On behalf of our executive committee, Laurie, Kelly, Neil and me - Happy New Year to all! Winter has taken over and some parts of our state have been hit hard by snow and ice. As for me, Spring (and the baseball season) cannot return fast enough! I hope that you and your families had an enjoyable holiday season, and that the new year brings us all “good tidings”!

Our NYS PTA Convention and the celebration of our 125th year of advocacy may be just a memory, but I did want to share with you some highlights of the weekend. Special thanks to all of you who helped us meet our goal of 125 members for the 125th!

The Syracuse Downtown Marriott was a beautiful venue for the Convention. Our first hybrid convention attracted more than 140 in-person attendees and over 400 virtual attendees. We were treated to amazing performances by students from schools from the local area. We welcomed our National PTA President, Anna King and President-Elect, Yvonne Johnson, to the weekend, and both will be looking forward to National PTA’s 125th Celebration in June. Guest speakers included Anna King, Senator Shelly Mayer, Deputy Secretary for Education, Dan Fuller, NYS Commissioner of Education Betty A. Rosa, and a past NYS Teacher of the year, and NYS PTA Wellness Coordinator, Amy Hysick. Bylaws and Resolutions were debated and approved and there were many outstanding in-person and virtual workshops to attend. Kudos to all of those who were instrumental in presenting this “historic” convention.

We were pleased to welcome 43 of our members to the annual Empire State meeting at breakfast on Sunday morning. At our meeting, we approved some revisions to the Muriel Berk Award procedure, and recognized last year’s recipient, Gracemarie Rozea. The following members were appointed to the Muriel Berk award committee for 2022: Laurie May, chair, Beth Sniffen and Kim Blasiak. Our bylaws expire in January 2023, and we must approve them at our November 2022 annual meeting. Appointed to serve on this committee were Pat Assortato, chair, Neil Johanning and Joan Wabnik. The election of the nominating committee was held, and the following members were elected: Kelly Howe (executive board), Jane Harsha and Debbie Lubben (general membership). I extend my thanks to all of these members for their willingness to serve on these very important committees. Good news on the membership front is that we are well within our goal this year of 175 members – as of Jan. 17 we have 147 members, nearly 84% of our goal, so if you can ask another to join, please do so and don’t forget to email me your “plus one” picture (espsta.president@nyspta.org) for our next newsletter!

Continuing with our NYS PTA history…….

- **1990** – Parent Involvement becomes a priority, Commissioner’s Regulation part 100.11 Education Law
- Support of labeling of milk products that are hormone treated
- Work on charter bus safety and begins active campaign for school bus safety
- **2000** – Collaboration between NYS PTA and Alaska State PTA to present a joint resolution, Internet and Wireless Communication Safety - adopted at the PTA National Convention
- Call for legislation task force to reform state aid to education
- Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Securing a NYS HS Diploma for all students
- **2010** – Raising minimum age for sales of tobacco and nicotine delivery products to 21
- Electronic Cigarettes and Youth
- Comprehensive Social host law
- **2020** – Seeks to block legislation that would make the sale of marijuana legal across the state – even though the legislation was eventually passed, we continue our efforts to advocate and encourage our elected officials to “opt out” of having dispensaries in their communities and to support the health and well-being of our children
- **2021** – Protection and Support for Transgender and Gender non-conforming students

Wishing you all good health in the New Year.
Warm regards,
Jacqueline Wilson, President
Empire State PTSA
SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS

Yvonne Johnson

Greetings from the National PTA President-Elect!
Hello PTA families and friends,
I hope you are starting your new year healthy and looking to the future.
I want to thank all of you for sharing your wonderful volunteers with me. Each and every one I met and spoke with was evidently dedicated to what PTA does best, building relationships and engaging families. I am humbled to have been a guest and to share in your celebration of 125 years of making every child’s potential by empowering and engaging families to advocate for all children. This is of course PTA’s mission. In all that we do we should always keep the mission in mind. It was quite evident to me that you do. I witnessed incredible advocates as you adopted resolutions, engaged delegates with a plethora of workshops that inspired leadership, and you adopted amendments to your bylaws that govern your association.

Conventions always bring us together. We work thoughtfully and play hard. I was amazed at the comradery that exists within your governance. The gatherings of the regions were great fun and I marveled at how much everyone missed being together in person. I especially was moved by the meeting to kick off the announcement of the creation of your new statewide PTSA celebrating diversity. Diversity is not just about skin color or religion, it is also welcoming a difference of thought, opinions, and backgrounds.

One of my favorite things was joining NYS PTA President Dana Platin for conversations with local PTA Presidents. It always strikes me, although we live in different parts of the state or even in different states, as leaders we all face similar challenges. It is the way we react and rise above these challenges that make us so strong. We all have dealt with the idea that many of our members did not see the value of PTA if we were not in physical buildings. What I witnessed was a coming together of everyone to show our true worth as an association. This demonstrates to me that we truly are one PTA.

Attending the NYS PTA Convention was great fun. I saw leaders come together with integrity, thoughtfulness, courage, and inspiration. I am truly blessed to know all of you and to have been part of such a tremendous milestone. I wish you all another 125 years of advocating and empowering families on behalf of our wonderful association, PTA.

Best to all of you and thank you for all you do for the children and families of NY State and in our nation!

Grace Rozea

Looking back over the past 27 years in PTA service gives an interesting perspective on how things have changed.

I started out at Birch Lane PTA in a small capacity. While I did some of the typical volunteer things, like being a class mother, I did have an interest in getting more involved.

A welcoming leader asked me to serve as the newsletter chairman and I said yes. What she did next made the difference in my journey. She invited me to attend a Nassau Region Fall Conference training and I decided to attend. Showing up to a conference and being given a carefully packed folder, loaded with information to educate me, along with attending a few workshops, left me wanting more. I didn’t realize then that this was helping to shape the leader I would become. My training helped me gain the confidence and knowledge that I would need as I served as a unit president.

Interestingly, the thing about that newsletter job is that it led me to join the Nassau District board as the Leader editor. My PTA career had two tracks running simultaneously. I finished a two-year term at Birch Lane PTA and was elected president of Massapequa Council of PTAs - this was in the same year I served as Associate Director of Nassau Region PTA. My experience at the Region level made me a much stronger local leader – I knew the correct methods and procedures. The component that made the difference was the training. At this point, I was appointed Region Director. Having the chance to influence the future of other PTA volunteers was an awesome responsibility. I served as the Leadership Development coordinator for NYS PTA and always kept that passion (still to this day). I witnessed the strongest leaders come from the Growth Through Leadership training – it was my desire to see that revamped and brought back and I still hope that it did.

Once completing my term as president of NYS PTA in 2018, I became active again at the same school/unit where I started my journey. My granddaughter Madelyn is a student at Birch Lane Elementary. When there was an opening in the position of PARP chair, I said yes to trying something new.

I hope that you noticed my frequent references to training. It is essential that training be instilled in our new leaders so that they will be able to successfully lead their units/councils/regions/states into the future. We need strong leaders that will move up through the ranks so that PTA can continue advocating for many years to come!
ESPTSA FINANCIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESPTSA Treasurer Report Fiscal Year 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022</th>
<th>Q2 10/1/21 - 12/31/21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approved Budget 2021-2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>Q2 Activity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Starting Balance 2021-2022 4,146.14$</td>
<td>Starting Balance 10/1/2021 4,854.73$</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>160 members @$6</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
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<td>Members = 55@$6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Gift Memberships for staff/guests</td>
<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>$ 28.00</td>
<td>Gift Memberships Staff (1) $ 4.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$ 1,443.00</td>
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<td><strong>Closing Balance 12/31/2021</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$ 4,213.14</td>
<td>$ 4,240.73</td>
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</table>

Note: 56x$4=$224 allocated to NYS PTA for State and National PTA dues portions.
Note: $1,000 is in reserve for the Muriel Burke Awardee event attendance.
Neil Johanning, Treasurer
Happy New Year Empire State PTSA Members!!! This great state-wide unit is 147 members strong so far ... and oh so very close to hitting our goal of 175 members!

As the Membership Engagement Specialist for NYS PTA, I get the pleasure to work with many PTAs across the state, and Empire State PTSA is one of my favorites!

What is so great about Empire State PTSA you ask?

Well, for one thing, anyone can join, from anywhere! And it is so easy for people to join now that they can do it online (keep reading for the online join link)! Another great thing about ESPTSA is that it provides people a chance to support PTA who are no longer connected to a school with a PTA, like me. Our membership with this great state-wide unit means that we are still able to support NYS PTA’s advocacy efforts. This is important to me because I want to make sure that every child has the best education, which is what they all deserve. Something else that our membership with Empire State PTSA supports is awards, like the Muriel Berk Award. This award 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. Empire State PTSA is also a generous PTSA that has gifted much needed items to our great association (like projectors for training events) and they often give other award recipients memberships to encourage their continuing involvement with PTA.

On February 17, 2022 (Founder’s Day) NYS PTA will be hosting The Great PTA Sign Up Day. I would like to ask each of you to invite someone you know to join Empire State PTSA or purchase a gift membership (Use Member Donation as the name for ESPTSA to change later in the profile). NYS PTA will be posting live throughout the day on all social media with updates on our State Goal for the day so be sure to tune in!

It is easier to join PTA than what most people realize. Here 3 Things that are harder:
  
  Deciding what’s for dinner
  Getting a teenager to clean their room
  Getting a hold of a live Representative at [insert name of company]

Please consider sharing the online MemberHub store link: https://esptsa.memberhub.com/store in an email, text or on your social media. You can also post this nifty QR code for people to point their cameras at to get them there even faster!

I would like to say thank you to each of you for joining Empire State PTSA. I really appreciate you all asking a friend or other loved one to join. We are so very grateful to have everyone’s continued support.

TRIVIA TIME! Let's have some fun!

Email me at membershipengagement@nyspta.org with the Subject EMPIRE!

Tell me:

What year did Empire State PTSA form?
Who formed ESPTSA?
Tell me something funny that is harder to do than joining PTA.
Tell me who your Plus One will be for The Great PTA Sign Up Day on February 17th!

Those who take part and email my by 11:59pm on 2/17 will be entered into a drawing for a $10 Barnes and Noble Gift Card. Help us reach our goal!

Renee Daniels, NYS PTA Membership Engagement Specialist
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 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 one-time stipend not to exceed $250, to be used for attendance whether in person or virtual, at a NYS PTA event. The award may be utilized by the recipient for the NYS PTA Convention, Summer Leadership Conference or Legislative Summit within the next five years. ***

Each year, the name of the recipient of the award will be engraved on the Muriel Berk Award Plaque located in the NYS PTA Office.

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:
• Why are you nominating this person for the award?
• What positions (i.e., offices, chairmanships) has the nominee held at the unit, council, region and/or state level?
• Why or how does this nominee’s 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 to the recipient 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.

***Proviso: For the years 2021 and 2022 ONLY, any past recipient of the Muriel Berk Award who has NOT yet used their stipend, shall be entitled to use it for attendance, either virtual or in-person at/for the 2021 or 2022 Convention.

We are accepting nominating letters for the 2022 award. Please email your submission to: esptsa.president@nyspta.org
Happy New Year! The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is kicking off 2022 by honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy through an exhibition of student art and essays that reflect his teaching.

We are thrilled with the quality and breadth of student essays and artwork illustrating the Six Principles and Steps of Nonviolence. The students’ work will be displayed virtually as part of the 2022 New York State Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Observance. We will also feature student art each day on our social media channels through the end of Black History Month in February. I encourage you to follow the hashtags #NYSMLK and #StudentsExhibitingMLK on our social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn).

NYSED announced this week that the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) will offer a total of $150,000 in scholarship opportunities for high school students to attend regional summer arts programs for summer 2022. Students can apply for a scholarship through May 1, 2022, via an online application.

