

CouncilConnections

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ICPT 37

Message from the Illinois PTA President

My webmaster tells me each month that I need to write something to inspire, inform, and activate people to be better persons in the lives of children. I try each month to put together a message that gives you some inspiration to go out into the community and work for children – be it contacting a legislator on an issue, working with local authorities to correct a ‘not-so-good’ situation, or asking you to reach out to others in making your PTA a better organization. This time I ask that you think of what it is that your Illinois PTA can do for you this year.



Have we met your expectations? Have we reached out to you in a timely manner? Would it be easier for you if we contacted you strictly by email? Would a personal phone call be of any assistance to your PTA unit? Would you be interested in having a member of your Illinois PTA State Board of Managers visit with your board or unit?

We hope that you take the time to contact us, either by email or phone, with your comments and concerns. A good organization runs on the feedback of those it comes in contact with during the year. Unlike the phrase on my post it note pads - “We’re not *control freaks*. We just happen to know what’s best for everybody else.” – We, your State Board of Managers, need to hear from you.

Hugs,
Jean
Illinois PTA President

2009 PTA Public Policy Agenda

PTA published the **2009 PTA Public Policy Agenda** after presenting the document to President-elect Barack Obama’s education transition team in a one-on-one meeting in December 2008. The Agenda focuses on three key priorities: parent engagement in education; equity and opportunity for all children; and child health.

The priorities were selected based on the following criteria:

- Timeliness of issue (is it being considered before Congress and the Administration)

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- Opportunities for PTA to provide leadership and expertise to Congress
- Alignment to mission and resolutions
- Ability to achieve a meaningful policy change that will produce positive results for children and their families

Review the Agenda at http://pta.org/public_policy_agenda.asp to take a closer look at what national PTA is focusing on for the upcoming year.

Information courtesy of pta.org.

STC Reflections Program

WOW! The students in District 54 are so talented and creative! It was truly amazing to see the awesome hard work of our students at the Reflections exhibit last November. It was great to see how many people came to observe all the talent that night. The Reflections theme this year was "WOW!". Entries ranged from pictures and drawings near and far to poems and stories about nature, and what means WOW to them. STC had 365 visual art, photography, musical composition, dance choreography, film/video production, and literature projects submitted. Each one revealed the personality and effort that went into creating it. 82 of those projects were sent on to the next level, which is PTA District 37. We just found out that 13 of those projects were sent to Illinois PTA level. Thanks to the local PTA Reflections chairpersons who encouraged and assisted the students, and who carefully wrapped artwork in cellophane, made sure forms were filled out correctly, and organized it all. Congratulations to everyone!

Tammy Loch
STC Reflections Chair

Environmental Education

The District 54 Recycling Committee met last Thursday and I am happy to report that the Tech Drop date for this spring has been set for Saturday, April 18th. More information is to come. Please remember, this event will be to collect large electronic items such; computer components, microwaves, phones, etc. A combined collection effort with the Community Closet is still being worked out. Feel free to share this information with your friends, family and neighbors. If you find you cannot wait until spring or have other questions about disposing of any type of item, please let me know, and I will try to set you up with an alternative plan.

I am also thrilled to announce that the district would like to expand upon the Waste-Free lunch initiative that it hosted during Earth Week last year. Beginning in March every school is encouraged to participate in Trashless Tuesdays! We understand that each school may need to adjust this day according to their PTA Hot Lunch Schedule. In which case, we ask you to set aside one day each week to support this effort. Try Waste-Free Wednesday, or use any other catchy and easy to remember tag you would like to invent for your chosen day! More information, including flyers, morning announcements and newsletter articles, is on the way. Please contact me at any time if you have any questions or need any help at all.

The district wide co-mingled recycling effort begun this year is showing good results. There is a measurable reduction in trash. The district will soon be reviewing the pick up schedule at each school to see if there are opportunities to make money saving adjustments. Our waste-free efforts should help to make an even larger impact, which will be important as the cost for waste and recyclable disposal will likely rise in the upcoming years. Purchasing items in bulk, rather than individually wrapped, will also save our parents money throughout the year, much needed in this economy.

Please continue to take your shoes, pet supplies and media items to the Nature Center at any time and contact me if you have any questions!

Michelle Mussman
STC Environmental Education Chair

Hanover Highlands School

Margaret Mead, a famous anthropologist, once said *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

This has been very evident with the Hanover Highlands Elementary School PTA. They have provided numerous opportunities for parents, students, and community members to become actively involved not only at the school but also active members of their community. As the new principal here at Hanover Highlands I have been very impressed with the work ethic and the level of commitment exhibited by our PTA on a daily basis. So on behalf of all of our staff and students I sincerely thank the Hanover Highlands PTA for their dedication, their compassion, and for providing activities that foster a sense of school spirit and pride as well as being actively involved with helping to make our school community a better place for all students. Never before has the old adage of ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ been more true than it is today. These small groups of thoughtful and committed citizens are changing the world one student at a time. Please continue to be actively involved in not only your child's life but in the lives of others- the future of our society depends on small groups of people just like yourselves. Again thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,
David Negrón
Principal Hanover Highlands

STC Newsletter Question for January

“How does your school handle getting parents to clearly understand when something is going home and needs to be returned or paid for, such as; Entertainment Books, Spring photos, etc.?”

In a normal situation, a letter (cover letter) is sent home with the items stating something like: "Please find enclosed a Entertainment book, if you are interested in purchasing this, please return a check written to Churchill School or cash. The cost is....., if you want more, please contact

someone. If you are not interested in purchasing this, please send this back to school with your child. Thank you.”

Tina Rommel
Churchill School

Armstrong tries to leave the children out of it, using direct contact with parents when possible. For example, Entertainment Books are left on children's desks during Curriculum Night. Alternately, we use short notes when the direct approach is not possible, perhaps clipping or stapling to packet.

Christine Bock
Armstrong School

Lincoln Prairie chooses not to participate in spring photos or entertainment books and possibly that is why this last photo push was not well received by our community.

Brandy Krupa
Lincoln Prairie School

We have a weekly family folder--(one per family, goes home with youngest or only child, goes out every Monday and we ask that it be returned by Wednesday). Only school news and info go into this folder and we ask parents that things that need to be returned be returned in it on Wednesday. However, things do not always happen that way, and sometimes a reminder notice needs to go out, preferably in the next folder. We try not to send out a mass handout during the middle of the week. If there is an odd thing, like spring pictures it is preferable that it go out on Mondays, (we are hoping that we have trained our parents to look for info on Mondays!) with an additional note explaining what it is and what needs to be done. That doesn't always work either but we try.

Joyce Prigge
Einstein School