



Newsletter

15th District Office • 319 South 15th Street • Louisville, KY 40203 • (502) 485-3535

every child. one voice.®

April 2009

Together We Can ... Make a Difference

Wow! It's been an unusually busy winter for the 15th District Parent Teacher Association (PTA). In February, we were lucky to have National PTA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Byron Garrett come to town. Talk about excitement! I hope you were able to take one of the opportunities to see him speak. If not, check out the "Making Connections 2009" article on page three of this newsletter or watch his speeches at www.YouTube.com.

Winter is over, and spring is here. Prepare to celebrate!

We've been through the start-up of school, hurricane winds, and an ice storm. It's time to reward your volunteers, teachers, and staff members by saying thank you to everyone. Celebrate your accomplishments by attending the 15th District PTA Awards Banquet on **Tuesday, May 5**. Invite your principal to attend the banquet with you, as your guest, along with your board and any special volunteers. The registration form is in this issue. Come and be recognized, and honor others who deserve recognition.

As always, I greatly appreciate all of the work that you are doing in your schools. If you have any questions, call any of the 15th District PTA Board members.



Traci Priddy

Traci Priddy
15th District PTA President

What Officers and Leaders Need to Do Now!

- Make sure that officers for the 2009-10 school year are elected according to your bylaws.
- **Elect officers for the 2009-10 school year now.**
- Remember that your principal is a member of your Executive Board and that he or she has voting privileges.
- Send in new officers' information to the 15th District PTA and to the Kentucky PTA by **Monday, June 1**.
- **Attend trainings.**
- Start planning to attend Leadership/Convention in July.
- Keep an eye out for information about trainings from the 15th District PTA in August/September or before, and plan to send several people.
- Make sure that by the end of this school year you and your board know when the audit form and the tax form will be done. (All PTAs must complete both of these.) You might as well do them at the same time. The audit form is due to the Kentucky PTA. The tax form is due to the IRS, and a copy of the form is due to the 15th District PTA.
- Have your financial books audited by **Wednesday, July 1**.
- Allow money for next year's board for start-up expenses and trainings.
- Although officers must be elected, the Executive Committee appoints chairpersons.
- Continue to recruit new board members.

2009 15th District PTA Spelling Bee Winners

The 2009 15th District PTA Spelling Bee was held February 18, in cooperation with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), at the Louisville Male High School Sallie Phillips Durrett Auditorium.

Sixty-one students were eligible to participate in this year's contest. They all fought long and hard through multiple rounds. The final three standing were as follows:

First Place—Neha Srinivason, Brandeis Elementary

Second Place—Yue Zhang, Dunn Elementary

Third Place—Kylie King, Noe Middle

Congratulations to all of the student participants. We are proud of your accomplishments.

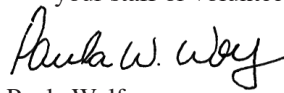
Winners will receive a government bond. The first-place winner is eligible to participate in the Derby Festival Spelling Bee with other students from Kentucky.



Ideas for Healthy Lifestyle Programs

Even though it is close to the end of the school year, it is not too late to promote healthy lifestyles at your school. Here are some ideas that were developed during a workshop on programs. You can also find informative handouts at www.pta.org.

- Give pedometers or water bottles as membership thank-you gifts.
- “Walk” to Walt Disney World or California or across the United States or Kentucky by recording steps taken during several walks. This could tie in with the curriculum and could also be a fundraiser for either playground or physical education (PE) equipment.
- At a family dinner event, hold a taste test of healthy foods that people might not try elsewhere. Ask a local grocery store to provide samples.
- Have a chef or nutritionist give suggestions for healthy lunches and dinners.
- Produce a cookbook with healthy recipes submitted by members. If a recipe is not healthy, have a nutritionist make it healthy.
- Conduct hands-on activities, such as testing food for fat content by using a brown paper bag.
- Post a Food Pyramid bulletin board in the cafeteria with pictures of food choices.
- Have a nutrition article in the newsletter every month.
- Host a Family Field Day with activities for the whole family.
- Host an informational meeting to discuss the school’s wellness policy. This policy is required by federal law and is part of your school’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).
- Invite officials from a local hospital and the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness to sponsor a health fair or free clinic on wheels. Fairs and clinics can provide health and nutrition information, information on children’s health issues and available services, immunizations for children, and demonstrations by hospital personnel or paramedics about emergency care and safety techniques.
- Host a Couch Potato to Exercise Potato Contest.
- Host a healthy breakfast/luncheon for your staff or volunteers.



