

# CouncilConnections

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ICPT 37

## Message from the Illinois PTA President

### Thank You!

Two simple words that say a lot! We use them when we receive a gift or when someone does something quite unexpected that pleases us. We, also, use them to thank those who have given of their time to participate in an activity whether it's for fundraising or some other form of charitable work. As president, I want to thank those of you who were able to participate in the 107th Annual Illinois PTA State Convention. Your attendance, participation, and comments were welcome and will help your state board of managers in preparation for future events.

I hope that you learned some new things and have shared them generously with those PTA members who were unable to attend. If we can be of assistance in seeing that you receive training, or perhaps you would like to present a program on one of the workshops given, please feel free to contact us. It is always a pleasure to be able to work with a unit in preparing them for PTA work.

All the courses that were presented at convention are available to be given at your local unit. They can be done at any time or place. You pick the schedule. We will be more than happy to accommodate your unit. The state board realizes that knowledge given about PTA is one of the most valuable tools that a PTA unit can have. Leadership can be built through training, and it's only a phone (or better yet, email) away.

One of the questions that frequently came up was how do we get volunteers? The answer is showing them what you have to offer and then utilizing the talents they have, but give them the 'tools' that they can utilize to do a good job. I hope your unit will be a "leader" when it comes to utilizing the training available.

Hugs,  
Jean  
*Illinois PTA President*

PS. To those of you who attended the President's Course training at convention, the answer about minutes being put on websites is that it should be put in a "members' only" section. Any questions, please feel free to email me at [prazunas@comcast.net](mailto:prazunas@comcast.net). Double hugs!!



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## STC 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

My job as 1st Vice President is to assist the President in all aspects of PTA. I help Mary Kay with anything she needs and I try to help her and the Board get things done.

My next responsibility is to facilitate the STC Auction. I say facilitate because this event is so large one person cannot do it alone. It takes a lot of help from individual schools, volunteers, businesses and Board members. I start sending out donation request letters in late October and then I must keep track of everything that comes in. I set up the packet of information for the Auction Chairs and answer any questions that come in. Next comes sort day and the logging in of all donated baskets. My volunteers on sort day were Claudia Bellinger and Julie Johnson who took care of basket wrapping and re-wrapping. Thank you ladies so much! Kathy Pritscher, Terry Vitacco, Laura Nevel, Terri McHugh, Jean Lemp, Christine Bock, Deb Marinoff, Mary Kay Prusnick, Michelle Mussman and Nicole Fentem donated their time and talent to help me sort baskets and keep me sane all day. You ladies rock! Next came the choosing of live items and putting the program together. I spent a lot of time with Mary Kay, Deb, and Terry on this one. You guys were awesome. After the program was complete, and errors found (thanks Terri), it went to Kay for copying. It was done within hours and looked great. Claudia stepped up again and made the centerpieces. If you were there you know how awesome they looked. Those paddles were not made by me either. There was glitter all over Wanda Farnell's basement! Thanks for doing this huge job so well! When Auction Day finally arrived I was tired but ready. Lots of volunteers helped set up at the Meridian and make everything look beautiful. This job is all consuming at times but with the help of the many volunteers it was manageable.

A special thank you to Deb Marinoff. Her knowledge of the workings of the auction is second to none. She wasn't afraid to share all the "tricks of the trade" and show me the ropes. This Auction was a success because of her and everything she did with me and for me. Thanks Deb.

My next challenge is setting up the Scholarship Dinner in May. It will be May 12th at Mead Junior High. We will be celebrating all the winning applications submitted by the High School seniors who went through District 54 schools. I hope you will be able to join us for this special event.

Deb Loughman  
*1st Vice President-STC*

## 107<sup>th</sup> Illinois PTA Convention



### **“Reach for the Future by Reaching for the Horizon”**

When you say the word “convention” different images come to mind. You might picture long days attending meetings and seminars, a group of extreme loyal followers for a given cause or even wild people running around with funny fez hats on. The PTA National President, Jan Harp Domene explained convention in her opening greeting, “Learning. Networking. Celebrating. Connecting! Convention connects you to the things that matter most in helping all children succeed.”

Convention offers learning by a variety of workshops which include those that sharpen your leadership skills, start innovative programs and discuss current issues that affect our children. At the STC Meeting we mentioned the workshop, LOL-Do You Speak Texting? The workshop discussed texting and its effect on our children. We tested our knowledge of texting acronyms. The presenters sited the website netlingo.com which lists the top fifty acronyms and a new one for the day.

The presenters also cautioned us on a text that is frequently used by sexual predators, LMIRL (Lets Meet in Real Life). We touched on new health issues both physically and emotionally which are affecting our children with excessive texting. This workshop was an eye opening experience that taught me about the world of texting.

