

# CouncilConnections

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## Message from the Illinois PTA President

### March Madness

No I'm not talking about basketball, but about the PTA events that are occurring during this month. I hope that you will be attending the state convention on March 13-15. Sending someone to represent your PTA unit is a good expenditure of your PTA monies. It is your right to be present to help your fellow PTA members determine the actions that will affect the things which guide your state and, hence, local PTA. We will be voting on bylaw changes, new officers, resolutions, and hearing about what has occurred over the past ten years concerning the Juvenile Justice Report. This report was brought about due to the action of the delegate body in 1998.



At the national level, PTA members will be 'storming' Capital Hill to talk with senators and representatives about the issues that pertain to child welfare. I hope that you will take the time during March to contact your legislators and make them aware of your concerns. A brief note – whether regular mail or email – is better than no mail. Legislators must hear from their constituents if they are to make informed decisions about the bills that they will be voting on during the sessions. Act now! It's for your child's welfare.

Hugs,  
Jean  
*Illinois PTA President*

## Dara Torres Joins Team PTA

**CHICAGO (February 9, 2009)** – The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is making a splash with Olympic gold medalist and mother, [Dara Torres](#), who will be announced as its newest National Ambassador. The five-time Olympic swimmer will help boost parent involvement by talking to families and educators about the importance of being engaged in the lives of children.

"My mom has always been an active advocate for children and continues to be very involved. As a busy parent myself, I know how difficult it may be for parents across the country to be engaged

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in their child's life and education," said Torres. "That's why I'm proud to support PTA's mission as they create innovative ways for today's parents to be involved through technology and helpful resources."

Torres, who has won 12 Olympic medals, is committed to helping parents be involved and she leads by example. As adamantly as she trains, she is equally steadfast in her vital role as a mother to her two-year-old.

"I also believe that now more than ever it's important that parents take action and advocate for all children to have the same opportunity to succeed. Whether it's simply being a PTA member, donating to the cause or getting engaged with advocacy efforts, everyone who cares about children and education has a stake in the future of our country," said Torres.

In her new role as a PTA Ambassador, Torres will join millions of parents and educators to work toward improving the lives of children, as well as urging parents and other family members and caregivers to be more involved. Torres follows in the footsteps of dozens of community leaders, celebrities, legislators, and U.S. Presidents, all of whom have lent their voices and support to National PTA to make a difference in the lives of children. Torres, who has millions of fans around the globe, will also lend her support at PTA events by speaking directly with kids, working with National PTA to provide relevant information to parents, and being a strong advocate for education.

"National PTA is thrilled to add Dara Torres as the anchor on our Ambassador team," said National PTA President Jan Harp Domene. "Dara serves as an excellent example. She trains vigorously and fulfills her commitments, yet with such a busy schedule she dedicates quality time with her daughter. She's dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth—and that's what PTA is all about."

*Article Courtesy of National PTA at PTA.org*

## **STC Elementary Scholarship**

We are hoping for a great turn in for the Summer Scholarships this year. We set up a committee at the beginning of this year to look over the application and process to help define things. We kept a lot of it the same but added a few changes to try to make the application process better. We added a checklist to the application to hopefully cut down on the missing items that we have seen in the past. We defined the dates that the scholarship qualifies for. We made the Identification and Certification sheet one page instead of two to hopefully avoid people missing one of those pages. The scholarships are due to their local schools by 3:30p on April 1, 2009. The students will be notified by mail on or around May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Julie Johnson  
*STC Elementary Scholarship Chair*

## **School District 54 Blood Drive a Great Success!**

On Tuesday, February 17th, many people came to the District 54 Office Building for the 2nd blood drive of the school year. This event only lasted 5 hours, and the representatives from Heartland Blood Centers said it was a very successful drive. 84 people came, and only 6 people were deferred, therefore 78 units of blood were donated! Let me explain it in even bigger terms, each unit of blood can help save up to 3 lives, that means our district alone will be helping up to 234 people in need! I don't know about you, but said in those terms, I would say it was worth every drop and every minute spent (it actually doesn't cost the donor a cent either!)

Thank you to those of you that either donated your blood and/or your time volunteering to help run the drive. Thanks also to all the Health & Safety Chairpeople or PTA Presidents that helped to secure donors or volunteers for the drive- this is an endeavor that no one can do alone! If you were unable to donate at this drive, please consider going to one of the Heartland Blood Centers or any blood center and donating. Blood is something that is needed every day and is so easy to give. Check out [www.heartlandbc.org](http://www.heartlandbc.org) for more information.

Thank you!

Jean Lemp  
*STC Health & Safety Chairperson*

## **Fairview School**

The school year is just humming along. February was a packed month with PTA activities and school related events. At the beginning of February, we held the traditional Celebrate Reading and Writing Evening. This year the event moved from a weekday to Friday night. Also, we moved it from the school library to tables outside of the classrooms. Families were able to stroll the halls looking at the art work displayed and to read books from our favorite up and coming authors of Fairview. We received many compliments on this layout. Also, we added a Family Pasta Dinner on the same evening. One Night, One School, two fun events. Walking into the school that night, it never smelled so good. Yum! A great success. Both events were well attended and brought the Fairview Families to school.

Reading Recognition held a skating party for the readers who turned in their minutes on time and at the right level. How fun to have the skating rink all to ourselves.

