

CouncilConnections

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STC Outreach Program

As I hope many of you have seen, the STC Outreach Program is well under way this month. I had the big idea that going to 27 PTA meetings in one month would be fairly straightforward. As it turns out, all of our PTA meetings occur generally on 1 of 5 nights. So it's been a little hectic, but the other officers and I have managed to make it to quite a few of your meetings already. Thanks to Debbie, Tom, Julie, Jean and Kathy for making the rounds with me. I can't speak for them, but for my part, I have truly enjoyed the time I have gotten to spend at the local unit meetings.

Campi's Ms. McDonald reminded me of my theory that every PTA has a unique character. It is true that at each new school, I find a hard working PTA with a personality all its own. My home school at Einstein works so hard with the dedicated core group that have. Campinelli was warm and friendly with lots of familiar faces. Nerge, always bigger than life, even had a Past Illinois PTA President in their midst the night I visited. I'm pretty sure they didn't even need me! Anne Fox's PTA struck me as a close knit family, with the board, principal, staff and even a brand new parent member all sitting around one big table. At Collins, there was a casual get-the-job-done attitude that was great to see. They even put a WELCOME sign up so I'd know where to go.

That's all to say how impressed I've been with the welcome I found everywhere I went. My message that we are all connected has been well received, and seeing your PTAs in action has illustrated that point even further to me. If you haven't had an STC visitor yet, be patient with us. We may have to catch you next month, but we look forward to seeing all of our local units.

Thank you, too, for working hard to find auction items and generating interest in the auction. It's going to be a super night – the Pro Bowl of Fundraisers. It will be amazing to see so many men and women who care so deeply for our community, together in one place for a great cause.

Keep up the good work. The fantastic things you are doing at the local level perks up to help STC better serve this community. I hope that goes both ways.

Best,

Mary Kay Prusnick
STC President

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Hanover Highlands

Hanover Highlands has been named a No Excuses University (NEU) by Turnaround Schools due to our belief that all children can and will learn. This belief system guides our daily instruction as we prepare our students to be life long learners and provide them with the necessary tools so that they can attend college one day. Our PTA has played an integral part of in our ability to become a No Excuses University. This year our PTA was gracious enough to donate a t-shirt with our NEU logo as well as with the child's graduating year from college on the front of the shirt to every child in our school. We are fortunate to have such an involved parental community. We have also been fortunate in that we have been able to develop relationships with universities throughout United States from Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Wisconsin and of course Illinois to name just a few. All of our staff here at Hanover Highlands works very hard to ensure that all of our students receive the best possible education. As a result of all of our hard work we have seen excellent academic gains and our school community continues to flourish as we continue to grow as a professional learning community.



Sincerely,
David Negrón
Hanover Highlands Principal

Link School

Happy New Year! It was nice to have a break to rejuvenate and prepare for the next few busy PTA months. Our school is in the same situation that many schools are or have been in over the years. We have a large base of very involved parents whose last child is entering junior high in the next year or two. I have been actively pursuing ways to involve a new group of parents from the younger grades, and slowly I see it paying off. The last two years we have had a volunteer sign up table at School of Information day. Each committee that needs volunteers during the year has a sign up sheet that contains information about the event or committee, and parents are able to sign up to help in areas they feel comfortable. Our Volunteer Committee chair is available to encourage parents to sign up and answer questions. We give this sign up sheet to the committee chair, and they are then able to call on these volunteers when they are needed. It has eliminated our struggle to find volunteers as the events near, and allows parents to learn more about how PTA serves our students. It has also brought new parents in to help, and I hope that the result down the road is a new group of members willing to accept the more challenging board and chairperson positions.

Christine Kawalek
Link PTA President

Keller Junior High

As a member of the Keller PTA executive board, I am part of some decisions that affect our students while at school. Such as Special Lunch, Spring Pictures and Spirit Wear, to name a few. Usually, I am asking for volunteers or Thanking the parent volunteers. But this month I would like to give

praise to our Keller Music Department and the Art Department. Having students in each, I feel compelled to thank them and the School District for the opportunities given our children.

After attending the Choral Concert and the Band Concert at the Junior High level, it is amazing to see the depth of commitment these teachers give to our students. With the Band department, it starts way back in 5th grade. I was astounded by how amazing 7th and 8th grade bands sounded. The progression of their skill is so evident in their performances! Kudos to the band teachers for the skills they are teaching our students. The Orchestra Department did a fantastic job too! I can't imagine how hard it is to play a string instrument, but the kids continue to make improvements every time I get the chance to hear them. The pieces they played were moving and inspiring.