Paula Wolf
Health Chair



Amending the Budget

At the beginning of the year, your board made an educated guess as to how well your fundraiser would go and how much money would be needed for all the programs that were planned. This information was shaped into a budget. Now is the time to look at your budget and make amendments to it.

If your PTA raised more funds than expected, congratulations! You now have to amend the budget to account for the extra income. This does not mean that every cent needs to be spent before the end of the school year. Funds can be carried over for programs that occur at the beginning of the school year before money is raised; however, be aware that carrying over a large amount of money does not always sit well with that general membership. PTA Board members must be good stewards

(guardians) of PTA funds and use them for programs that benefit **all** students at their school.

If your PTA bank account has taken a hit like so many of our personal bank accounts, you must amend your budget to reflect the board’s new spending priorities. That can mean that some projects will be deleted and some will need to be scaled back. For example, can you really afford to sponsor the basketball team since the number of students affected is small? This is a decision that your board must make, and there are no hard and fast rules. Just be aware that the next step in the process of amending the budget is to have it approved by the general membership (after approval by the board). You will have to explain your choices to your **entire** membership.



SBDM Parent Elections

The elections of parent members to the School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council are the responsibility of the PTA. When the SBDM Council chairperson determines how many parents need to be elected and the terms of office, based on the SBDM Bylaws, the PTA sets up the date and time for the election.

The candidates are then recruited, the parents notified, the ballots made, the elections conducted, and the principal, the candidates, and the parents are all informed of the election results.

For more information on SBDM parent elections, check the Kentucky PTA’s booklet on SBDM. Since this is a law, we cannot deviate from it.

Making Connections 2009

Did you know that you can be a Facebook friend with National PTA CEO Byron V. Garrett? Okay, so maybe you are not into all of the technology these days. It is not as if I am tech-savvy—I don't even know how to text-message, but I am trying to make connections. Mr. Garrett was recently in town to be the keynote speaker at the Louisville Urban League's Education Summit '09. Wow! What an opportunity. I checked out all of the information on Mr. Garrett at the National PTA Web site; ordered his book, *The ABC's of Life*; and made plans to attend the summit.

There was a lunch on Friday, cosponsored by the Center for Family Literacy (in partnership with Verizon) and Greater Louisville Inc. This lunch was an opportunity for PTA presidents and other board members to get a sneak peek at Mr. Garrett's keynote address and meet with him and some of the staff from National PTA. Mr. Garrett had confirmed me as a friend on Facebook, and I had sent him a message that he might want to pack an extra sweater due to the cold snap. I was impressed that when we were introduced by Rose Babiak at the lunch, he instantly knew who I was! He even autographed his book for me. This was better than the time I met author Carl Hiaasen in Ann Arbor, but that's another story.

Many of us know that now, more than ever before, parents need to make the connection with education. The PTA offers an opportunity for parents (and teachers) to have a say in everything from important fundraisers to essential advocacy. On Friday and Saturday, Mr. Garrett spoke about how parents often feel disconnected from their child's life, in part because they are unfamiliar with technology. (He said that when his nephew would text him *LOL*, he thought it meant "lots of love" not "laugh out loud.") In addition, we as parents often equate caring and concern with stuff, not time. "Our children don't need more stuff, they need us" was an often-repeated phrase and theme throughout both speeches as well.

