

Muriel Berk Empire State PTSA Service Award

**Nominee: Jane E. Harsha NYS PTA Past President & Empire State PTSA member & Consultant --
Hispanic/Latino Initiative**

“A *Leader* is a dedicated individual through their role, who participates in an organization and can understand and handle a crisis and then reinvent the crisis to set new and creative goals, whereby new solutions are directed toward more success for the organization!”

I am proud to nominate Jane E. Harsha for Empire State PTSA Muriel Berk Service Award. She is one of our most important leaders and role models. Like many of us did, Jane first came to PTA at the Somers Middle & High School PTA's when her boys were there. She participated in the Somers Council PTA for a few years, and then was invited to take a position on the WEPR PTA Board when her motivation and engagement in advocacy was recognized by the District Director (now called Region Director). Jane served as our Region's leadership development chair, membership chair and held several officer positions including Region Director (2006-2009).

As Membership chair, we had the largest number of memberships of any NYS PTA Region and as Westchester East Putnam Region Director, she significantly increased the diversity, equity, and inclusion of members as well as a sense of belonging, and added more voices to current issues and goals.

She was involved and engaged, always training others to lead. On the NYS PTA Board, she served as Resolutions' chair, Leadership Development Coordinator and Vice President for Advocacy, and was then elected NYS PTA First Vice President, and then became our President. She is kind, considerate, sets goals to engage everyone, an excellent listener, and familiar with several languages. While creative and assertive in support of our PTA goals, she connects using a quiet manner to our diverse membership. I learned this first-hand, when as the Region special education chair, Jane provided Spanish translation for my presentation and as a result, we were able to develop more diverse, inclusive programs to engage and increase our membership.

Jane became our President when Lorey Zaman unexpectedly passed away. In this difficult circumstance, she stepped into the role and brought our membership and Board together to continue the NYS PTA work. She kept us going without losing a beat, a credit to her skill and dedication to PTA.

Jane has been recognized with the Honorary Life and the Distinguished Service awards and also received the Westchester County Global Warming Task Force Commendation and “Kudos” from the WEPR board for her role as NYS PTA President. Our world is ever changing, and we need and depend on leaders like Jane E. Harsha. It is fitting that we add her to the list of distinguished Muriel Berk recipients. It has always been a privilege to work with Jane and be part of her team.