The Keller Chorus teacher should be commended. I recently attended one of their performances and they sounded terrific, so it is not surprising that they were given the honor of a repeat performance at the Partnership breakfast! That my student would enjoy being in chorus and invite half our family to a performance, speaks volumes. It is yet another way for our students to appreciate music as an expression of how we live.

You only have to look around to see the difference the Art Department has on Keller Jr. High. The beautiful murals on the walls make the school come alive. Having a love of art since I was a child, I truly appreciate having an Art program at Keller and so does my student. She walks around with pride, showing the work that she has had a part in creating.

We are a very lucky group of parents to have our children in District 54 schools that recognize that Music is an important part of our student's education. It is not surprising that parents have admitted to moving to this area so their children can attend District 54 schools. Music is part of our lives every day, in commercials and TV shows we watch, in the car on the way to work or maybe just while you are cleaning house. So wouldn't it be amazing if one of our students was a part of that one day? PTA gives us parents a VOICE, to be heard by our school districts and school boards and legislators. To borrow a quote : "It shouldn't take our creative leaders shouting from the tallest mountains that arts-based education is the key to developing the kind of workers they need to grow their industries. We should all recognize the role of the arts in our lives and create opportunities for each individual to develop the kind of open-ended creativity and thought processes which are critical to reaching our highest human intellectual and economic achievements." -Dylan Kendall, Founder and Executive Director of Hollywood Arts — I couldn't agree more.

Janessa Wagner
Keller PTA President

Armstrong School

*Volunteer \Vol'un*teer"\, v. i. To enter into, or offer for, any service of one's own free will, without solicitation or compulsion; as, "He volunteered in that undertaking."*

Source: Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

At age 15, I decided I wanted to be a candy striper at a local hospital. To do this, I had to get a social security number, then travel to downtown Chicago to fill out forms for a worker's permit...

TO VOLUNTEER. There were no paychecks, no tips, no travel reimbursements, no tax benefits involved. I used my allowance and lunch money to get to and from the hospital via the CTA every weekend. That, to me, was the definition of volunteering...sacrificing to help make someone's life easier or better. This was over 30 years ago, but for me, it was a defining period in my life. I always knew I would return to volunteer work later in life, after my career was established and my children

were grown, but I never expected volunteering would bring me to the PTA. I try to bring that same spirit to my current position as PTA President at Armstrong School.

Recently, I overheard someone say this about PTA: "If you want me to do that much work, you should pay me". Frankly, I was stunned. I know times are different now, but should money drive everything we do? Obviously, the answer is "no". If that were the case, there would be no PTA.

If you currently volunteer your time to the PTA, stop and think about why you do it. Tap into the feelings you had after helping at the first few events you attended. If you are not bringing that attitude to everything you do today, ask yourself "why?". Are you hesitant to ask for help? Are you doing too much? Are you doing it for the wrong reasons? Can others tell you are burned out? If so, you may be scaring away people who would like to volunteer by making comments like the one I overheard. Or perhaps you appear frustrated and overwhelmed all the time? If you appear to be struggling, how can you inspire others?

Give yourself an attitude check. Find someone you can mentor. Ask them to help with one event and stay by their side throughout the event, coaching and praising their efforts. Don't forget to say "Thank you" to your fellow volunteers when the event is over. The time you spend guiding them can come back to you in many ways. Not only will you have help when you need it, you might start feeling that joy again.

Alternately, if you still find purpose in your work with PTA, find someone to share those good feelings with. Invite a neighbor or friend's parents to a meeting or event. Offer to carpool. If they can't make it this month, ask again in a month or two. Spread the word after a meeting by highlighting upcoming events. Let everyone know that simple everyday things are the only skills they need...serving beverages and snacks, setting up tables, collecting tickets, helping children find age-appropriate books...again, very simple things. If everyone gives a little, we can benefit a lot.

Giving of yourself to help others...isn't that why we're here?

*Christine Bock
Armstrong PTA President*

STC Newsletter Question for December

*How much does your school charge for PTA Memberships now
and what if any change do you plan to make next year?*

Dirksen Membership is \$5.00 per person. We list family as \$10.00 and each person gets a card so there really isn't a family rate, just a single form for both parents to complete rather than two forms.

As for rates next year, we still need to discuss. I'm thinking \$6.00 per person but we would need to vote on this - I plan to take the results of this poll to the meeting to discuss.

*Michelle Courtney
Dirksen PTA President*

At Hale we charge \$5 per membership. The amount will be raised but we are not sure how much yet.