The other part of this disconnect, which the Louisville Urban League hopes to address in its Saturday education sessions, is that many parents themselves have had a poor relationship with education and don't feel confident in their child's schools or teachers because of past personal experiences. What we have to do, as parents, educators, and PTAs, is make sure that parents' past feelings are validated and acknowledged and then give them the tools needed to regain confidence in their child's educational experience.

I left on both Friday and Saturday feeling a connection with not only the Louisville Urban League and 15th District PTA but also with the National PTA. I know that it is time to keep my calendar on a BlackBerry (if I could afford one), start learning how to send text messages, become Twitter-savvy, find out who my son's virtual-reality friends from RuneScape are, and make an effort to actually be part of the twenty-first century, which is driven by technology.

I look forward to working with my new friend, Mr. Garrett, as well as others on the staff at National PTA, and I am excited about attending the National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. It is time for all of us to connect with one another, our community, our PTA, but most importantly, our children. Remember, *every child. one voice.* Get connected, but most of all, stay connected. As the kids say, "C U L8TR, LOL."

Myrdin Thompson
Secretary



Government in Action

Here's my newest observation into "What is irony?" Being at the Capitol and seeing characters in Chik-fil-A costumes walking around the building while an animal-rights advocacy group is holding a rally in the rotunda. This is what government is all about—finding the balance between messages and the grace to let everyone's voice be heard.

Those of us who went to Frankfort for this year's Kentucky Kids' Day went on behalf of the students of Jefferson County who have entrusted us to speak for them. We delivered our Dollars for Education Forms to the offices of various senators and representatives and our governor, asking that they support education in Kentucky. I certainly don't have all the answers, and although I know that our current system must change, I'm unsure as to what the best avenue for that change might be. Therefore, I am educating myself on the issues so that when I do step up to speak, I have the back-

ground and confidence to engage in that debate.

We all know that advocacy is a part of the PTA. There are those natural speakers who are comfortable meeting with elected officials and talking about the needs of Jefferson County students. There are those who would rather write letters and e-mails. I believe that we all have the opportunity to voice our opinions, to connect with one another, and to let our elected officials know what we as parents and teachers consider important to the students we represent. On their behalf, I am excited to see how we can create our own balance with officials and those that we represent as a PTA. But I will not dress as a costumed character next year; I leave that to the professionals.

Myrdin Thompson
Secretary

Cooperation. Collaboration. Appreciation.

Since 1984, PTA Teacher Appreciation Week has been celebrated during the first full week in May. It is about forging positive partnerships between families and teachers. It's about saying thanks for teachers' dedication to excellence in education. It's about supporting teachers throughout the year through cooperation, collaboration, and expressions of appreciation.

PTA Teacher Appreciation Week is **May 3 through 9**. Local units, if you are not making it part of your spring events for families, students, and the community, then please reconsider. Activity ideas and other planning resources are available at www.pta.org/teachers.

The Importance of Board Training

The importance of training your PTA Board members cannot be stressed enough. Running a PTA is much more involved than many people realize. You aren't just volunteering at your child's school; you are running the parent organization of the school. It is like running a small business, and there are rules and regulations that you need to follow. We have information and materials to help your board get off to a smooth start.

Throughout the year, there are several opportunities for PTA Board members to obtain training on various topics. The **Kentucky PTA Convention/Leadership** meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn South, **July 16–18**. Many informative training sessions are available. The 15th District PTA offers a **Back-to-School/Back-to-PTA** workshop at the beginning of the school year. Watch the 15th District PTA newsletters for the exact date of this event. The 15th District PTA also offers **private board trainings** at your convenience. Several district officers will come to your school and

conduct a two-hour training session for your board members.

We will hold **general board training** on **Tuesday, June 16**, at the VanHoose Education Center in the Stewart Auditorium from 2 to 4 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. All incoming officers are invited to attend. We'll discuss officers' responsibilities, bylaws, fundraising, and much more. Please R.S.V.P. to Cherie Dimar at **244-5171** or at **jdimar2@aol.com**. Let us know which of the sessions you will attend and how many people will be coming from your PTA.

You can also contact Cherie Dimar if you are interested in having private board training at your school. Please provide three possible dates that your board members and principal are available for training. We look forward to hearing from you!

Cherie Dimar

Men Wanted at Convention!

113th Annual PTA National Convention & Exhibition
Friday, June 26, through Monday, June 29
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

A growing number of men are joining PTA, with a 2 percent increase in male PTA leaders just last year. And, for the first time in PTA history, a man will become the national president when Chuck Saylor is inducted during the convention in Fort Lauderdale.

The 2009 PTA National Convention is a great opportunity for dads and other men to learn how to make the most of their involvement in children's lives. There will be plenty of workshops specifically aimed at boosting male involvement, including workshops on the following topics:

- Accessing PTA's MORE alliance programs for men
- Creating organizational culture and leadership
- Building an effective parent-involvement policy
- Using new media to promote membership growth
- Helping the working parent in PTA
- Increasing the impact of men on schools

Start enlisting men to attend the convention today, and encourage them to bring the whole family. The PTA is hosting a Family Expo, and Fort Lauderdale is home to some terrific family attractions. The deadline for advance registration is **Friday, May 22**.

Send your men to pta.org/annualconvention now!

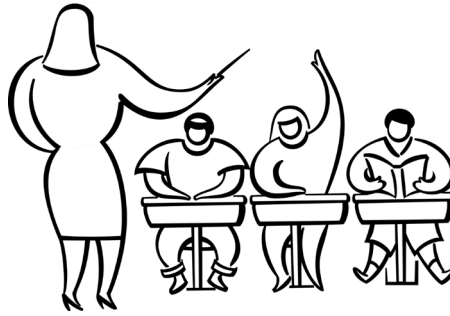
Top Ten Reasons You Should Have Training

10. You want your PTA to be organized and efficient.
9. You don't want your PTA to be just a party-giving organization.
8. You want to learn how to be an effective PTA that helps parents and families.
7. You want to follow your bylaws—the document you must follow “by law.”
6. You want to know safe and proper ways of handling your PTA's money.
5. You don't want your PTA to be just a fundraising organization.
4. You want to learn about parliamentary procedures so that your meetings will be productive.
3. You don't like to have long meetings with conversation that skips from issue to issue.
2. You don't like running your PTA by the rumors that have been passed down through the years, guessing that you're doing things the right way.
1. You want your PTA to be the best it can be.

If you agree with one or more of the above statements, you are off to a good start. You might ask, “Why do I need training in order to be on the PTA Board?” or say “Trainings are just a waste of time” or “I don't need to know all of that technical stuff.” We've heard all of the excuses! We know all of the preconceived notions about training. But, to put it bluntly, they're wrong! Training gets your board on the same page. It helps make your job easier. It helps you know the rules that will help your PTA stay out of trouble. Every PTA is responsible for its members' money. That role should not be taken lightly. Parties, celebrations, and rewards are part, but not all, of PTA life. PTA also is about helping families. Trainings can help you get started in sponsoring programs that bring students and parents together at the school; that teach parents how to be better parents; and that help make families stronger, smarter, and better. Take advantage of the services that the 15th District PTA offers. Schedule a training! Contact Cherie Dimar at **244-5171** or by e-mail at **jdimar2@aol.com**.

Teacher Appreciation Ideas for Parents

You and your child's teacher are working together to raise a great child. Here's how to show your thanks for a job well done.



1. Say thanks. Take time to write a personal note to your child's teacher, thanking him or her for the time and effort he or she has given throughout the year.
2. Give a gift certificate. Teachers often spend their own money to buy classroom supplies and special teaching items.
3. Send flowers or a plant to the teachers' lounge in your school to celebrate all teachers.
4. Volunteer. Help out in the school or classroom during the week. Serve as a chaperone for the next field trip. Your involvement not only helps the teachers, but it also benefits your child and you. That's a three-for-one-deal! Don't forget to reinforce at home what's being taught in the classroom. Let teachers know you want to be involved.
5. Give a gift basket.
6. Create a memory book.
7. Make a bouquet of thanks. Your child can color and cut flowers out of paper and then write a word of thanks on each flower. Help your child come up with words that compliment and best describe his or her teachers. Remind your child of words that will make his or her teacher feel good, such as: *Thank you so much! You're great! You taught me a lot! You make school fun! I'm glad you're my teacher!*
8. Give a report card. Your child can make his or her teacher a thank-you card that looks like a report card. Include areas for grading such as: *Makes Class Fun, Helps Me Learn a Lot, or Smiles Every Day.* Grade teachers with the same phrases they use: *Super! Great Job! or Hard Worker!*

9. Do five nice things. Your child can pledge to do five things, one each day, during Teacher Appreciation Week. Help them choose realistic activities, such as helping the teacher put away supplies, cleaning out a classroom closet, or drawing a special picture.
10. Give balloons with the words *Thank you* for all you do!
11. Teachers might appreciate popcorn and cold bottles of water.
12. Bundle a few Hershey's Hugs and Kisses into a tulle-net bag and wrap with ribbon (maybe in school colors). Include this little note:
*These Hugs and Kisses
Are just for you
To say thank you
For the things you do!
Great teachers
Are hard to find
Thanks for teaching
And sharing your mind*
13. One day parents could prepare a potluck lunch for the teachers. Everyone could bring something.
14. Give an apple or an orange to each staff member with a message such as:
*To say thanks
We have left you this treat.
Our PTA thinks
You are all really neat!*
15. And remember—Teachers are not the only people in the school who interact with students. Follow these suggestions to **show appreciation for all staff members.**

PTA Bylaws

Bylaws need to be resubmitted every five years. This enables the school to regularly discuss whether changes are needed. Items that should be discussed include:

- The amount charged for dues. This could change over time due to the needs of the PTA.
- The number of vice presidents. The titles and duties of officers and board members are spelled out in detail in your standing rules, which also might need updating to stay in sync.
- The number of general meetings. The purpose of each general meeting can be included in the standing rules to allow everyone to understand the flow of the year.
- The Nominating Committee size, when members are elected, and who elects them (the general membership or the PTA Board).
- What represents a quorum. This could change over time as the size of the PTA changes.

Other items to review include:

- The term of office for elected officers and succession rules.
- The SBDM election procedures, which should be in your standing rules. A copy is supposed to be sent to the Kentucky PTA Office per the bylaws.

If the bylaws for your school's PTA need to be updated this school year, you should have received notification on the envelope that contained this year's membership cards and the *Kentucky PTA Leader's Notebook*. You may have received these items at the state convention, at a local unit board training, through the Pony, or from the 15th District PTA Office through pickup arrangements with the district president. Please contact Syndra Scherffius or Traci Priddy if you have any questions about your bylaws.

Locating Resources for Students With Special Needs

As a parent of a son who has multiple special needs, I know that sometimes it can be frustrating and time-consuming to locate available and needed resources for my son. I have always tried to share information with other parents that I hope will be beneficial to them.

I would like to share some helpful resources that I have found for parents/guardians of children with special needs:

Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities at www.yellowpagesforkids.com

Once you have accessed this page, click on your state and you will find such resources as educational consultants, health-care providers, psychologists, therapists, advocates, attorneys, special education schools, respite care, and parent groups.

Wrightslaw Newsletter at www.wrightslaw.com

This Web site offers a special education electronic newsletter that you can subscribe to for free. The newsletter provides valuable information about special education law, advocacy, parenting information, and more. Wrightslaw also offers training seminars across the country. There are resource books that you can purchase from the Web site. You can also access previous issues of the newsletter.

The Schafer Autism Report at <http://lists.envirolink.org/mailman/listinfo/sareport>

You can subscribe to *The Schafer Autism Report (SAREport)* electronic newsletter. *The SAREport* monitors several autism-related e-mail lists, keeps up with larger dailies and Web sites for important news and developments, and sends the informa-

tion to your e-mail address once a day. You can also review prior postings by visiting *The SAREport* archives on the Web site.

Reading Rockets at www.readingrockets.org/newsletters

You can subscribe to *Reading Rockets News*, a free newsletter for news and information about reading, learning disabilities, and finding strategies and techniques to help teach your child to read. There are also more resources on the Web site, such as reading guides.

World of Dyslexia Newsletter at www.dyslexia-teacher.com/t23.html

This bimonthly, free newsletter keeps you updated on the latest news and research about dyslexia.

The Council on Mental Retardation at www.councilonmr.org

This organization provides information on resources for people with mental disabilities. It offers free outreach workshops on planning for the future for families, advocates, and friends of children/adults with disabilities. You can also subscribe to the newsletter that is mailed out by calling **584-1239**.

Kentucky Education Rights at www.edrights.com

This Web site is for families of children ages 3 to 21 years old with physical and mental disabilities that relate to the public school systems. There is information and support on such topics as advocacy, Social Security, family need networking, and Individual Education Programs (IEPs)/Section 504.

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Kentucky at www.ldaofky.org

This Web site offers helpful resources on learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). There are printable resource guides for parents/guardians on IEP/Section 504, understanding the special education process, and more. There is also information about parent/guardian support groups and other helpful links. You can also sign up for LDA of Kentucky's e-mail newsgroup.

Medline Plus at www.medlineplus.org

You will find information on prescription drugs, their purposes, side effects, and more. It is important to know as much as you can so that you are well informed. You should always communicate any concerns to doctors. You are the best advocate your child has.

Find a Future at www.findafuture.org

This Web site offers information on local and regional supports, services, and products for parents/guardians and educators of children and adults with disabilities.

I hope you find some helpful information from these resources. You are the best advocate for your child. Remember to also take care of yourself so that you are at your best for your child.

Theresa Mayfield
Exceptional Child Education (ECE)
Chairperson



15th District PTA Awards Banquet



May 05, 2009
6:30 p.m., Holiday Inn



2715 Fern Valley Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40213

15th District PTA Awards Banquet will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 05, 2009 at the Holiday Inn.
We are looking forward to a fantastic banquet.

Join us and celebrate all of your PTA/PTSA accomplishments for the year! Each table will seat ten people.

Reservations are \$30.00 a person if received by April, 15th, 2009

Reservations are \$40.00 if received April 16th, through April 30th, 2009

We are unable to accept reservations after April 30th, 2009

To be sure that your PTA holds as many seats as you require, send in your reservations as soon as possible. If you need to be seated with another school, please send both in at the same time.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Gardner, 502-499-9779

Send reservations to:

15th District PTA, Banquet Reservations
319 South 15th Street
Louisville, KY 40203

**Dinner will be Fresh Garden Salad, Chicken Rosemary, Vegetable, Rolls, Dessert, Coffee and Tea
Vegetarian Meal is available, if ordered on this form, in advance.**

Name of your PTA or JCPS Office or Other Guest _____

Name of a Contact person and phone number _____

Number of Reservations at \$30.00 by April 15, 2009 _____

Amount of check enclosed _____

Number of Reservations at \$40.00 if sent April 16, 2009 – April 30, 2009 _____

Amount of check enclosed _____

Number of Vegetarian Dinners needed and the person's name ordering the meal: _____

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www.jcpsky.net/Programs/PTA/index.html

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