Getting to School 101

By Maria Sweezy, former Events/Programs Associate

I f you have not subscribed to the analogy of good parents being like early 20th century ring leaders at a traveling circus (i.e. live lions, hoops on fire, questionable safety nets) you haven’t experienced a morning on a school day. Within a matter of hours they manage to get mostly everyone bathed, clothed, teeth brushed, and prepared for their day. Albeit, some may have mismatched socks.

The grand finale is always getting the kids off to their designated locations. For some it means strapping them into their car seats in the back seat while they eat a granola bar for breakfast because they suddenly don’t like eggs. Others are hustling/dragging a 30 pound first grader down the street. Many are waiting for a big yellow bus to take the kids away while checking their watch knowing their meeting is in 15 minutes. Somehow, they all manage to get them where they need to be every week day morning.

Transportation is the link between home and school. Whether it is walking, riding a bike, in the back of your own car, or on the school bus. Here at New York State PTA, we value all aspects of children getting the education they rightfully deserve, that means safe transportation to and from their educational facilities. The NYS Department of Transportation realized that information on safe transportation for kids was missing from our conversations as a community. Together we have developed a program called “Every Child Travels Safely,” grant funded through the NYS Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee.

“Every Child Travels Safely” is a traffic safety program which your local PTA hosts through the guidance and support of NYS PTA. Because the program is directed by you, it can be made to fit the needs of your community.

The first step is reaching out to NYS PTA to schedule a date in our calendar. From there, NYS PTA provides the local unit with planning documents such as RSVPs, save the date templates, template letters to community partners, and a list of ideas of who to invite. After that, your local unit is responsible for reaching out to your school’s administration, community partners, and volunteer support staff. On the day of the event, NYS PTA will provide educational materials for students and their families in whatever language necessary, reflective slap bracelets, reflective vests for kids and a select number of helmets for those who do not have one or need a better fit. Anything else at the event such as food, activities, and guests is up to your local PTA.

Some local units choose to make their event mostly focused on bike safety. Dobbs Ferry PTA hosted a Bike Rodeo in May 2019 which brought a huge crowd. Kids were able to practice a variety of bike skills with the guidance of their local bike club and police force. It was a day spent in

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It is hard to believe that summer is behind us and another school year has begun. I have watched three of my four children transition during this time. My oldest daughter graduated from grad school and is working her dream job in Boston, my oldest son graduated from college and is working in his field in LA, and my younger daughter graduated high school and has begun college in Miami.

The dynamics at home have changed immensely, with just my fourth grade son there now and me planning my wedding. With so many changes in my life, I look at what it is that keeps me dedicated and committed to our mission.

It is a simple answer, attitude. I have learned over the years that the energy you choose to surround yourself with is so crucial. I challenge each of you to remember you cannot always change your situation or an outcome, but you can change your attitude about it.

People remember your reactions. People define you by your energy. So as you embark on this new school year, surround yourself with positive energy, emit positive energy, and I promise you will feel the difference.

Even better, the children and volunteers you come in contact with each day will see and feel the difference. You will attract what you emit.

Be bold and courageous, while being positive and kind.

Create an environment that is contagious. See obstacles as opportunities. Smile everyday. Laugh often. Embrace every moment.

You will make a difference.

Have an awesome school year!
Back to School – Excitement or Summer Blues?

By Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky, Esq., Executive Director

Summer is nearly over. You’ve done your back to school shopping. The school buses have come out of retirement. The leaves will start to turn soon. Then snow will fall. Are you excited? Or do you have the summer blues?

The beginning of the school year brings both for me. As a parent of a now 5th grader, just like many of you, it’s always a mad rush to prepare for the start of a new school year. Jackson (and mom) are both excited, and sad that the summer is over. We rush to buy school supplies, review our math facts, make sure he’s completed his summer reading log, and start to plan for lunches and early wake-ups to catch the bus. We look back at the past summer months and ask ourselves, did we do all the things on our summer bucket list, and the answer is inevitably no.

It’s a life lesson that recurs in our lives, and the lives of our children frequently. Do you choose excitement or disappointment. Possibilities or missed opportunities. It really is all how you look at things.

Our family decided to choose excitement. Sure, we miss summer, we’ll miss the warmer weather, we’ll miss the extra time together, and I know Jackson will certainly miss not having to do homework. But each and every school year is filled with promise. Promise of new experiences, new ideas, new challenges and new friends.

