campanelli PTA
Fairview PTA (MTP)	Fairview PTA (STC) **
Greenbrier PTA	Hunting Ridge PTA
Ivy Hill PTA	Lincoln PTA in Palatine
MacArthur PTA	Olive-Mary Stitt PTA
Patton PTA	Thomas PTA
Westbrook PTA	**Outstanding Unit

Local Unit Honorable Mention Awards:

Aldrin PTA	Dryden PTA
Mead PTA	Muir PTA
Paddock PTA	Sandburg PTA
South PTA	Tarkington PTA
Virginia Lake PTA	Windsor PTA
Winston Campus Elem. PTA	



TECHNOLOGY - Nicole Fentem

For children, it seems they don't know how to survive without technology. They play video games, handheld games, do homework on their computers, e-mail one another, instant message each other and of course, use their cell phones to talk with one another, text message, email and surf the web. It doesn't seem very long ago when this type of technology was the exception as opposed to the standard.

Today we use technology all the time as a means of communication, a resource/virtual library, shopping and much more. Honestly, I can't remember not having a cell phone so I can call someone in an emergency or get a hold of my husband when he's travelling. Technology is definitely a benefit to today's fast-paced life that we all lead. Of course, every pro has a con and the cons are what we need to protect our children from.

So often we talk about cyber-bullying (bullying through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, myspace, facebook, and cell-phones to name a few) and find ways to protect our children from this abuse and it is very important! Cell phones can be even more detrimental to children and adults as well when they are not used appropriately. Yes, research has showed that the use of cell phones can be life threatening.

This is not referring to radio waves, rather, to a huge distraction while driving. The majority of car accidents are the result of one or both drivers being distracted from the road. The main distraction is the usage of cell phones while driving. It seems common sense that one should not be dialing a phone number, texting another or surfing the web while driving, but the reality is that many are doing just this and more.

Illinois is one of six states that allow localities to determine their own laws regarding cellular phone use while driving. Chicago is one of the cities that has chosen to enact hands free legislation and make driving while using a cellular device illegal. The State of Illinois as a whole does address driving and *cell-phone* use **by minors**. Starting January 1st, 2008 SB140 prohibits **drivers under the age of 19**, from using a cellular device or any type of **hand-held** communication device while operating a motor vehicle. This past October the City of Chicago also specifically bans text messaging for all drivers and will be imposing fines on individuals doing so.

Please be sure that your community is aware of this information and perhaps you can research more and possibly educate everyone not to abuse technology but to use it appropriately.

STATE & NATIONAL PTA AWARD DEADLINES



With Illinois PTA Convention taking place almost a month before it used to be held, all applications for awards have moved to earlier than normal due dates. To simplify things as much as possible the magic deadline date is the same for all applications, with a few exceptions, of course. What is the magic date?

FEBRUARY 28, 2008

If you haven't already begun working on your applications and events, there's no time like the present!

The following award applications must be postmarked no later than February 28, 2008:

- Council Membership Increase Award
- Environmental Concerns Award
- Membership Awards
- PTA Founders 50 Award
- Keeping Our Kids Healthy Award
- Juvenile Protection & Safety Award
- Newsletter Award

Each of these applications can be found on the Local Unit Packet 2008-2009 CD that each unit received at our District 37 Orientation in August. The CDs were located in the Back-to-School Box. The applications are also available for download online at: www.illinoispta.org on the front page and in the Member's Only Section.

Be sure to fill out each application completely and then mail it to the address listed on the application.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE MAGIC DATE:

- ✓ Any Resolutions being put together for delegate consideration at our 2009 Convention must be turned into the Resolutions Committee no later than January 1, 2009. Please refer to the local unit packet and the Illinois PTA website for more information on Resolutions.
- ✓ Website Awards applications must be postmarked no later than February 6, 2009 to be considered for the award.

DISTRICT 37 COUNCIL CORNER

Arlington Heights Council of PTAs

The Arlington Heights Council has been off to a productive start. One of the main goals of our Council is to provide opportunities for all 9 of our schools to work together. Two committees that have stepped up to the plate have been Ecology and Art Appreciation. Both Committees have provided information to assist local units in training and leadership development.

On top of coordinating some district ecology events like International Walk to School Day, National Recycling Day, and lunch recycling, our Ecology Chair, Sara Nowak, has coordinated efforts with the district staff to assist our PTAs in going as paperless as possible by using digital technology. Sara also passes on important eco information from the Village of Arlington Heights, SWANCC, and our local Waste Hauler, Groot.

Our Art Appreciation Chair, Janet McDonnell has created dialogue with the 7 elementary schools on improving volunteer training for their art presentations in the classroom. She has directed the schools to tap into the Teacher Resource Center at the Art Institute of Chicago. She encouraged many of the schools to take advantage of some volunteer training and art lessons that they provide. Most of our schools have taken advantage of this opportunity and our children can look forward to some new art discussions!

Another goal of our Council has been to conduct PTA training for Administrators and Principals. We know that if staff understands the goals and methods of PTA, it will make for stronger individual units and Council. On October 22, former State President, Barb Quinn, presented "Building a Partnership: The PTA and the Principal" to the Superintendent, some Assistant Superintendents, Principals and Assistant Principals. We know that this additional training will reap rewards for our students through better cooperation between the PTA and school staff.

Finally, in cooperation with our Superintendent, Dr. Sarah Jerome, PTA hosted a program on November 18: "Community Conversation on World Language Instruction in Arlington Heights School District 25." Currently, six different languages are offered in the district's middle schools with exposure to five of them in sixth grade. Dr. Jerome made a brief presentation about the changing world demographics in the next 50 years and the challenges this will pose for our children. Given these changing demographics, exposure and proficiency in multiple languages will become increasingly important. Parents, staff and community members were allowed to dialogue about how and when other languages should be introduced in District 25. The district will be compiling and condensing the many ideas that were discussed and continue the Community Conversation in the spring.



Thanks for making our Annual Meeting a Success!



DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1, 2009 – Resolutions for
Convention Deadline
February 6, 2009 – Website Award Deadline
February 17, 2009 – Founders Day
February 28, 2009 – Most Award Deadlines
March 13-15, 2009 – State Convention
Naperville, IL

ILLINOIS PTA ANNUAL MEETING



“Reaching New Horizons”

Please Join Us At Our

Illinois PTA 107th Annual Convention

March 13 - 15, 2009

It will be held at:

**Holiday Inn Select Naperville Hotel &
Conference Center
Naperville, IL 60563**

Watch your mail for the Illinois PTA Convention Bulletin which will be mailed out early February for exact details and watch the Illinois PTA website for updates as well.

The vendor exhibit hall is scheduled to be open during the day and evening Friday that weekend. Be sure you have members in attendance to get all the valuable information and resources they have to offer. Remember to bring your PTA membership card with you.

During convention there will be multiple workshops offered to help your PTA be a success in carrying out the mission and objectives of PTA. Award events will be held for PTA units as well as student awards. Most importantly, Illinois will be conducting its Annual Meeting which will consist of more than one session. Bylaw amendments, officer elections, resolutions and more will take place at this time. It is a great way to learn how parliamentary procedure looks and see Robert's Rules of Order exercised.

Don't forget, we'll be having our District 37 Caucus at Convention as well. It is becoming a widely talked about event amongst Convention attendees.

DISTRICT 37 BOARD

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