Convention offers networking with sessions with the Illinois PTA President, District Directors, Council Round Tables and local units. The District 37 Hospitality Suite brought leaders from our district together to discuss issues and programs in a very relaxed environment. We met informally with the National PTA President-Elect Charles Saylor and Immediate-Past National PTA President Anna Weslak along with other PTA leaders and found out, "same problems, different State." Mr.Saylor, the first male National PTA President, told us how he wanted to try to shake up and invigorate PTA.

Convention offers celebrating. We celebrated local unit achievements at the PTA Awards Dinner, viewed Reflection projects, attended the installation of newly-elected Illinois officers and student awards which included scholarship and Reflection award recipients. Congratulations to Tom Goodrich, President of Eisenhower PTA for receiving awards for the best Newsletter and Website. Congratulations to all of our STC PTAs for receiving the many membership awards! We will do more celebrating at our Scholarship Dinner coming in May.

Convention connected local PTA units across the state of Illinois. They discussed ways to increase membership, include more Dads and increase involvement. As delegates we participated in General Sessions which are the business portion of the convention. The General Sessions also determine the resolutions and actions of the Illinois PTA for the coming year.

Convention is a rewarding experience that helps rekindle the reason we do the things we do. We might be at different places with the PTA experience but it always leads back to our children. So next year join us for convention. Don't worry we do not wear funny hats! We do have a wonderful time networking with many special people. See you at Convention 2010!

Debbie Marinoff  
*2nd Vice President*

## **STC Parent Enrichment**

Happy Spring PTA parents! That glorious time of year has arrived when our schedules become overloaded with chaotic carpooling, finals, teacher retirements, religious holidays & commitments, sports, graduation plans, summer camp schedules, scout camping plans, cold outdoor bleacher seats, etc...

Just when we are contemplating 'throwing in the towel', we notice through the window- a single yellow bud on a slender branch. Through the remaining snow on the ground, a tiny sprout of lime green is a welcome contrast to the dreary gray we have witnessed in the past few weeks. A glimmer of hope which guides us to a renewed focus that we can do just about anything! In case those flurries got to your sprouts last week and you need another jolt of java in approaching this next week- please be reminded in the story below, that you are a great parent; there isn't anything you cannot do!

A son asked his father, "Dad, can I participate in a charity marathon for a paralyzed athlete in our town?" The father who, despite having a heart condition, says "Yes." The father & son went on to complete the marathon together, crossing the finish line 2nd to last. Through the years, this father and son went on to join many other marathons, the father always saying "Yes" to his son's request [of going through the race together.]

One day, the son asked his father, "Dad , what about the Ironman?"

To which, his father said "Yes."

For those who don't know, Ironman is the toughest triathlon ever. The race encompasses three endurance events of a 2.4 mile (3.86 kilometer) ocean swim, followed by a 112 mile (180.2 kilometer) bike ride, and ending with a 26.2 mile (42.195 kilometer) marathon along the coast of the Big Island .

Father and son went on to complete the race together: [http://www.godtube.com/view\\_video.php?viewkey=8cf08faca5dd9ea45513](http://www.godtube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=8cf08faca5dd9ea45513)

Happy 'You Can do Anything' this Spring!

Laura Nevel

*STC Parent Enrichment*

## **Lakeview School**

Our first year as co-presidents for Lakeview PTA has had some successes along with a few challenges. One of our biggest challenges has been to fill the responsibilities of our 2nd Vice President who had to move at the beginning of the school year. Our 2nd VP is responsible for the important task of fundraising. We made the decision to ask our membership to provide fundraising ideas and present them at our PTA meeting. There was a fantastic response. Our members came through with some great ideas. After a very long meeting and with great debate we were able to decide on the best fundraisers for our school community.

With great care and consideration in selecting our fundraiser, our first one was the \$5.00 salsa. It was very successful. We went far beyond what was expected in sales. It allowed us to concentrate on other important PTA business. We feel that it was successful because we listened to our members and decided on an affordable popular product. Our Spring Fundraiser is \$5.00 See's Candy boxes and hopefully, it will be as successful. As co-presidents we feel very fortunate to have such a supportive Lakeview School community! It really pays to listen to your membership.

Susie Olsen and Jennifer Jernigan

*Lakeview PTA Co-Presidents*

## **Frost Jr. High School**

Last Friday we were cleaning up after hot lunch and noticed a bin filled with brown bags. We learned that they were uneaten lunches from the free lunch program. We asked what happened with these lunches and we were told that they would be thrown away.