One of our goals this year was to be more green. We have reduced copies and gone from full sheet to half sheets where we can to save paper; however, our biggest push involved our PTA Newsletter. We have been advertising since last year that January 2009 we were going paperless. In a last ditch effort to convert more to the electronic version, I sent home a personally addressed note to the 200 families still getting hard copies asking them to "Go Green". The response was wonderful, we now have only 51 families getting hard copies. We view this as a major success. We did not want to cut off anyone from getting communications from school; however, we did want to encourage families to be more environmentally friendly by going electronic. Another addition this year was the introduction of the Fairview Flash, an electronic supplement to the monthly newsletter. It allows for fast communication between newsletters when needed.

We continue to try new things and invite the Fairview community to be involved. There are still a few more months and we will be holding several upcoming events including a community service opportunity this spring.

RoseAnne Caboor  
*Fairview PTA President*

## **Nerge School**

Nerge PTA has many wonderful programs that we offer our students. One of the best programs that come to my mind is our ISAT snacks. Every morning of ISAT testing the PTA provides a healthy snack for students. The snacks typically include string cheese, Gogurt, apple sauce, fruit cups and bananas. The kids look forward to their “brain” food. We have been doing this for the past three years and it has become very successful.

Mucia Burke  
*Nerge PTA President*

## **Helen Keller PTA**

This year sure has gone by very fast. I can't believe it is March already. This is my second year as Keller PTA President, and it has been an enriching experience. It is amazing how the parents from four different feeder schools come together for a common goal. I have met a lot of people who are willing to help our PTA over the last two years. It has been a pleasure to work with such dedicated volunteers!

Our PTA held our annual fall Gym Jam last November. The students enjoyed Karaoke, dancing, basketball, volleyball, crafts, ping pong, Twister game, and of course lots of food to eat. We have tried to have a second Gym Jam of the year, in the winter or early spring, and it didn't generate enough interest.

In March, our Cultural Arts Committee will sponsor a Presidential Assembly. It should be very informative for our students. In early May we will have graduation pictures taken for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who choose to do so. At the end of May there are several things being planned from PTA. We provide lunch for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and we will hold our annual “8<sup>th</sup> Grade Event” for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Last year, we tried something new. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders enjoyed a comedy night with dinner, and during the day, in their gym class, they enjoyed the inflatable obstacle course. This year, we will have the inflatable obstacle course and others during the day for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders. At night, we will have an assortment of games, dancing, inflatable items, pictures, and food. It should be a fun event for everyone.

Our Reflections program at Keller had an increase in the number of students participating. Hopefully it will keep increasing every year. This is such a worthwhile program for our students to show their creativity. We have learned at Keller, that it is O.K. to try new things, and keep some

things the same. If you try something new, and it doesn't work, don't do it again, or change something about it for the next time.

Tammy Loch  
PTA President  
Keller PTA

## **STC Newsletter Questions for March**

**Has anyone ever worked with a book fair company other than Scholastic?  
If so who, and how did it go?**

Our last fair with was done through the school, and not PTA, but the teacher who chaired this was EXTREMELY happy with this company and has already booked them for next year.

"Very easy to deal with. They send author signed books, and send award winning books (ie Rebecca Caudil award winners). They don't send the coloring or 'junky' stuff that Scholastic sells. We made more money from them, even with a lower profit margin. The bookkeeping end is easier because they scan everything they send you. You send all back, they scan again. If there are missing books, you are responsible [Scholastic doesn't do that] but we had no problems. You also have to wait a little longer to get your profit check- 30 days- but that is ok."

If you want to talk to the teacher in charge of this, contact Sue Mattioli at Hoover. She would be willing to answer any questions anyone may have.

The company info is:  
Anderson  
520 N. Exchange Court  
Aurora IL 60504  
630-820-0044  
TT: Katie

Donna Boomgarden  
*Hoover PTA*

Our school has used Anderson's in Naperville for our past 2 book fairs. We liked the selections they sent and thought they sent some quality children's literature. We also liked the quality of their books. They are a bit more expensive than Scholastic so our earnings from the book fair were a bit less than expected, but we thought it was worth it, so we went with them again for a 2nd year. My understanding from our book fair chair was they were easy to work with and accommodating. For example, they would have sent all paperback instead of the mixture of paperback and hard cover we received. When we used them for the 2nd year we requested books that might interest grownups and they sent us a nice selection too. We have also used Anderson's this past year for our Birthday book program which was a new program for us this year. I also like the idea of supporting a smaller local business which I believe Anderson's is.

Lisa Guagenti  
*Stevenson PTA*

Has your school or PTA ever produced a cookbook?  
Any feedback on pros and cons, etc?

Lincoln Prairie did do a cookbook 5 or 6 years ago and it went over really well. We used Morris Press which is the most commonly used for community cookbooks as far as I know. You just need to make sure you have enough people donating recipes because I believe the statistics are for every one person that donates a recipe they will usually purchase 2-3 books after printing. We just sent home the recipe form with every child and as they came back to us we entered them in online. You can also put a cute section in of recipes written by the preschoolers or kindergardners where they say things like "bake the turkey at 20 degrees for 4 days" those little ones are always a hit.

Brandy Krupa  
*Lincoln Prairie School*

This is the first year that I have seen our school, Winston Churchill, do a cookbook. Everything went well, other than we didn't have involvement from our staff. It took me 3-5 times to ask for any of the staff members to send in recipes and I think that only 1 teacher purchased one of them. I wasn't too worried about them purchasing them, but it would have been nice to have more of the teacher's recipes because the students get excited to see their teachers involvement. We had a great volunteer that headed this up and did an outstanding job.

Tina Rommel  
*Churchill PTA*