The goal of the scholarship program is to promote access and equity to arts education by providing need-based grants to low-income students pursuing summer learning opportunities. The scholarship application will evaluate financial need and will not include an audition or portfolio component. More information on how to apply is available on the NYSSSA website.

SHINING A LIGHT ON LEGISLATION

NYS PTA LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT AND LOBBY DAY

FEBRUARY 16, 2022 6 pm – 9 pm VIRTUAL FORMAT!

This is a FREE NYS PTA Event!

Hear from experts and PTA advocates on critical issues facing students, educators, families and schools while learning the ‘How To’ of advocacy!

NYS PTA will also be scheduling meetings with State legislators. If you are willing to participate in these meetings, please indicate that in the last question. We will be scheduling lobby meetings and training prior to the scheduled legislator appointments. Virtual Legislator visits will generally be held during business hours, Monday – Friday, February 28 – March 11, depending upon the legislator’s schedule. While these are optional meetings, they are a great opportunity for PTA members to meet with policymakers to share their experiences relative to the 2022 Legislative Summit key issues.

Note, you must attend the Legislative Summit to attend a virtual legislative visit.
We look forward to seeing you at the NYS PTA Legislative Summit 2022!

Register Here!

NYSED NEWS

Happy New Year! The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is kicking off 2022 by honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy through an exhibition of student art and essays that reflect his teaching.

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January 18, 2022

Christopher Alexander, Executive Director  
Tremaine Wright, Chair  
NYS Office of Cannabis Management (OCM)  
Building 9 Harriman Campus  
1220 Washington Ave.  
Albany, NY 12226

Mr. Alexander and Ms. Wright,  
The NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is honored to represent the families of our 2.6 million school children and our nearly 250,000 members. It is our mission to make every child's potential a reality and support EVERY child with ONE voice.

We write to formally request that when promulgating regulations related to the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), the Board and OCM keep child health and safety at the forefront of decision making.

As MRTA is implemented, we must reflect on how our policies and procedures ensure that our children are safe from the practicalities related to legalized recreational marijuana.

We must work together to combat what we sadly know from other states related to children:

- The Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs found that children in California are significantly more likely to use marijuana since its legalization there in 2016;
- Nevada and Oregon saw similar trends: once legalized, youth marijuana usage significantly increased when analyzing data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health;
- The University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future Survey of American Youth reported that between 2017 and 2018, the percentage of 8th and 10th graders who report “vaping” marijuana increased 63%;
- According to a 2019 report by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s toxicology reports, the percentage of adolescent suicide victims testing positive for marijuana continues to increase;
- Between 2011 and 2013, 20.7% of suicide victims between the ages of 10 and 19 tested positive for marijuana (compared with 12.7% who tested positive for alcohol). Between 2014-2016, 22.4% tested positive for marijuana (compared with 9.3% for alcohol);
- From 2005 to 2015, the number of youth (ages 13-20) who went to urgent care for marijuana related illnesses increased 172%.
- A systematic review and meta-analysis in JAMA Psychiatry (2019) of 11 studies including more than 23,000 individuals, found that adolescent cannabis consumption was associated with increased risk of developing depression and suicidal behavior later in life, even in the absence of a premorbid condition; and
- The Children’s Hospital of Colorado outlines the dangers of “Acute Marijuana Intoxication” and discusses the harm of child overdoses, usually as a result of ingestion of edible forms of marijuana.

Thus, we hope we can work together in moving forward to see that we each support the health, safety, and wellness of our children.

As always, NYS PTA stands ready to work collaboratively to support ALL children and families and we look forward to discussing these matters with you. We are available at any time by contacting our Executive Director, Kyle Belokopitsky, at execdirector@nyspta.org or 518-452-8808 (office) or 518-817-3017 (cell).

Sincerely,

Dana Platin, President  
Kyle Belokopitsky, Esq., Executive Director

Cc: Governor Hochul  
Dan Fuller, Deputy Secretary for Education

You can find a copy of the letter HERE