On this particular day there were 25 left over lunches. We were told that some days there may be as few as 10, but each day varied. The fate of these lunches is always the same, however. They are all thrown out.

Friday's leftovers included 25 apples, 50 bags of carrots, 25 packs of ranch dressing, 25 packs of napkin, spork and straw, 25 pizza bread, and 25 lunch bags. We spent a couple minutes, separated the items, and brought them to the Schaumburg food pantry. All the items were happily accepted.

Maybe some of our schools have a committee, like the community closet committee, that is dealing with this. I am very interested to hear how they handle this. If each of our 27 schools had 8 left over lunches each day, that equals over 1,000 lunches a week.

Tracy Bush  
Robert Frost Junior High PTA

\*\* Concerning this topic that effects all of our schools... I have spoken with members of the District 54 Administration about this concern previously and my understanding is this basically comes down to a liability issue. These lunches are not refrigerated or regulated for stability beyond the time required to serve them to our students, so some items, say meat sandwiches or the chicken, cannot be legally passed on in a safe manner. Some schools put together a team to dismantle the leftover lunches and set aside shelf stable items, such as the whole fruits, to be shared with students at different times, such as breakfast programs or if students do not bring a mid-morning snack, as some classes allow that, etc. Some lunch supervisors, staff, or parent volunteers have chosen to take home certain leftovers, as they become available and can be handled appropriately. My kids love when I happen to show up on the correct day and can bring home the roast chicken! The lunch supervisors at your school should be monitoring the amount of lunches that are consistently unclaimed and be adjusting your school's food order accordingly, as such, there are always a great deal of extras in the beginning of the school year until adjustments can be made. We encourage you to talk with your school principal to develop a plan to make the best use of this surplus food. We certainly do not want to waste these resources, but the District cannot at this time be liable for seeing the food redistributed. Perhaps this would best be discussed with Mr. Rafferty at an upcoming STC meeting.  
~Michelle Mussman, *STC EE Chair*

## **Einstein School**

Albert Einstein School has always had a great turn out for our Fun Fair and Celebrate Reading and Writing Night. But we have not had many other family nights during the school year. So this year PTA decided to do some activities for Take Your Family to School week in February. We were not sure how successful it would be. It was scheduled only 3 weeks after the Fun Fair and we did not know if people would come out for another family fun night so close. We decided to do something simple the first year to see what would happen. We planned 2 main activities for the week. First, we invited families to come to school to have lunch with their child. We ran it like a Hot Lunch, with simple foods like pizza, cookies and drinks. Families had to pre-order their food and we all ate in the gym. It was a fun time; many families sat together and enjoyed a good lunch. I would say that only about 15% of our families participated, but we had a full gym!!

Our other event was an Ice Cream Social/Craft Night /Used Book Sale. We started asking for used books back in the fall and we had lots to sell. We had a simple bookmark craft with just yarn and beads and we had ice cream sundaes. We wanted it to be an inexpensive and fun family night. The ice cream and the craft were free and everyone seemed to enjoy the night. We sent out reservation forms so we knew how much ice cream to buy. We did get a little nervous when our count got to about 350, but we don't think all those people actually showed up. Families just roamed around and visited the different activities and nothing seemed to get too crowded. The idea for this week came up after we set our budget so we did not have a specific line item for it and planned to take money from our special events budget, but the money earned in the book sale covered the cost of the ice cream and supplies. We will definitely participate in this week again next year with some

more creative ideas. This year the board ran it, but in the future, we would need to form a committee to run it. We know now that the Einstein community is open to more family fun nights.

Joyce Prigge  
Einstein PTA President

## **Eisenhower Jr. High School**

### **“Joining Together for Our Kids”**

Being new to Eisenhower Junior High School with twin 7th grade girls in addition to being the incoming PTA President was intimidating at first. But the task becomes much easier with an energetic and active PTA board, and a wonderful school administration and staff. I found Junior High PTA is different than grade school PTA. With clubs, sports and student council there is not as much time available for the fun nights and family orientated events as in grade school.

This year our PTA provided free ISAT lunch to all the students which included pizza from Garibaldi's, drink and cookies. We also offer monthly hot food and monthly nachos during lunch. This year we are providing two cultural arts events. One is a school wide assembly that presents the effects that gang involvement can have on student's lives. The speaker is an ex-gang member who involvement left him a paraplegic. The other is a trip to Schaumburg's Cultural Art Center for a presentation on Anne Frank, which complements school curriculum in Social Studies and Language Arts.

During school conferences our PTA offered “Conference Kudos” where the school community could reward students with candy and words of encouragement and congratulation. We are also contributing to 7th & 8th Grade field trips at the end of the year.

To boost our newsletter readership, I have offered a “President's Challenge” each month. The first five people (parent, student, teacher or staff) to call me each month gets a prize. It has been fun to do and increases school spirit and involvement.

*Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ~ Margaret Mead*

Tom Goodrich  
*Eisenhower Jr. HS PTA President*

## **MacArthur School**

The MacArthur Family Restaurant Nights have been very successful for our school this year, both as a great fundraiser and as a positive community event. Our PTA has held a fundraising night at a local restaurant on the third Wednesday of each month, starting in September. From September through February, we raised over \$1100 for the PTA. Our biggest night was held at Chuck E Cheese, when we raised \$290 in one evening. The lowest amount we raised was \$108 at Sweet Tomatoes, on a snowy February night.

Other restaurants where we have held our fundraisers are Buona, Fuddruckers, Garibaldi's, Wendy's and McDonald's. Most restaurants host fundraising nights Monday-Thursday and give 15-20% back of the sales brought in by the school. The restaurants have different rules regarding the hours of the event and whether drive-through or carry-out orders count towards the total. They require a flyer

to be handed in when the order is placed. Then they track the sales for the night and send a check to the PTA in 2-4 weeks for the % earned.

In April we are trying our first sit-down restaurant, California Pizza Kitchen. We try to rotate the type of restaurant, menu prices and location to appeal to more families. Most of the restaurants provide the flyer promoting the event. Because of our dual-language program, we also translate the flyer into Spanish. We copy and distribute the flyers to the students and staff a few days before the event. We also promote the Restaurant Nights on our school marquee, on our website and in our newsletter.

The Family Restaurant Nights are a great way to bring the school community together. The kids love seeing their friends, teachers and principal outside of school. It's neat to watch MacArthur families bring friends, neighbors and other extended family members out to enjoy a fun evening together, all while supporting their school!

Laurel McGrath  
*MacArthur PTA President*

## **STC Newsletter Question for April**

**My PTA is wondering how about schools that have a family night at local restaurants. How much does a school make from that and what are some favorite locations.**

\$100 maybe \$200, really all you are doing is advertising and bringing in business for the restaurant. If you do it right and actually have people get together as an event it may be worthwhile, but most schools don't and that is really just a PTA doing free advertising for a profit organization.

Some schools do a great job and have the staff serve the food/at the registers, it makes it a fun event for the kids. In the olden days, PTAs in partnership with the restaurant used to have games and activities for the kids during the family night out, making it a true family night out. Families getting together away from the school grounds and enjoying each other's company.

Nicole Fentem

Not sure on the actual amount brought in but a year or so ago we did a "Burgers and Books" night where we did a fundraiser at Fuddruckers and then we all walked over to Barnes and Noble where our principal read a book to the children back in the kids section. It was a lot of fun and the families really enjoyed being together for the evening.

Lincoln Prairie School

Usually the restaurants do 20% back to the school. We have done Culver's, McDonalds, Burger King, Buona Beef, and I want to say Old Towne Pizza in the past. We aren't doing as many this year as in years past...no one to chair it. Also, we have done similar stuff with the Chicago Storm Soccer team. That was really a no brainer.... we picked a day, and the people purchased their tickets directly from the Storm (online), attended the game, and we collected a check. They even provide the flyers to pass out! We made, \$81 with VERY LITTLE effort.

Donna Boomgarden  
Hoover School

*This poem is courtesy of Julie LaFrenere , PTA President at Dooley School. After a long year, and looking to the new one ahead, these are good thoughts to keep in mind...*

### **The Value of One Member**

Ten little members standing in a line.  
One disliked the president, then there were nine.  
Nine ambitious members offered to work late.  
One forgot her promise, then there were eight.  
Eight creative members had ideas as good as heaven.  
One lost enthusiasm, then there were seven.  
Seven loyal members got into a fix.  
They quarreled over programs, and then there were six.  
Six dynamic members worked with spirit and drive.  
One moved away, and then there were five.  
Five steadfast members wished there were more.  
One became indifferent, and then there four.  
Four cheerful members who never disagree-  
'til one complained of meetings, and then there were three.  
Three eager members! What do they do?  
One got discouraged, and then there were two.  
Two lonely members; our rhyme is nearly done.  
One joined a bridge club, then there was one.  
One faithful member was feeling rather blue—  
Met with a neighbor, then there were two.  
Two earnest members each enrolled one more-  
Doubling their number, and then there were four.  
Four determined members just couldn't wait  
'til each won another, and then there were eight!  
Eight excited members signed up sixteen more.  
In another six verses, there'll be a thousand twenty-four!  
(Author unknown)