*Sandi Pyne
Hale PTA President*

Frost is \$5/ person.\$6 is what we are probably going to end up at next year. Personally would like to make it \$10, though not sure if can make it happen.

Mike Scharringhausen
Frost PTA President

Link also charges \$5.00 and is thinking of raising it to \$6.00.

Christine Kawalek
Link PTA President

Stevenson's PTA membership is \$5.00.

Lisa Guagenti
Stevenson PTA President

Dooley charges \$5.00/person for membership to our PTA. I wasn't sure if \$6.00 is too much... but thought it was a nice round number, maybe \$5.50 is better?

Julie LaFrenere
Dooley PTA President

Blackwell currently charges \$5 and we give a magnet with school info on it-We are talking right now about increasing \$6 and charging for the magnet if they want it.

Kim Mack
Blackwell PTA Co-President

We charge \$7.00 for parents and other adults, 3.50 for students and seniors. We highly encourage parents to sign up their children, and we've been pretty successful at getting student memberships (although I haven't studied this year's membership list so I'm not sure what the numbers are).

We decided to keep the prices the same this year as they have been in the past, and we'll decide on next year's costs when we do our budget over the summer

Caryn Wagner
Lincoln Prairie PTA Presiden

Eisenhower \$5 now. Not sure for next year.
Tom Goodrich
Eisenhower PTA President

Mead \$5 not sure about next year.
Kathy Pritscher
Mead PTA President

Collins charges \$5. Membership will increase next year just don't know yet by how much but thinking at least \$1 to \$1.50 increase.

Rhonda Riefski
Collins PTA Co-President

We charged \$4.00 now and probably will up it to \$5.00 next year.

Theresa Hafer
Nerge PTA President

5 individual and 10 for family. Next year has not been formally decided upon but we are leaning toward keeping dues the same.

Rose Ann Caboor
Fairview PTA President

Churchill school currently charges \$5.00 a person which included a magnet. Next year we are raising the price.

Tina Rommel
Churchill PTA President

Muir PTA is currently charging \$5, next year it will most likely be \$6.

Grazia Cortez
Muir PTA President

We also charge \$5.00 for each membership. We have been discussing a price increase for next year. Nothing has been set as of yet.

Laurel McGrath
MacArthur PTA President

We currently charge \$5.00 for an Armstrong PTA membership. Numbers are currently down, so I am hoping we can stay at \$5.00 but we will have to discuss at the next meeting.

Christine Bock
Armstrong PTA President

Our Board decided last night to increase our dues from \$5 to \$6 per member. We will be bringing that vote before our General Membership this spring.

Sharon Janega
Aldrin PTA President

Parent Involvement

Have you considered using Parent Involvement to drive your membership? Maybe you have parents that come in to help out in a classroom or at a holiday party, but haven't joined PTA yet. Get together with your chairs that use a lot of volunteers – book fair, holiday workshop, fun fair and class parties – see who is on their list that maybe isn't on the membership list. Sometimes there is an education component that needs to happen. Parents might be happy to come in once or twice to volunteer for an event that they know is important to their child, but are still worried that PTA will hound them if they become a member.

Rather than using membership to always drive your volunteers, look at volunteers that could be potential PTA members. Work at getting them in the door and making a difference at school. Gradually, you can help them understand that we are all in it to make a better place for our children – and isn't that EXACTLY what PTA is all about?



Important Auction Dates to Remember:

- February 3 Commitment forms due
- February 17 Dinner RSVPs due to Julie Johnson
- February 19 Warehouse Drop-off 9-12
 - Centerpieces
 - Donations
 - Volunteer Forms
- March 5 FIRST AND TEN, BID AGAIN!

Do you know a graduating senior?

Encourage them to apply for the
STC High School Scholarship.

STC is offering twelve \$2,000 scholarships to students that attended a District 54 Elementary School for at least one year and a District Jr. High School for two years. Applications can be found at [www.stc.edu](#) and are due at the end of January.

**2009-2010
Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs
Nomination Form**

I nominate* _____ for the position of _____

The reason I feel this person would be a good fit for this position is:

-OR-

I nominate myself, _____ for the position of _____

The reason I feel I would be a good fit for this position is:

Please return this form to any member of the nominating committee, listed below,
by January 20, 2010

Jenn Maze	Churchill	Laura Nevel	Fairview
Sharon Janega	Aldrin	Linda Walser	Addams
Mike Scharringhausen	Frost	Terrie Poczatek	Mead
Christine Kawalek	Link		
Julie Johnson, alt.	Eisenhower	Larry Gray, alt.	Eisenhower

When nominating another person, please get their consent prior to turning in the form.