It is February, and winter is here in New York as evidenced by how many areas are in the deep freeze! 

I want to once again take this opportunity to thank all of you who have become members of Empire State PTSA. We are still hoping to surpass our goal of 175 members, and we can only do it with your help. If you belong to a local unit or council, advertise the Empire State PTSA and share our newsletter so that others can get to know what we are about. As we are approaching the Great PTA Sign Up Day, February 10th, we encourage you to purchase a membership for a friend or family member. Founder’s Day, Feb 17th, celebrates the very beginning of our organization as the one that has been and continues to be dedicated to the welfare of all children and youth. We know that our power is in our membership numbers and both Washington and Albany do listen.

More than a month into the new year and there seems to be some positive news on the horizon, as the vaccine rollout begins and we hope that more things may soon get back to normal. Schools however, are still struggling. Some districts are allowing students to participate in sports activities, but others are not. We still have multiple ways that students are attending classes; live, remote or hybrid, and many still have limited access to adequate internet for this all-important instruction. We are still unsure about the future of testing and state exams, and about possible cuts to education funding. This is why it is important that all of us stay involved and allow our voices to be heard.

The Governor’s Budget once again includes the legalization of recreational marijuana, creates a new Office of Cannabis Management, and attempts to balance the budget with “new” marijuana revenue. We continue to fiercely oppose these measures, as there is no amount of revenue that can possibly offset the harm of the legalization of marijuana on our children. With the serious crisis of youth vaping and tobacco use, and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while still battling the opioid crisis, this harmful legislation is counterintuitive. We must continue our resistance to this proposal by adding our voices to the fight.

On February 27th, NYS PTA will hold its first Virtual Legislative Summit and Lobby Day, and you can register for free. Check out the link in this newsletter to register. As Empire State members and even if you may not be an active member of a local unit or council, you are very aware of the impact that the NYS PTA can have on the decisions that lawmakers make. In addition, for the first time, National PTA will hold LEG CON 2021 LIVE as a virtual event, at a minimal cost, allowing more members a chance for their voices to be heard!

Empire State PTSA members, let’s join with our fellow PTA members across NY and continue our advocacy efforts on behalf of every child with one voice. (check out our new feature– shining a light on our members)

Warm regards,
Jacqueline Wilson
President, ESPTSA
Susan Berkow

Through participation in PTA, we learn by sharing information, experiences, and aspirations.

Thanks to my first role as my son’s kindergarten’s class mother, to my final role as a member of his college’s parent advisory committee, I became a better parent.  I also became a strong advocate for parent involvement, having seen first-hand how important that is to student success.

I’ve served in all PTA positions (except treasurer, to everyone’s relief) and through each also learned how PTA advocacy promotes meaningful involvement in decisions regarding our children’s education, health and welfare. Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference – most importantly to your own child, and certainly to your community and beyond. Technology now allows me to remain part of PTA - through ESPTSA involvement I can continue to support the association and be a better grandma to my son’s small children.

dr. Lester W. Young, Jr.

Catherine Romano

Why would you be involved in PTA? is still a question I am asked, my thirty-year-old daughter left K-12 schooling about twelve years ago. I joined PTA because I knew other children would not have the advantages she had entering school.

My PTA career began as Kindergarten President, leading to Council Secretary, VP then President, so locally I was well known as a doer and dependable voice at the school board meetings.

My PTA service helped to form the NYS Family Engagement Coalition with past President Maria DeWald. It was a lifetime honor to visit the White House Press Room for a briefing with the US Dept. of Education. PTA led to being elected a school board trustee, board President, and now a representative of Suffolk County school boards.

I know the value of our combined voices to make a huge difference in children’s lives. The value of my membership still matters, our collective voices matter, always keeping our children first.
TAKE ACTION! NYS PTA ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Date: February 27, 2021
Time: 9 am – 12 pm
NEW - Virtual Format!

This event is free! Register Today!

Why Attend?
• Expand your knowledge of the issues affecting children and public education
• Grow your advocacy skills
• Explore NYS PTA's legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative session
• Sign up to virtually meet with your legislator. Appointments will be made through NYS PTA and scheduled March 1-12

Advocating TOGETHER makes a difference – Every Child, One Voice!

NATIONAL PTA

Registration Now Open!

Register now for the 2021 National PTA Virtual Legislative Conference (LegCon) March 9-11, 2021.

Network with fellow PTA advocates, virtually meet with your members of Congress, hear PTA advocacy success stories and learn how to shape public policy on Capitol Hill and at home.

General registration: $50
SHINING A LIGHT ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & OUTREACH

よろしくお願いします！My name is Namiko Suga and I am the Diversity Coordinator for New York State PTA. The DIO Committee is dedicated to furthering the PTA’s goals of promoting diversity, inclusion, and outreach to families across the state and to help with that end, we’ve created a new Facebook group and we invite everyone to join us: https://www.facebook.com/groups/nysptadiversityandinclusion. This private group is a place where people can discuss relevant topics and share ideas of what they’re doing on the local level to advocate for all the different forms of diversity, and we want to hear from you!

We also have some exciting things planned for the near future and in the coming months, many in partnership with other NYS PTA committees, because diversity is crucial in all aspects of advocacy and programming. I’m not sure what I’m allowed to spoil at this point, so watch this space, the NYS PTA website, the NYS PTA Facebook page, and the DIO’s own Facebook group for more information coming soon!

ABOUT EMPIRE STATE PTSA

The ESPTSA has been actively engaged in assisting NYS PTA with advocacy efforts and recruiting new members. In addition, we have gifted many important essential items to the NYS PTA office over our many years of existence.

The NYS PTA gifts Empire State PTSA memberships to students who have received the NYS PTA Jenkins Memorial Scholarships as well as to recipients of the Richard Gazzola Teacher fellowship. It is our hope that these memberships, along with a one-year subscription to our electronic periodical, New York Parent Teacher, will encourage both the students and teachers to continue their journey in PTA for years to come. We have been fortunate that membership dues and generous donor gifts to the association have made it possible to expend funds to NYS PTA for various projects and materials to enhance the work of staff and governance in their advocacy efforts for children and youth.

These projects include:

* Region-designed banners that are displayed at our annual convention, one representing each of the 12 state regions. By keeping the banners "in house" and returned each year we ensure that every region has the spotlight at convention.

* Three fire-proof cabinets for the state PTA office in Albany. These are of utmost importance to our organization as they house the archival material of the NYS PTA, and the cabinets ensure that these most precious documents will always be safe.

* The purchase of projectors for use by NYS PTA governance and staff for power point presentations or displays at various state events and in the field. This is a cost savings for NYS in that there is less money expended on rental fees for AV equipment at hotels and conference centers.

* Donation of a brass tree outside the office and several past presidents' plaques inside.

* The establishment of the Muriel Berk Award which honors an outstanding PTA member who is a member of the ESPTSA and who has continued their service through PTA by giving their time and talent to the children and youth of NYS.

* A plaque dedicated to recognize and celebrate those ESPTSA members who have received the Muriel Berk Award which hangs in the PTA Office.
ESPTSA MEMBERSHIP

For just $10 you can honor our Founders and help our unit grow! Please consider a membership in honor of a family member, colleague or friend.
Every membership counts, every child counts.
We want to raise our voices to the top of the Empire State Building!
Join today!

ESPTSA MEMBERSHIP
"Reaching New Heights!"

Join today!

https://esptsa.memberhub.store/
NYS PTA Code # 99-888

Click here to join!

To Celebrate!
Plans are underway for the 125th NYS PTA Annual Conference and Convention and boy, are we excited!
November 19-21, 2021 at the newly renovated and beautiful Marriott Syracuse Downtown, check it out here!

Founders Day
February 17

New York State PTA
EMPIRE STATE PTSA MURIEL BERK SERVICE AWARD

Do you know a current ESPTSA member who has exhibited long standing PTA service? Nominate them (or yourself) for the Muriel Berk Service Award!

The kind of PTA commitment and leadership that led to the formation of the Empire State PTSA (ESPTSA) in 1979 through the work of a superb leader, Muriel Berk, then NYS PTA Membership Chair, serves as a model for us all. Her vision of how to strengthen PTA, coupled with her pursuit of this goal with consistent and constant passion, patience and persistence, continues to serve as an excellent framework for action.

Therefore, on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of ESPTSA in November 2014, the Muriel Berk Service Award was established and dedicated to the memory of this visionary leader so that her service will support the service of others into the future.

AWARD:

The recipient of this award will receive a $250.00 stipend to be used for NYS PTA Convention attendance expenses. The award may be utilized by the recipient for the convention immediately following the award announcement or the next succeeding convention.

CRITERIA:

The recipient must:

♦ Be a current member of ESPTSA
♦ Have exhibited long standing PTA service
♦ Have been nominated by any ESPTSA member or may self-nominate

SELECTION OF THE RECIPIENT:

Application shall be made through the submission of a one-page statement which states, at minimum, the following criteria:

How many previous conventions has the applicant attended?
What positions (i.e., offices, chairmanships) has the applicant held at the unit, council and/or region level?
Why does their service to the PTA stand as a model to others?

HOW TO APPLY:

1. The one-page statement must be submitted to the President of the Empire State PTSA, via email to esptsa.president@nyspta.org and in the subject line place “Muriel Berk Award”, no later than May 1 of the award calendar year either by the nominee or another member.

2. Applications shall then be reviewed by the Muriel Berk Award Committee who will determine the final selection no later than June 1 of the same calendar year.

3. Notification of the award will be made by the Empire State PTSA President no later than July 1.

4. Please note that, according to the availability of ESPTSA funding, this award may not be given in every year. However, notice of the availability of the award will be made to the membership annually.
Jane Skrzypek Leadership Award

This award was established in 1991 to honor the memory of Jane Skrzypek. The award is given in recognition of outstanding PTA volunteerism and leadership that goes above and beyond the scope of the nominee’s PTA position. More information can be found on our website.

Jamie-Beth Knapp Family Engagement Award

Jamie-Beth Knapp believed that Family Engagement was critical in the successful education of students and in helping them with academic achievements, graduating high school and overall success in life. This award recognizes an individual, or a group of individuals, who display innovative ways to encourage and involve parents and family members to be equal partners in their children's education and to empower families to advocate for their own children. More information can be found on our website.

A complete list of awards is available here.

Coming Soon - NYS PTA Beacon!

As yet another way to connect with our members we are starting a new podcast - the NYS PTA Beacon!

Our first episode will be out soon so keep an eye out for more information!

If you have any suggestions on topics you would like covered, please drop us an email!