The beginning of the school year also brings a fresh start for your PTA year. It too can both be an exciting and overwhelming time. Some things to make it easy:

1. Reach out to your region for any help you may need. We can help connect you, or you can find a list of our region directors. Plan to talk to someone from your region once a month for help or questions!

2. Check out the NYS PTA website, there are membership tips, advocacy materials, programs information, parent and family resources, and vetted fundraisers and membership benefits for you to review.

3. Join us on social media (listed on page 2 and the last page) where we share great tips and articles!

4. Join National PTA’s PTA Local Leaders Facebook group for more ideas and tips.

5. Check out the NYS PTA Resource Guide, filled with information you might be looking for during the year.

6. Contact us at the state office anytime, especially if you don’t know where to turn to: pta.office@nyspta.org.

7. Check out this information on MemberHub, or contact your region or state office with questions.

8. And most importantly, each and every day YOU have the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. Your child, a child in your school or community. YOU are a dream maker.

So next time someone asks you if you’re excited to start the new school year, or have the summer blues, share your excitement!
Parent Resources

Middle school is a transition from childhood to adulthood. It’s full of discovery, change—and doubt. [Here are 10 things every middle schooler needs to know from Your Teen Magazine](#)

With guidance counselors overburdened and with an inherent bias in many schools against community colleges, [high school seniors are often steered toward four-year programs even if they are not the best choice from The 74](#)

Is an employee’s attendance at a child’s IEP meeting covered by the FMLA? The answer from the US Department of Labor? [Yes. Most definitely, yes from Jeff Nowak, Littler Mendelson P.C.](#)

Please, please talk to your children about the dangers of e-cigarette use and vaping: Mystery lung illness linked to vaping. [Health officials investigating nearly 100 possible cases from The Washington Post](#)

Take advantage of these special offers

**$1,500 PTA Grant**

Get funding for school supplies or projects supporting K-12 classrooms with a Mountain America PTA Grant.* Details at [macu.com/pta.](#) Deadline is September 20, 2019.

**$100 Cash Bonus**

For a limited time, receive a $100 bonus when you open a new MyStyle Checking™ account and set up eStatements.**

Open your account at any branch or call 1-800-748-4302.

[Some restrictions apply. Visit website for additional details.](#)

**To qualify for and redeem bonus, you must sign up for eStatements at account setup. Bonus will be deposited into account within 30 business days after eStatement setup. Account must remain open for minimum of six months from bonus date, or bonus will debited from account at closing. Limit one bonus per person and per household. Offer only available on new MyStyle Checking accounts. Offer not available for secondary accounts, account conversions or in combination with any other offer (some lending product exceptions apply). Employees of Mountain America not eligible. Bonus is considered interest and will be reported on IRS Form 1099-INT. Membership required—based on eligibility. Offer valid through 6/30/20. Promo code: MACUPTA1](#)
As the hazy days of summer wind down to a close; your summer days start to fill with that annoying hum. It’s subtle at first. Maybe some of you have already stepped into it with sports obligations. It’s the droning of a hectic schedule that waits to snatch you up in its waves of relentless persistence like a day of rough surf on the ocean.

I don’t care who you are, there are many times you are dragged in the undertow of this massive surf. You have work, school, home, extended family expectations, friends, practices, doctor’s appointments, after school activities, volunteer commitments, etc. The list is unending. Many of us go from one task to another without time to think or feel anything – just go, go, go!

Most schools, especially at the younger grades, have expectations of reading twenty minutes. Twenty minutes is not a lot of time, but it can seem like a lifetime when you are overwhelmed. Twenty minutes is a long time when there is an epic meltdown attached to it.

What if we flipped the script? What if twenty minutes became a time of calm and connection? What if we put the phones down and spent twenty minutes together? It becomes not a chore, but a choice. A choice to listen and connect and ignore the outside demands of the world.

Don’t tell my school, but our family reading time sometimes was about the book my kids were reading, but more often was a time to talk. To unburden what happened during the day and have someone listen. To ask questions about life, faith and everything in between. Sometimes it was a time to clear up the mixed messages we were unconsciously sending our kids. And yes, sometimes the questions were initially to avoid doing the reading!

My daughter is heading into high school this year. We have the usual family dynamic. There is a lot of time spent on her phone in her room. She does not respond well to “how was your day?” especially if it is asked right when she gets in the door after school. Asking her questions about what she is reading gives me a glimpse into what she is thinking and feeling and what beliefs she is forming for herself.

So I want you to think of that reading requirement as your family time. The dishes can wait and the endless emails will still be there when the time is done. Build in that space for conversation, literacy, and family. All too soon our kids are off to college and on their own.

Happy Reading!

The New York State Education Department’s Summer Reading at New York Libraries program has again partnered with myON in 2019 to bring digital books to young readers via unlimited access to the myON by Renaissance digital library!

Remember that students and their families can easily access this resource from May 1 through September 30 with one simple statewide login.

A mobile app allows up to 20 books to be downloaded and read while traveling or away from home. Just remember to log back in using WiFi at the beginning of the school year so that any myON books read offline are reflected in the statewide total! The goal is to keep children and teens reading and learning through the summer and into the beginning of the school year by providing them with access to an abundance of reading material.

The myON library has a collection of over 6,000 fiction and nonfiction ebooks geared toward children from birth to 12th grade, with recorded audio, text highlighting, and an embedded dictionary all included. Click HERE to find login information and other myON resources. Students and their families are encouraged to continue to use their local libraries for a wide variety of book selections and formats, as well as engaging programs and fun learning activities.

Discover “A Universe of Stories” at your library and online with myON! Questions about Summer Reading at New York Libraries or the myON partnership? Contact Sharon Phillips, Summer Reading Program Manager, at Sharon.Phillips@nysed.gov.
In late August 2017, all NYS PTA units were given access to a group communication/member management platform called MemberHub. MemberHub is one of the largest, fastest-growing cloud software platforms powering K-12 parent groups. They are dedicated to furthering the PTA mission through technology—to benefit schools and children. MemberHub is currently partnered with 23 state PTAs, representing almost 11,000 school PTAs. This platform allows PTA units to have their own sites that allow them to communicate directly with parents and others who are involved in activities at school. New York State PTA’s state-wide partnership offers the benefits of this platform to EVERY PTA unit—there is no cost to the unit to use most functionality. (Note: a couple “premium plans” were recently introduced with special features for those units that are willing to pay for them.) One of the great benefits of this platform is that it can be used to communicate with both PTA members and non-members. People that are current PTA members are designated on the site with a literal “gold star” next to their name.

The MemberHub platform is based on “hubs” (aka groups) where people can share files, photos, receive messages (via email/text), engage in signups and have a shared calendar. Each PTA unit is a separate organization. Personal information entered on one unit’s site does not get shared with any other site. One major benefit for parents/users is that those who are registered with multiple organizations can access those organizations from within the site and can switch from PTA unit to unit without logging out/in by “switching organizations.” Parents and users can also access MemberHub on their mobile device with apps available for both Apple and Android devices. PTA Officers/Site Admins should decide how to best setup MemberHub for their particular need. Elementary schools may want to have separate hubs for each classroom, middle and high schools may want to have grade-level hubs and central units may want hubs for each building/grade-level, etc., as well as PTA hubs for their particular unit’s needs. Committee hubs can then be created (recommended with PTA being the parent hub) to encourage participation from parents. Individual hubs can have their own “administrators,” such as teachers, committee chairs, etc. to allow them to engage directly with those who are in their group. Hubs can be closed (i.e., Classroom hubs—where only Hub Admins (Teachers, Room Parents) can add members) or hubs can be open (i.e., Committee hubs), where any person registered on the site can choose to join.

Beginning with the fiscal year 2018-19, MemberHub became the official membership platform for NYS PTA. The platform now includes all official membership records, officer contacts as well as the recording of 990 filings, and other important unit management information. The capacity for renewing bylaws will be coming in the future. The online store (initially launched in Fall 2018 with improving functionality happening on a regular basis) allows units to sell PTA memberships in an online environment, and units are also able to send EFT payments directly to NYS PTA for the state/national portion of their dues. The online store isn’t just for memberships, though—it can be used for donations, spiritwear, fundraisers, etc.

I have personally used the MemberHub platform for the past 3 years heavily with both elementary and middle school units. Whereas, I had previously had to use several online tools to manage PTA communications, signups, file sharing, etc.; it is all done now through MemberHub. It helped me to establish a regular email newsletter schedule out to parents (thanks to the “Schedule Send” option on messages) and see how effective it was with real-time analytics of how many people opened the message. Automatically sending out reminders to PTA meetings and events via email and text have helped to bring new people. Sharing volunteer opportunities through signups with all parents (not just those that initially signed up to volunteer) allows parents to participate as they are able.

If you have any questions about how to utilize MemberHub for your unit, there is a lot of support information available at support.memberhub.com, as well as YouTube training videos on the MemberHub channel. Workshop opportunities are also often available at NYS PTA and some regional training events. Learning new systems is never easy, but this author believes that the time and effort that PTA units put in to making MemberHub right for their unit/school community will pay dividends in more engaged parents and supporters.
We Are On a Mission!

By Patty Frazier, Outreach Coordinator

NYS PTA is working to achieve our mission: PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

Over 1,450 PTA units across the state connect families, schools and communities to support student success. Each unit has its own calendar of programs and activities designed to involve stakeholders in meeting the needs of their children. Together, we are united in one voice as the leading organization for family engagement and child advocacy.

POWERFUL VOICE FOR ALL CHILDREN

What began with a collaboration of South Grove PTA (Nassau Region) members and region representatives regarding the dangers of tobacco use for minors led to a resolution adopted at the NYS PTA Convention in November 2018. The resolution on raising the minimum sales age of tobacco and other nicotine delivery systems to 21 was widely approved by the Convention delegates and became part of our statewide legislative actions in Spring 2019. In July, Governor Cuomo signed legislation that will take effect on November 13 raising the age to purchase tobacco and tobacco related products to 21.

RELEVANT RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Dobbs Ferry PTSA (Westchester-East Putnam Region) Diversity Committee partnered with their school district to have May designated as “Reading Without Walls” Month. Students were encouraged to seek out books with characters that were different than themselves or ones that had unfamiliar topics or genres. The superintendent, school librarians and teachers promoted and participated in activities throughout the month. The local public library also helped with reading recommendations.

STRONG ADVOCATE FOR THE EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING OF EVERY CHILD

When the parents in the Orchard Park School District (Western Region) formed a group to support their students with special needs, they chose to charter a SEPTSA unit. They decided this even though none of their schools had parent groups that were part of PTA. They recognized that the advocacy efforts, resources at the region, state and national level, and training and networking provided by our association will assist them as they endeavor to ensure their students have the best educational experience.

Units like these bring our mission to life. Their members are committed to improving the lives of every child. Our mission is possible and we welcome everyone’s contribution—spread the word!

For information about the benefits of becoming a PTA unit, contact me at outreach@nyspta.org.
All parents are concerned for the safety of their child, and NYS has legislated and required school district–wide safety plans for over 20 years.

But are school districts complying? According to a safety planning audit of 19 schools, released in July by NYS Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, schools are not doing enough to prepare for emergency situations. His auditors have completed three audits that examined safety planning at more than 40 school districts.

The audits have found significant problems at schools, including no safety plans, plans filled with errors and plans not being shared with local law enforcement. DiNapoli’s auditors looked at safety planning efforts at 16 school districts and two charter schools from 2017 to 2018, and 2019 for one school district.

In New York, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act, enacted in 2000, mandates training and instruction for preventing and responding to incidents of school violence and establishes a statewide uniform system for reporting violent incidents.

The SAVE Act also requires public school districts, charter schools and BOCES programs to develop comprehensive safety plans and building-level emergency response plans. SED regulations were developed to provide additional guidance and details on school safety planning requirements. The requirements outlined in the law and regulations do not apply to private schools.

Auditors found:
1. Two schools did not have safety plans and 17 others had incomplete safety plans. None of the schools met all 19 minimum safety plan requirements. Overall, half the safety plan requirements were met, but seven schools did not meet a majority of the requirements.
2. Sixteen school boards did not adopt a safety plan within the time requirements, properly submit it to SED or give the public the opportunity for input. Thirteen schools did not hold a public hearing on the safety plan or offer a public comment period.
3. Eighteen schools either did not have a safety team or did not have all the required members.
4. No schools met all of the annual safety training requirements, yet they certified to SED that they trained staff.

For the FULL audit report, please click HERE.
For the FULL press release from 7/25/19 by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli’s office, please click HERE#.

NYSDEC’s Pilot Pharmaceutical Take Back Program

Thanks to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s (NYSDEC) statewide Pilot Pharmaceutical Program, households such as yours can now safely dispose of unused and expired medications in any one of 270 Rx collection boxes now located in participating retail pharmacies, hospitals and select police stations.

To find a Rx collection box near you, check out the NYSDEC Rx Drop Box Map.

These Rx collection boxes provide a safe, convenient and easy way of getting rid of unwanted medications from your home, while also taking important proactive steps to fight the opioid epidemic that is plaguing all of our communities across the state. This disposal option also helps protect public health, public safety and the environment.

As of today, the Rx collection boxes have kept over 15 tons of unwanted medications out of medicine cabinets, our kid’s hands and our waterways.

NYSDEC is partnering with school districts from all across New York State, with support from their superintendents, principals and New York State Parent Teacher Association to get the word out to parents about this important program and disposal options.

Need more information? Click HERE.
Getting to School 101
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the sun where you could see the community come together. Other schools, like Wynantskill PTA, encourage kids to have experiences with those who enforce traffic safety and help keep our roads safe. At their event, kids of all ages were able to take turns flying drones with state troopers and see the inside of police cars.

Horsemen PTA located in Tarrytown, NY hosted a community day in the park and asked NYS PTA to help run a traffic safety table at the event. They organized a food truck vendor, a live band to play music, and a table for their local unit membership.

Their unit was also selected to pilot a Healthy Hydration program with National PTA. Tarrytown has a significant Hispanic population, so all of our educational materials for the programs were translated into Spanish. Many parents told me that this was the first time they had been provided information on traffic safety in a way which was accessible to their family. These traffic safety events leave a lasting impact on the communities they take place in and the membership and support of the hosting local PTA. At NYS PTA’s Summer Leadership Conference on July 27, 2019 Horsemen PTA was awarded with top membership growth over the past year against all New York State local PTAs.

As we head into the fall, the mornings are soon to again be consumed by the hectic before school transportation shuffle. Kids all across the state will be boarding school buses preparing for a brand new year in their lives and all the milestones that come with that. Working with NYS PTA, you can help to ensure that their journey to school is safe, no matter what it looks like. Take the first step in planning a traffic safety event for your community by reaching out to the NYS PTA at 518-452-8808.

Safe travels and happy school year!
Tarrytown is the PTA Convention Place to Be in November!

By Laurie May, Convention Coordinator

The office is in full Convention mode, the excitement is building, Tarrytown here we come for Convention!!

We are thrilled National PTA President Leslie Boggs will be joining us, just one of the many highlights that await you!

Looking to increase membership and participation in your PTA? Need programs and fundraising ideas? Want to sharpen your skills and learn something new to take back to your PTA?

We have it all in one inspirational weekend that will ignite the flame of the torch PTA advocates proudly carry on behalf of our children.

Learn to lead, share to enlighten, grow our grassroots and shape the future of our PTA at the 123rd NYS PTA Convention November 8-10, 2019 in historic Tarrytown!

Countdown to Convention

One of the highlights of every NYS PTA Annual Convention is a review and vote on changes to the NYS PTA Resolutions.

We invite you to come to Convention and be a part of the discussion and the debate.

Please review these changes before Convention, to vote on their adoption and/or amendment at Convention.

Click HERE for our proposed resolutions.

Make sure that you schedule a general membership meeting to discuss and vote on the proposed resolutions.

Your members may suggest amendments to the resolutions that they want your delegates to make at Convention. These should also be voted on by the membership.

Send your delegate to Convention with a “vote of confidence.” This means your delegate is required to vote the unit’s intentions on the resolution change and can evaluate changes that are made on the Convention floor.

Get Ready for Convention Resolutions

By Lucille Vitale, Resolutions Coordinator

Back to School time is upon us and that means the NYS PTA Annual Convention is right around the corner!

The Resolutions Committee has been hard at work preparing the 2019 Retentions and Updates for the Convention floor. The committee has been preparing and researching the 11 Retentions and 11 Updates that will be voted on at Convention by the delegates state-wide. This year’s Convention is taking place in Tarrytown, NY on November 8-10. We are hoping you will join us and be a part of this exciting advocacy process!

Convention also offers many great opportunities for all attendees including many workshops for you to attend. As Resolutions Coordinator, I am presenting a workshop entitled “Don’t be Scared, Be Prepared to Write a Resolution.” This workshop will help you with the process of discussing an issue, to writing a resolution and sending it to the NYS PTA State office. Come prepared with all your questions and ideas for a possible new resolution. To help decide if your issue can possibly be a new resolution, I would suggest you first read through the document ‘Where We Stand,’ which contains NYS PTA’s official positions. In this document you will see if there is a current position on your issue that you can advocate on. If we do not already have a position, you may be on your way to writing a new resolution.

Looking forward to seeing you all in November!

Resolutions Preview:

Here are some of NYS PTA’s Resolutions that will be reviewed and then voted on at Convention.

Many of these Resolutions were first introduced in 1984 and are still making headlines:

• Marijuana
• Migrant Children
• Paper Recycling and Recycled Paper Use
• Equitable Distribution of State Aid
• Mental Health and Substance Abuse Insurance Parity
• Teaching Our Children Personal Safety
• TV and Internet Control Devices
• Ban of Standardized Testing of Young Children
Congratulations to the 2018-19 Membership Growth Golden Apple award recipients!

Grand Prize of a $500.00 Convention voucher goes to 18-210 Horseman PTA (Westchester-East Putnam Region)

Two Runner-ups will receive a $300.00 Convention voucher:

• 17-282 Roundout Valley Middle School (Taconic Region)
• 18-306 Pelhan Memorial High School (Westchester-East Putnam Region)

Congratulations to all of our winners!

We can’t wait to see you at the NYS PTA Convention this November in Tarrytown, NY.

Sometimes kids need help asking for help.

1 in 5 kids have seriously considered suicide.¹
4 out of 5 teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.²

When students are telling us something, we must listen. With GoGuardian Beacon, schools can receive alerts when students’ online activity shows intent for self-harm or suicide.

To learn more, visit: www.goguardian.com/beacon

¹2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).
²http://beaconfoundation.com/youthsurvey/warning-signs/
Awards Announcements
For any awards questions, email awards@nyspta.org

As we move into the school year, be on the lookout for award opportunities!

Jenkins Memorial Scholarship for Teacher Education

This award was inaugurated in October 1946 as a special Golden Anniversary Project. In 1947 the fund was established as a permanent project to be a living memorial to the young people who lost their lives in military service during WWII and was named for one of them, Clifford N. Jenkins, Jr., the son of Margaret Jenkins, who was New York State PTA President 1944-1947 and National PTA President 1961-1964.

This award is for high school seniors who are preparing for a teaching career. The students must plan to attend a college of the State University of New York for a baccalaureate degree in education or plan to attend a two-year community college before transferring to a baccalaureate degree program in education in a college of the State University of New York. Students also must not have accepted scholarships exceeding the monetary value of $16,000 and must attend a public high school in New York State with a PTA/PTSA unit in good standing.

The scholarship is $3,000.00 distributed over four years.

The application will be on the NYS PTA website from September 15, 2019, to December 15, 2019. Notification of availability will be sent to guidance counselors in high schools with PTA/PTSA units in good standing. Each high school may submit two candidates. All applications must be accurately completed and postmarked (not metered) to the NYS PTA office by December 15, 2019.

Youth Humanitarian Award in Memory of Stanley Marcus

This award is presented to a high school junior or senior student who best exemplifies the humanitarian principles of Stanley Marcus, who died in 1977 while serving as third vice president of NYS PTA. He will always be remembered for his humanitarianism and dedication to youth through zealous volunteer community service.

The award application will be posted on the NYS PTA website in November. Nominees should be juniors or seniors at a high school with a PTA/PTSA in good standing, demonstrate outstanding volunteer community service, display humanitarian principles by word and deed, and be selected for the quality of the humanitarian activities rather than extracurricular activities.

Applications should be sent to your region director postmarked by January 31, 2020. The applications will be judged and a region winner selected. NYS PTA will then judge and select the overall winner. The state winner receives an engraved 8” x 10” plaque and $250 award. Region winners will also receive an engraved plaque.

Celebrate the Arts!
By Alaina Rullo, Arts Specialist

PTAS Have Two Opportunities Coming up to Highlight the Arts!

September 10-14, 2019 is National Arts in Education Week

National Arts in Education Week is supported by Americans for the Arts on behalf of the field of arts education to bring visibility to the cause, unify stakeholders with a shared message, and provide the tools and resources for local leaders to advance arts education in their communities, according to the Americans for the Arts website. Share your support at #BecauseofArtsEd.

October is National Arts and Humanities Month

National Arts and Humanities Month is a coast to coast celebration of the importance of arts in America. According to the Americans for the Arts, this celebration grew out of the National Arts Week that started in 1985 by the National Endowment for the Arts and Americans for the Arts. It became a month-long celebration in 1993.

Join the once a day Instagram challenge #ShowYourArt2019! Each day has a challenge to share. Challenges include: Art I can’t live without, I made this!, Sustainable Art and Art That Changes Me are just a few.

How can your unit celebrate the arts? It can be as simple as providing sidewalk chalk during recess so students can create artwork on the playground or school sidewalks. Have a paint and snack night. Provide various art supplies and snacks and let the students go wild with creativity.

Have a raffle for a basket of art supplies. Talk to local, county and state legislators about how important the arts are for our school and how to adequately fund them. Encourage PTA members to attend the high school musical or choral concerts. Organize an outing to a local community theater. Work with a local college’s art department and support artists of all ages.

We want to hear from you! Let us know how you are celebrating the arts! We would like to highlight great ideas and events from our units. Let us give you a Shout Out for the Arts! Send your information to me at arts@nyspta.org.
And the Award Goes to… Spring is the Season for Awards

By Melissa Cancro, Programs Coordinator

Awards season is in full swing; 98 students applied for the Jenkins Memorial Scholarship for Teacher Education.

We had the opportunity to meet and interview many of these amazing students. The 12 scholarship winners will be announced soon.

Pick a Reading Partner (PARP)

If you have run a PARP Program consider submitting your program for the PARP Award. One winner from each region is selected, and then a statewide winner is chosen and honored at the NYS PTA Convention in November in Tarrytown.

The application is available HERE and applications must be sent to your region director and postmarked by June 15. If you want to see some of the past winners, check out the PARP Toolkit on the website.

We are looking for PARP programs with unique themes, innovative ideas and a lot of heart. You don’t have to have a big budget to be a winner! But you can’t win if you don’t apply. For questions, please email literacy@nyspta.org.

Family Engagement

Do you know of an individual or a group that promotes family engagement in your school? Nominate these individuals for the Family Engagement Award in Honor of Jami-Beth Knapp. This award honors those who have innovative ideas to provide education and encourage family involvement. The deadline is May 15. Click HERE for more information and the application.

Leadership

Another exciting award opportunity is the Leadership Award in Honor of Jane Skryzpek. This award is for an outstanding PTA leader who inspires others to volunteer and take on leadership roles. Winners are chosen at both region and state levels. Applications must be postmarked to your region director by June 15. Click HERE for more information and the application.

Grant Opportunities

National PTAs’ Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant is now open! Named for the founder of the National PTA Reflections program, this grant awards two local PTAs $1,000 in matching funds for arts education programs that increase access to high-quality arts learning experiences. In line with Mary Lou Anderson’s belief in the importance of the arts for all students, this grant opportunity places special emphasis on increasing access to arts education among at-risk and underserved students. Deadline is June 30, 2019.

For more information and the application, click HERE.
**It’s Time for Reflections!!**

*By Alaina Rullo, Arts Specialist*

We are excited to kick off a new year of Reflections! What is Reflections? Glad you asked. Reflections is the National PTA Arts program. Reflections just celebrated 50 Years of supporting the arts! Each year over 300,000 students from all over the country create works of art reflecting on the student-selected theme. These students range from Pre-K to Grade 12.

The theme for 2019-2020 is Look Within. Students can submit artwork in one or all of the following categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography and Visual Arts.

Students are grouped by age divisions: Primary (Pre-K-Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12) and Special Artist (all grades).

The Reflections program starts at the PTA/PTSA/SEPTA unit level. To run any National or New York State program, including Reflections, a unit must be in good standing. This means that the unit must have at least 25 members, pay their membership dues by October 31, have insurance paid for and paperwork completed, have bylaws that are current, and file a 990 form with the IRS.

This excludes units who have notified the NYS PTA office that the reinstatement is in process. If your unit is not in good standing, please contact your region director for help.

To get your PTA going with its own Reflections program, follow these five basic steps:

**Step 1:** Getting started (September)

**Step 2:** Promote your program (September/October)

**Step 3:** Judging (November)

**Step 4:** Celebrate! (November-June)

**Step 5:** Advance entries to your region (November/December/January)

Click [HERE](#) for more detailed information about running a Reflections program at your school.

And the final important step to remember: your Region Reflections Chair and Alaina Rullo, the NYS PTA Arts Specialist, are here to help you! Contact Alaina anytime at arts@nyspta.org.

Get creative and have fun with Reflections this year!!

**Look Within**
Bylaws and Procedures

By Jacqueline Wilson, Bylaws Coordinator

Bylaws and procedures provide for the authority and administration of the affairs of the PTA.

Bylaws include all the rules that the PTA considers important.

Procedures are details of monthly PTA work.

It is important to review these two documents that help manage your PTA.

Your bylaws MUST be renewed every three years. If you do not have a copy of your current bylaws, you can contact your region director or Region Bylaws Chair.

Bylaws expiration dates are January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.

If your bylaws will expire on January 1, 2020, NOW is the time to appoint a bylaws committee to allow enough time to review and edit the bylaws, and with 30 days’ notice, present them to your membership at your November or December general meeting.

Remember that PTA units that do not have bylaws that are up to date are not eligible for any PTA grants or awards, and your members would not have voting privileges at Convention.

A procedures document is necessary to supplement the bylaws. It is vital to review these at least once a year.

If you have never had procedures, now is a perfect time to appoint a procedures committee who can begin their work.

Procedures can be amended or adopted at any PTA Executive Board meeting.

Keep procedures in a loose-leaf binder, so items can be added and changed easily.

You should have procedures for all events of the PTA, awards given, job descriptions for officers and chairs, etc.

Once a member takes on an event, office or chairmanship, the procedures will be a guide to help them have a better understanding of their role and responsibilities for your PTA.

Copies of your bylaws and procedures must be available at every PTA meeting.

It is vital that the current executive committee pass these documents onto the newly-elected officers prior to July 1, when they will be assuming their positions.

For more information on bylaws and procedures, go to the NYS PTA Resource Guide, Section 7, Bylaws and Procedures.

New Look New Date The Early Bird Award

SEPTEMBER 30TH

Register and pay dues for 60% of your state membership goal to earn this award

The Early Bird award is moving to a new date September 30th. Units who reach 60% of their goal, will also be entered into a drawing to win!

NYS PTA MEMBERSHIP
Lifetouch

Official Photographer of the New York State PTA

Albany - 518-767-9948
Cicero - 315-752-3081
Clifton Park - 518-383-3989
Goshen - 631-334-3737
Henrietta - 585-249-7660
Kingston - 800-333-2560
Long Island - 516-404-9671
Massena - 315-842-0760
Vestal - 607-797-5907
Westchester - 914-391-3599
Williamsville - 716-633-4466

MEANWHILE...

They totally do!

I wish schools had access to huge fundraising potential without any up-front cost.

Click here to check out Help Our School. It's incredible.

Whaaa?!
DO YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES TO HELP NEW YORK’S KIDS?

- Visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LVSC3NB,
- click this picture, or
- scan the QR code

and take our membership survey for a chance to earn a prize for your PTA!

New York State PTA
123rd Annual Convention
November 8-10, 2019

DoubleTree by Hilton
455 South Broadway, Tarrytown, NY

On the east bank of the Hudson River in Westchester county, Tarrytown has a bustling downtown with a rich artistic history. Filled with boutiques, antique shops, art galleries, restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, and beautiful parks. Tarrytown is a popular tourist destination, from the legendary manor of Sleepy Hollow to the Headless Horseman.

Save the Date!

NYS PTA Garner the Past, Change Today, Embrace Tomorrow

2019 FEE SCHEDULE

For Convention registration only —
Hotel reservations on your own at DoubleTree by Hilton under room block @ $164/night (see link below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Package</th>
<th>PTA Member</th>
<th>Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Total Conference</td>
<td>$351.00</td>
<td>$343.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>(All Meals &amp; Conference Fees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B) Saturday only</td>
<td>$265.00</td>
<td>$259.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>(All Saturday Meals &amp; Conference Fees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C) Saturday Day Tripper only</td>
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<td>$165.00</td>
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<td>(Saturday Lunch &amp; Conference Fees)</td>
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<td>D) Saturday Workshops &amp; Sessions only</td>
<td>$156.00</td>
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<td>(No Meals)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>E) Friday Workshops &amp; Session only</td>
<td>$63.00</td>
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<td>(No Meals)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>F) Sunday Workshop &amp; Fireside Chat only</td>
<td>$63.00</td>
<td>$62.00</td>
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<td>(No Meals)*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Meals can be added ala carte to some packages at additional cost

Overnight Room Reservation deadline—October 7, 2019

Hotel booking site (use code: PTA):

Online Registration opens
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019
UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 8-10, 2019
TARRYTOWN, NY

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE CHILD MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 10, 2019
ALBANY, NY

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE & LOBBY DAY
FEBRUARY 9-10, 2020
ALBANY, NY

You Advocate for Children. We Keep Insurance Simple.
Find More Resources On Our New Website:
www.aim-companies.com

FOR OUR LATEST INFORMATION, CONNECT WITH NYS PTA: