How to Help Your Child Stick With an Intensive Extracurricular Activity

By Janet Huie, South Central Region Director

A little swimming is fun for kids, especially “motorboat” kicking, splashing, and one-on-one time with an engaging instructor. A little horseback riding can also be super fun: petting the pony, feeding the pony treats, with the instructor running alongside saying encouraging things and the parent videotaping the entire 15-30 minutes.

But what about going swimming at the pool when it’s cold outside, when you don’t feel like it, when it’s just too much work to get changed, to get dried off? What about trudging through the mud to catch a pony who wants to stay out, lifting that heavy saddle, buckling and unbuckling fiddly bridle parts, and your parent is urging you to do it faster?

It’s a challenge to help your child stick with intensive afterschool or weekend activities. After the initial excitement wears off, it becomes… work! Particularly, it’s that difficult middle part, when an activity is no longer new and exciting, and there’s more of the actual work for the activity because the child is becoming more independent. That’s the mountain to get over, which in my experience as a parent is higher for a more physically difficult activity like swimming or riding, than for an activity that is easier for them, such as painting or choir.

So how do you help your child over the “middle mountain?” What lies on the other side? When should you allow your child to suspend or quit an intensive activity?

Some tips to help kids get over the “middle mountain:”

1. Approach it with the mindset that the child should get over it and has a responsibility to their learning and to their instructor, and that it does get easier, more rewarding, and fun as you get better at something. Remind them why they wanted to do it in the first place and how far they’ve come since then.

2. Instill respect for the instructor. For an individual activity such as riding, point out the need for respect to the instructor, as well as to the horse, which needs work and care. For group activities, respect for the instructor is just as important — not just being quiet, listening, and a good attitude, but also the responsibility to be reliably present for the activity.

3. Identify roadblocks that are making getting over the mountain harder. Are goggles needed? A better fitting suit or more comfortable foot gear? For some of these, it will have to wait until the parent can afford it or for the child to stick with it for the parent to feel it is cost-worthy.

4. Employ scheduled breaks. It shouldn’t be an endless road, especially for multiple day per week activities. It should be a long enough break (such as between sport seasons) to allow the child to absorb what has been learned and go back stronger. If the child has willfully missed sessions, be prepared to suspend the activity until the child asks strongly to do it again. As your child gets older, they usually need fewer or shorter breaks that can coincide with holidays.

5. Ask to be repaid for missed lessons that your child could have attended but wouldn’t. For some activities, the price per lesson is high, continued on pg. 17
President's Take on Embracing Change

By Lorey A. Zaman, President

I remember when I was a child, my end of November birthday wish was always for snow, and usually my wish was granted. Now in my fifth decade, my birthday wish is for sun, but I have not been so lucky.

It is interesting how we change as we grow. For me there are many changes ahead. Now with my first Convention as President behind me, my last year as President and my wedding plans are ahead of me.

We have decided on a November 2020 wedding, which means right on the heels of my last Convention as President! I must admit I am getting excited and have never been so happy.

I am so proud of all we have accomplished in my term thus far. Reading through our Annual Report at Convention made me realize just how far we have come. I continue to challenge all of you to think ‘What If‘ when faced with a challenge and see those challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.

My personal venture will bring many changes for me, but I will embrace every one of them as all things happen for a reason!

So this winter I will be preparing to sell my house and hoping spring will bring that to a close. I look forward to spending quality time in my soon to be home over the summer. I am currently exploring a new business venture, and for sure I will embrace not having to spend lots of time and money traveling. I am focused on mentoring future leadership and getting us across that bridge.

Next November I look forward to being luckier in having my birthday wish for sun come true, and even though life will take me to Alabama, I will always be a NY girl at heart. I bought a sweatshirt recently with that saying, as it is important to garner the past, change today and embrace tomorrow.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!
New York’s public schools have responded to significant growth in student needs in recent years with new supports, interventions and services while also striving to deliver relevant, high quality academic programs that prepare students for the demands of college and the modern economy.

Consider that the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch increased 15 percent in the 10-year period between 2007-08 and 2017-18, and that during this same time, the number of English language learners grew by more than 18 percent and students with disabilities by more than 17 percent. Schools are working to meet needs in these and other areas, making important investments in services such as English as a New Language instruction and school social workers, along with dedicating a greater share of budgets to strengthening safety and mental health services.

This is likely to continue: A New York State Council of School Superintendents survey found two-thirds of chief school officers identify mental health services as a top funding priority.

For these reasons, The New York State Educational Conference Board (ECB) – comprised of six leading educational organizations representing parents, classroom teachers, school-related professionals, building administrators, superintendents and school boards (including NYS PTA) – is recommending an overall $2.1 billion increase in state aid for education in the 2020-21 state budget.

Click HERE to read ECB’s full report. Click HERE to read ECB’s press release.
Parent Resources

Research shows that cleaning the house, taking out trash, washing windows or whatever chores you might delegate to your kids, instills a sense of mastery, self-reliance, responsibility, empathy and respect— the sooner you start, the better. from Fatherly

PTA Members can use the Office Depot OfficeMax PTA Discount Program by registering and shopping online or in store.

There is special pricing on copy and print services, discounts on school and office supplies, ink, toner, technology and more. Please sign up to enjoy these savings powered by PTA!

Experts argue that recess is necessary for a child's social and academic development, and skipping it as punishment for misbehavior or to accommodate more seat time is a serious mistake. from Edutopia

Message to Parents from the Education Commissioner

Happy Holidays! I’d like to express my gratitude for the work you do to support New York’s schools and communities.

Thank you to the Parent Teacher Associations across the state, including Kyle Belokopitsky and her team at New York State PTA, for all they do for students every day. I sincerely appreciate your continued commitment to ensuring a high-quality education for your children and all our students in New York State.

I hope you and your families have a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

Click HERE to read Acting Commissioner Tahoe’s full message.
Social-Emotional Learning Doesn’t Just Happen in Schools – It’s for Families, Too!

By Amy Hysick, Education Coordinator

Schools are increasingly understanding the critical importance that social and emotional skills play in children’s success in school and later in life.

Self-regulation, empathy, perseverance, kindness and resilience aren’t part of any science or English or math curriculum – yet a child’s ability to demonstrate these skills will help them to navigate through an increasingly connected and complex world.

Many teachers have incorporated social-emotional learning (SEL) practices into their classrooms, but that shouldn’t be the only place where these skills are learned and put to use!

Reinforcing the same messages at home will help children develop these habits of mind and become better able to cope with the stresses of school and life.

Here are links to articles from Edutopia (that have LOTS of resources) to help families support children’s social and emotional development:

- Social and Emotional Learning: Strategies for Parents

For Aspiring Future Teachers and Current High School Humanitarians

Do You Dream of Becoming a Teacher?

Attend a SUNY or CUNY School?

Apply for a NYS PTA Jenkins Memorial Scholarship for Teacher Education!

Application Deadline December 15, 2019

Are You a Humanitarian?

Are you a junior or senior at a high school with a PTA/PTSA in good standing?

Do you demonstrate outstanding volunteer community service?

Do you display humanitarian principles by word and deed?

Apply for the Youth Humanitarian Award – In Memory of Stanley Marcus

Application deadline is January 31, 2020
THANK YOU to everyone who filled out our membership survey! Nearly 1,000 of your fellow members shared feedback and great comments that will help us make PTA membership better for you. Use this infographic to discover more about volunteers and volunteering for your local PTA. Click HERE or any of the images to download and save the complete infographic.
Every Child Travels Safely + Every Child Healthy

By Donna Trikoulis, Events/Programs Associate

September and October were jammed with Traffic Safety and Health and Wellness events!

After an amazingly successful year, we are now gearing up for Every Child Travels Safely traffic safety and bike rodeo events!

We are looking for spring traffic safety event locations, and winter and spring health and wellness event locations. Contact Donna (dtrikoulis@nyspta.org) at the state office to lock in your dates, or if you have any questions about the program.

We are also proud to announce an initiative of the New York State PTA and Fidelis Care, Every Child Healthy!

This is an important program that is vital to the success and well being of every child. We have exciting plans for your Health and Wellness events at your schools! Please contact Donna (dtrikoulis@nyspta.org) at the state office for planning guides, resources and support.

These events can be as small or as large as you like, so please don’t hesitate to plan your event today!

Let’s get every child covered.

Call: 1-888-FIDELIS
Click: fideliscare.org/everychildcovered
Visit: A Fidelis Care community office near you. Search for locations at fideliscare.org/offices

Fidelis Care
1-888-FIDELIS  •  fideliscare.org  •  TTY: 711

To learn more about applying for health insurance, including Medicaid, Child Health Plus, Essential Plan, and Qualified Health Plans through the State of New York, visit www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call 1-855-GET-ALAB.
Every Voice Counts

By Patrice Rachlin, Resolutions Coordinator

PTA members are no longer the “Cupcake Moms” of yesteryear—we are ADVOCATES.

In National PTA President Leslie Boggs’ words, “Every member’s voice counts when we are advocating for our students and families, whether it is with your principal, school board, legislators or member of Congress. Your voice makes a huge difference! Emailing, picking up the phone, making those in-person asks truly sets our association apart from other parent groups.”

Remember that PTA’s mission is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

NYS PTA has been at the forefront of some of the most important issues facing our children: vaping/e-cigarettes/tobacco, recreational marijuana, mental health, gun control, opioid/drug crisis, education funding/policy. Each year at Convention we reaffirm our commitment to advocacy and do the work of the association. But this is just the stepping-off point.

As members, we need to continue our advocacy efforts by sharing our viewpoint via social media, through PTA meetings, and by face-to-face contact with legislators and education stakeholders.

Some of PTA’s advocacy efforts:

Vaping/E-cigarettes/Tobacco

• Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act legislation was amended to raise the tobacco purchasing age to 21 this year.

• PTA advocated for strong enforcement of product placement in Nassau County to include vapes.

• NYS PTA asks that the FDA include measures on flavors/designs that appeal to youth, child-resistant packaging and product labeling to prevent accidental child exposure to liquid nicotine.

• We are advocating for a flavored vape ban.

Gun Control

• PTA supports the federal “Background Check Expansion Act” which would make all schools and communities safer by requiring a background check for virtually every firearm sale and transfer. Too many communities nationwide have fallen victim to senseless school shootings.

Recreational Marijuana

• NYS PTA succeeded in decoupling the recreational marijuana language from the 2019 State Budget. We urged the governor to consider all facets of legalization infrastructure including: oversight, quality of life, motor vehicle insurance ramifications/impact, health insurance ramifications/impact, law enforcement, workplace protection, banking/funding streams, mental health/addiction support, decriminalization, environmental impact, and the impact on our children.**

• We asked the governor to charge NYS public health services and agencies to conduct unbiased multiple medical-based data-driven studies on recreational marijuana and its impact on the physical and mental health of our citizens and children.

PTA is not about the cupcakes … PTA is about advocacy for all children. Every Child … One Voice!

FOOTNOTE:

**Gun-control laws in New York were recently bolstered by building on the 2013 SAFE Act:

1) New York State requires a 30-day waiting period for people who want to buy a gun in the state and are not immediately approved through the federal background check system; and

2) a loophole in existing law was closed, that allowed the ownership or sale of so-called bump stocks, an attachment that increases the firing speed of a semiautomatic rifle. The devices have been deemed dangerous because they can essentially make semiautomatic weapons into machine guns, allowing shooters to fire ammunition faster than they could otherwise.
You Can Be an Advocacy “ACE”

By Antoinette Darden-Cintron, Vice President

PTA is the premier association that advocates for every child with one voice. It’s that premise that guides the work we all do. It is the “we” that extends beyond state and national advocacy. It is the “we” that needs to be nurtured and developed at the local unit, council and region levels that ensures our advocacy reaches all families.

The heart of PTA goes beyond bake sales, staff appreciation celebrations or book fairs. It is our advocacy efforts that ensure our families are educated about the needs of children at a greater level; it is when we sit at the table with our local elected officials to ensure they have their pulse on the needs of our local school districts and families.

Advocacy evokes a passion that reaches beyond our own children and broadens our minds to our schools, districts and state policies and practices that affect children as a whole.

Here are five easy ways to “ACE Advocacy”

   As mentioned, being an advocate can be as simple as liking a post or following NYS PTA or National PTA’s social media pages. By doing this, you’re signing your name to a cause and showing your followers that you, too, believe in supporting children’s rights and safety. Take it a step further by sharing a post or a page that highlights a children’s rights issue!

2. Volunteer
   Volunteering can be as simple and easy as you’d like it to be. Join a local Unit, Region or State PTA committee. There are a variety of committees that can use the support of diverse committee members.

3. Use your connections (or make some more!)
   Know a local representative? Get in touch! Advocate for local initiatives, like after school programs and affordable day care. The only way our representatives know what is going on in our communities is if we tell them. Speak up, and let our leaders know the issues at hand so that they may work toward making a change.

4. Attend a Local Event
   An easy way to get in touch with community leaders and lawmakers is to attend a local event. Take part in chamber of commerce meetings, parent’s night at school, church member discussions or a local education, family-center, or children-focused organization. Local events are great opportunities to hear from peers, community representatives and elected officials, and to speak with others about the importance of protecting children.

5. Training
   Attend local unit, region, or NYS PTA workshops to learn how to advocate for important issues, learn how to write a resolution, and attend the NYS PTA Legislative Summit and Lobby day!

Here are some resources for your review:

• NYS PTA Advocacy Tools
• National PTA Advocacy Resources
• Programs for Parents Advocacy and Public Policy Resources
No More Screen Time!

By Mary Sotomayor, Marketing Specialist

From one PTA family to another, I’m going to say something really controversial. I don’t want my kids to have a cell phone before high school!

I know, I know… it’s crazy talk. Our family has discussed this ad nauseum. We do understand the multiple pros and cons of giving our kids cell phones and salute anyone who’s been able to successfully navigate this terrain under the age of 12.

Vouchercloud did a survey for kids between the ages of 11-16. In that study the average American child gets their first cell phone when they are just six years old.

The study also found it’s not just cell phones that are invading your child’s life. Parents were asked to identify other technology they’ve purchased for their kids:

- 96% have a cell phone
- 83% have a TV or sound system
- 75% have a tablet
- 71% have a handheld gaming console
- 65% have an eBook reader
- 51% have an Xbox or Playstation

74% of the parents confessed that they felt ‘concerned’ when they first purchased a cell phone for their child, with 46% of these installing parental filters and monitors prior to giving their child the device in order to keep a watchful eye on their usage. So, I’m not alone!

We considered the benefits:

- The ability to communicate in emergency situations
- Opportunities for social contact with peers
- Ability to gain immediate knowledge for personal or academic use

What could go wrong?

Is my child responsible enough to carry a cell phone? If they often can’t find their shoes or homework, should you really provide them with an expensive phone? What about the impact on health? The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released information about exposure to radiation from cell phone usage. Risks of media in general include obesity (due to sedentary screen time), decreased sleep and distractibility contributing to poorer academic performance (because YouTube is more interesting than math).

What can go wrong socially? Thinking about your child’s maturity level and ability to recognize social cues is important.
No More Screen Time!

continued from page 10

**RELAY KIDS SCREENLESS SMARTPHONE**

**Pros:**
1. No screen-time issues
2. No internet browsing
3. Keep tabs on your kids
4. They can reach you when needed.

**Cons:**
1. No bells and whistles (which was a plus)
2. Set-up is a bit labor intensive

**NOKIA 3310 3G**

**Pros:**
1. There is a camera
2. Bluetooth
3. Radio
4. Space for a MicroSD Card
5. Headphone jack

**Cons:**
1. The battery life is not that great
2. This is a very basic phone (plus in my book)

**XPLORA 2 GPS SMARTWATCH**

**Pros:**
1. Smartphone app
2. Trusted phone numbers
3. Schedule
4. GPS tracker

**Cons:**
1. A separate SIM card is needed to operate this device

After careful consideration our family decided to try RELAY. The no screen group communication feature did it for us. It does everything we need it to do. And so far, because she hasn’t had a phone since 6 years old, it’s new and cool. GO FIGURE.

For some additional basic phones for kids options check out [this blog from Fatherly.](#)

Happy Shopping!
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We’ve Got PARP, Yes We Do! We’ve Got PARP, How About You?

By Paige Pye, Literacy Specialist

Four regions were highlighted at the Literacy Themed Banquet during Convention 2019. Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA’s (Northeastern region) “The Great Subway Reading Race” program was selected as this year’s winner of the New York State PTA Pick a Reading Partner (PARP) Award!

These programs encourage students and their families to read in a fun and exciting manner while promoting lifelong reading.

Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA transformed their school into the Great Subway Reading Race. They held a kickoff assembly where they introduced the program, how their cars would race around the building and set a building goal for minutes read. Their Assistant Principal would participate in a special reward if they met and/or exceeded their building goals. Each student received a metrocard that they used to collect their minutes read, which were converted to “money” and they were able to exchange said “money” for prizes at their Family Literacy Night. Other aspects of this winning program included: an author visit from Eric Luper (Key Hunters Series), Spirit Days, interactive building wide minutes tracking, ice cream social, PARP night at the library, Jimmy’s Pizza slices for all students that read for all four weeks of PARP, Book Brags, Graffiti Names, Morning show, just to name a few! Congratulations Northeastern Region Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA!

Nassau Region’s winning PARP program was Meadow School PTA with S’more Fun with Books! Students were engaged in fun literacy activities at “Camp Meadow-Waka” each day. Their door decorating contest really helped kick off the program and motivated students to read 15 minutes a day. With a Pledge, PARP Theme Song, Calendar, Book Fair-ies Book Drive, Scholastic Book Fair, Family “Camp” Reading Night, Community involvement, a dance party and some wonderful teacher participation, this PARP program was deemed a success!

Suffolk Region’s, Tamarac Elementary PTA, had an engaging “Choose Your Own Reading Adventure” PARP Program. They ran their program from November to May to encompass as many students and families as possible! Author visits, Book Clubs, New to You Book Shoppes and free book giveaways kept readers engaged all year long! There were prizes for 100% class participation! Students read books, sent postcards to the “commander” and earned gold coins which in turn earned them prizes to go along with the theme! Their Kick off included Stuff-A-Bear event so kids could read to their “partner” anytime they wanted! Way to go Tamarac Elementary PTA!

Central Hudson’s South Orangetown Central Elementary Schools PTA had a favorite book theme “The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane.” Both schools William O. Schaefer Elementary and Cottage Lane Elementary participated. Each family received a free copy of the book along with a nightly reading schedule. They enjoyed a live stage production, audio recordings in English and Spanish and collaborated with South Orangetown’s Family Engagement Center on a reading and writing workshop. The public library collaboration was fantastic, as was the community engagement from the Orangetown Diner and free chocolate from Matisse Chocolatier. “The Journey” culminated with Rockland-Read-In Day where the district’s students read Edward Tulane’s final chapter together in school. Now that is what I call a community culture of reading!
Embrace Tomorrow, Embrace Diversity

By Ina Ferguson, Diversity Coordinator

Bringing diversity and inclusion to our association will allow us to remain relevant and ready to meet our mission. These efforts will be the “change tomorrow” we need to embrace the true model for PTA – speaking for every child with one voice.

At the Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach Breakfast held at the NYS PTA Convention, we had two outstanding guest panelists who offered their perspectives on achieving a stronger association through diversity.

Dr. Ronald Valenti, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction at the Greenburgh Central School District shared what strategies they are implementing to hire teachers that reflect the student population. PTA units can use some of the same data-based techniques to diversify their boards and their membership in total.

Jamaica Miles, State Organizing and Training Director for Citizen Action of New York, facilitated the dialogue on how we can be more aware of others who may be different from us. She emphasized the need to be inclusive and to embrace differences in order to grow to a better community.

In this gratitude filled time of year, we know that we can not be thankful enough for our members. Each and every one of you add strength to our collective voice advocating for all children. Across the state, our units, councils and regions go the extra step to express their appreciation of our members.

At Webster Central PTSA (Genesee Valley), members receive a list of discount opportunities in their community. Members can show their card and save at local coffee shops and restaurants, on family activities and for services.

Suffolk Region PTA hosted a two day “shop ‘til you drop” event at the Vera Bradley store. Members were given a 15% discount on their full price purchase.

Taking a unique approach by offering a bonus good feeling for becoming a member, at Newfane PTSA (Niagara) for every 10 members who joined, a turkey was donated to their local food pantry.

Members make our mission possible. Thank you to all who share your time, resources and voice to change today and embrace tomorrow!

For information about the benefits of becoming a PTA unit, contact me at outreach@nyspta.org.

Showing Gratitude to Our Members

By Patty Frazier, Outreach Coordinator

In this gratitude filled time of year, we know that we can not be thankful enough for our members. Each and every one of you add strength to our collective voice advocating for all children.

Across the state, our units, councils and regions go the extra step to express their appreciation of our members.

At Webster Central PTSA (Genesee Valley), members receive a list of discount opportunities in their community. Members can show their card and save at local coffee shops and restaurants, on family activities and for services.

Our regions have been busy harvesting new units!

Welcome to:

• 12-381 Cambridge PTA (Northeastern Region)
• 12-382 Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake SEPTA (Northeastern Region)
• 15-392 Jamesville Elementary School PTA (Southeastern Region)

Here are tips Ms. Miles recommended for becoming a more inclusive group:

1. Create a space that everyone feels they can participate in the decision making.
2. Be inviting by setting meeting times and locations that are accessible.
3. When providing refreshments, be culturally appealing.
4. Include diversity and inclusion efforts in your budget planning.
5. Commit to inviting underrepresented leaders and members to be a part of your PTA.
6. Welcome all and build relationships at the beginning of your meetings and events.

Now is the time to work on how PTA leadership at every level can engage with all families in our communities. For more information, take a look at the National PTA’s Diversity and Inclusion toolkit. Let’s make meaningful changes to embrace everyone.

Use this worksheet for your unit’s diversity and inclusion action plan. Send it to me at diversity@nyspta.org.
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Learn more at g.co/BeInternetAwesome

Be Internet Awesome is Google’s free multifaceted program designed to teach kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety so they can explore the online world with confidence. The program is available in English and Spanish and consists of an ISTE standards aligned curriculum, was the 2018 recipient of AASL’s Best Websites for Teaching & Learning, includes ready-to-teach Pear Decks for each lesson, Interland—an adventure-packed online game about digital safety and citizenship—and plenty of resources for educators and parents.
How to Help Your Child Stick With an Intensive Extracurricular Activity

continued from pg. 1

and the child can repay the parent in a variety of ways, ideally with an equally intensive chore activity. For missed riding lessons, the child may even be able to work at the barn, which typically requires four hours of work per lesson. Support your child’s “working off the missed lesson” with transportation, boots, and gloves.

6. Foster independence and a relationship with the instructor. Parent involvement is great, but it can get in the way and contribute to the mountain. Allow the child to transition to relying on the instructor and themselves to accomplish the activity – step away and find other ways to keep track of how it is going (spies are great). Attend every now and then at your child’s request. Question the instructor’s judgement only when the child is NOT present. Don’t support the child’s whims in opposition to the instructor. Rather, point out that the instructor has a reason for the exercise choice or the particular pony for what the child needs to learn.

7. Use your judgement. If the instructor isn’t experienced or isn’t the right one for some reason, look for another opportunity whether in the same sport or a different one. If the child is overwhelmed, help them to find a better balance that they can manage. Don’t ramp up the number of practices per week from zero to more than the child can handle, but be prepared to add more as they adapt, grow older, and are interested in learning or doing more.

The key is to find 1-2 difficult activities for your child and then help them to get over that “middle mountain.” It might be a physical activity or community service or work at home, but it must be a regular activity and provide room for increasing independence and continued learning, physical strength and skill building, and along the way foster kindness, community, and collegiality (getting along well with others).

What lies on the other side? Most importantly, your child acquires skills, strengths, fitness, and an enjoyment in learning outside of the classroom. Learning how to stick with a difficult activity translates to better schoolwork and later in life, a better work ethic and the ability to stick out the tough times that come to all of us. In point of fact, the other side of that “middle mountain” is a whole world one could only guess at or dream of – the sky really is the limit for someone who sticks with an activity and keeps wholeheartedly learning it!

When should you allow your child to suspend or quit an activity? You’ll know pretty quickly, well before reaching the “middle mountain” – there won’t be that initial excitement and right away your child won’t want to participate. Sometimes you can identify a simple fix: the boots are just way too tight or there is an initial bad experience (unscheduled dismount off the pony or a bellyflop into the pool) that can be corrected. But maybe your child just doesn’t at all enjoy even the first sessions of gymnastics, tap dancing, or lacrosse. Or, if competitions are the problem and aren’t required, support your child’s learning without pushing them to compete and instead celebrate their continued participation and advancement.

For particularly hard activities, a child has to really want to do it, and it will take that much more support from the parent, instructor and others. Instructor, teammates, location and the culture around the activity make a big difference; your child may feel out of place and just not be able to reach a comfort level in the activity. It’s really OK to try out different activities to see which gives that “spark” of interest for your child. Once you find it, that’s the one that you’ll end up helping your child to climb the “middle mountain” to reach the other side of rewarding satisfaction. Along the way, it instills a love of learning, a good attitude towards the harder activities in life, and the ability to stick with something to reach higher skill levels.

The best reward? When your child tells you, “We need to leave NOW – I don’t want to be late!”

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Learn more at eftours.com
The 123rd Annual NYS PTA Convention was awesome! But don’t take my word for it.

Here is what honored guest National PTA President Leslie Boggs posted about on Facebook, “New York PTA’s convention was fantastic! From the opening ceremony to the mental health symposium, it was an experience I will remember for a lifetime.”

Thank you Leslie, we couldn’t agree with you more!

Held at a new venue this year in Tarrytown, with higher member attendance than we’ve had in over 10 years, including 120 first timers.

Delegates from across our state enjoyed:
• amazing student talent, including a jazz band, a mariachi band, and an 85-piece marching band that rocked the house;
• a diversity and inclusion themed paneled breakfast;
• 20 workshops that took our delegates to a higher level of leadership;
• keynote speakers, including Dr. Kimberly Young Wilkins, NYSED Deputy Commissioner, the NYS Teacher of the Year, Alhassan Susso and National PTA President, Leslie Boggs, that inspired us;
• 49 exhibitors that decked the halls with fund raising and programming ideas and lots of giveaways;
• a literacy themed banquet with a local story teller regaling the tale of the Headless Horseman, complete with an appearance of the character himself;
• an after party with a DJ celebrating our wonderful members;
• our PTA store loaded with PTA pins, apparel and accessories; a display of our state Reflections winners entries;
• award presentations; and
• concluding on Sunday with an important and urgent panel discussion on student mental health that is certain to continue in our regions and local units.

All of this doesn’t happen without a tremendous amount of teamwork – thank you to all who contributed to its success!

Members, mark your calendars for next year’s 124th Annual Convention in Syracuse, November 13-15, 2020!

You don’t want to miss it!

See you there!
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Leadership Webinar Series
December 18:
Building Great Relationships with School and District Leadership

Webinars will start at 8:30 PM and end by 9:30 PM.
For over 50 years, students have been creating original works of art of their own Reflections – expressing their hopes, their feelings, and their worlds by telling their unique stories through the arts.

The Reflections Program welcomes students of all grades and all abilities to explore and be involved in the arts where they develop artistic literacy, increase confidence and find a love for learning that will help them become more successful in school and in life. Students interpret a theme and create imaginative works of art in the areas of dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts. Students reflected on the ‘Heroes Around Me’ theme, created original works of art, and have been celebrated for their achievements. The theme helped students to unleash their imagination to the point where over 1,800 entries were received by the state’s 12 regions.

NYS PTA received over 405 entries advanced from the Regions. We awarded 28 Awards of Excellence and 107 Awards of Merit. The 28 Award of Excellence entries advanced to the National level of judging in March. In May, National PTA announced that NYS PTA had 4 Award of Excellence and 4 Award of Merit winners at the National level.

We celebrate the achievements and recognize the talent of the students that are part of the Reflections program.

On September 21, 2019, NYS PTA was honored to celebrate our students’ talent and accomplishments at the sixth annual NYS PTA Celebration of the Arts held in the Rotunda of the New York State Education Department building in Albany. The exciting event recognized all Reflections award winners. Over 35 students and their families were in attendance and the Rotunda was packed with over 150 people. Many families traveled three to four hours to witness their child being honored.

During the award presentation, each artist was called to the podium, where they received a medallion and their artist statement was read. It was so touching to see how each student interpreted who they thought were the heroes around them. Enjoy the photograph below of the celebration and the students’ excitement. The celebration wouldn’t have been a great success without the Reflections Committee and the NYS PTA office. Thank you to the Reflections Committee, Carol Raymond, and Donna Trikoulis for their hard work that resulted in a fabulous event. Thank you to LifeTouch for capturing the special moments and the family portraits.

PTA’s mission is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. NYS PTA Reflections program has been providing students from across the state an exceptional opportunity to follow their dreams. A parent said, “without the program, my sons would not have the opportunity to pursue their passion. Their school doesn’t offer film production.”

We look forward to September 2020 where we will celebrate students’ achievements with the Reflections theme, ‘Look Within.’
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Legislative Summit and Lobby Day
Albany, NY
Sunday, February 9 – Monday, February 10, 2020

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124th Annual NYS PTA Convention
Syracuse, NY
Friday, November 13 – Sunday, November 15, 2020

Summer Leadership Conference
Utica College | Utica, NY
Saturday, July 18 – Sunday, July 19, 2020

FOR OUR LATEST INFORMATION, CONNECT WITH NYS PTA: