



June 3rd, 2009

Greetings,

As local PTAs make new transitions after recent elections, so does MCCPTA. On May 27, 2009, at the MCCPTA Presidents and Principals dinner, the MCCPTA officers for 2009-2010 were installed.

Kay Romero, President - president@mccpta.com

Kristin Tribble, VP Educational Issues - vpedissues@mccpta.com

Carol Salisbury, VP Programs – vpprograms@mccpta.org

Rebecca Smondrowski, VP Legislation - vplegislation@mccpta.com

Jaimie Jacobson, Treasurer - treasurer@mccpta.com

DeBora King, Secretary, Board of Directors - secretaries@mccpta.com

Patti Twigg, Secretary, Delegates Assembly - secretaries@mccpta.com

Also installed were MCCPTA Area Vice Presidents and Cluster Coordinators. The contact information for all MCCPTA officers is located on the MCCPTA website.

On May 27, 2009, the MCCPTA Presidents and Principals dinner was held at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center. Almost 400 people joined us for the installation of officers and the honoring of individuals and organizations that have given extraordinary service to the students of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) through their PTAs. MCCPTA has over 50,000 members and represents 189 local PTAs.

The dinner was attended by many state and county officials including Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Executive and a number of senators and delegates from the Maryland General Assembly, County Council members, Board of Education members and MCPS officials. Several past MCCPTA presidents were also present: Marian Fox (1968-70), Vicki Rafel (1985-87), Nancy King (1993-94), and Jane de Winter (2006-08).

At the May 27, 2009 MCCPTA Presidents and Principals dinner, Craig Zucker, Chief of Staff for State Comptroller Peter Franchot, presented a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of Mr. Franchot to MCCPTA: *“In recognition of your tireless advocacy on behalf of teachers, parents and students throughout the county. Your activism and energy have helped to make your association one of the most effective in the state of Maryland.”*

The Certificate of Recognition is featured on our MCCPTA website at <http://www.mccpta.com/>. Also featured on our website is our MCCPTA press release about the dinner that included the lengthy list of dignitaries who attended and celebrated PTA along with our many local PTA leaders.

Maryland PTA Lifetime Memberships were presented to parents Steve Augustino and Kate Savage. Mr. Augustino has been involved in PTA for 13 years, including serving for the last two years as Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) chairperson for MCCPTA. Ms. Savage started volunteering for PTA even before her oldest child started kindergarten, and has served PTA in many capacities from running the Sally Foster sales at Beall Elementary School to PTA President at Richard Montgomery High School, as well as serving as a cluster coordinator and area vice president for MCCPTA.

The Partnership in Education Award went to the Knights of Columbus for their many years of support of programs and students at Stephen Knolls School and other alternative schools throughout the county.

MCCPTA raffled off a free Kaplan PSAT, SAT or ACT Classroom course valued at over \$1000 during the dinner. The winner was Northwest High School.

On June 1, 2009, MCCPTA held its annual Spring Training at Blake High School for over 200 local PTA leaders. The following sessions were offered:

New & Returning Presidents

Treasurers

Secretaries

MCCPTA Delegates

Area Vice Presidents/Cluster Coordinators

Reflections

Bylaws

FLES & Hands on Science Coordinators

It was a time to get down to PTA business while meeting our local PTA leaders who give of their time to volunteer on behalf of children in our school communities. It was nice to get to know some of our PTA leaders and be able to put faces to email addresses. The training material packets that were not picked up at the MCCPTA Spring Training will be ponied to each school. When the materials are received at your schools, please distribute to your officers as soon as possible. All guidebooks are available on the MCCPTA website to be reviewed or downloaded for your use. You will find them under the PTA Resources tab.

For local PTAs, please make sure that you forward to our MCCPTA office the names and contact information for your new officers. MCCPTA will be putting together its Blue Book and we need you to complete the Blue Book information request that was included in your Spring Training packets. The form is also online at <http://www.mccpta.com/bluebookForm.html>.

Membership

As PTAs change leadership, it is important to remember that PTA membership runs year round and PTAs may accept new memberships at any time of the year. Challenge your PTA to see how many new members you can add over the summer months. Then carry that over into the school year and challenge your PTA to increase your membership by at least 5% or higher.

Continuing PTA Activities

Remember that PTA business goes on year round. Local PTA officers should be meeting over the summer to plan your budgets as well as identifying goals for your PTAs in the upcoming school year. Local units are reminded to change your bank signature cards if your officers have changed. While planning your individual PTA budgets remember to include money for the Presidents and Principals dinner, MD PTA trainings and fall convention. Committee positions should be filled and plans for their work should be discussed. Local PTAs should be addressing their ICB paperwork to be submitted by August 15. Please refer to: “Your PTA and the Interagency Coordinating Board” at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/cupf/documents/PTA-07.pdf>.

Listsers

PTA members and leaders should become familiar with MCCPTA Listsers. In order to foster communication, MCCPTA maintains five listsers. Two of them are currently open to all who wish to subscribe. These two lists are called MCCPTA_Bulletin and MCCPTA_Delegates. The other three lists, which have restricted membership, are MCCPTA_Board, MCCPTA_Treasurers, and MCCPTA_Presidents. A detailed description of, and subscription information for all five lists, can be found in documents listed below. These listsers are a way to pass along important information to our local PTAs, and to facilitate communication between the PTA/PTSAs of public schools in our county. Some MCCPTA Committees also maintain specialized listsers of their own. A list of committees that have listsers can be found in one of the documents below, or you can contact the chair of a committee you are interested in to see if one is maintained by them: <http://www.mccpta.com/listsers.html>

MCCPTA Listsers Documents:

- [Annual Transition of Listserv Membership and Settings](#)
- [Listsers Summary Table](#)
- [To Join](#)
- [General Information](#)
- [Etiquette](#)
- [MCCPTA Committees Listsers and Liaisons](#)
- [A Beginners Guide to the MCCPTA Listsers](#)

Calendar

MCCPTA has set a schedule of calendar dates for our Summer Area Meetings. These meetings are held during the summer in each quad or quint cluster with MCCPTA leadership and local PTA leadership. These meetings are designed to build the framework for MCCPTA's advocacy for the coming school year and to gather input for the budget process. MCCPTA uses the input gathered at these meetings to formulate the MCCPTA Budget Priorities and MCCPTA Budget Compact. This helps to shape upcoming budget testimonies and advocacy efforts on behalf of our organization and its members in the upcoming year.

MCCPTA leadership will also be meeting with the Board of Education (BOE) leadership and board staff to discuss the format and content of the Cluster meetings with BOE. BOE holds these meetings with different clusters each year on a rotating basis to discuss local school issues with cluster leadership.

Capital Improvements

2008-2009

FY 2011-2016 CIP Comments Were Due June 1

It's time to submit our comments on next year's CIP. Next year is a "full" CIP year, meaning that MCPS will consider not only the FY 2011 budget but also a FY2011-2016 construction plan. Listed below is a link to the CIP comment form and last year's instructions from Adrienne Karamihas. Please use these documents to prepare your comments. **CIP Comments were due on June 1.**

Restroom Renovation Assessments

In October 2009, MCPS will propose a new phase of its restroom renovation project. The project will rank 108 schools for renovations, including all special centers and holding school facilities. MCCPTA is asking for your input to assist with the assessment and ranking of schools. Below you will find a link to comment instructions for PTAs and background information concerning the project. For further information, contact your cluster coordinator or the CIP chair. For more information:

<http://www.mccpta.com/cip.html>

MDPTA Summer Leadership Conference

Mark your calendars for the MDPTA Summer Leadership Conference July 18, 2009 at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, Maryland. PTAs should have received the packets from MDPTA by now. The sessions are geared to PTA members and leadership; check out the sessions offered and choose those of interest to you and your PTA. The packet and all the training sessions offered are located on the

Maryland PTA website at: <http://www.mdpta.org/documents/conference09.pdf>. Please pay attention to the dates of registration and take advantage of the early bird enrollment savings. You want to encourage your Ways and Means Committee chair (fundraising) to attend and tour the exhibit hall of vendors and register for door prizes. They will be able to attend the last session of the day, "Taxes and Fundraising," free of charge if they register upon arrival. Do not miss that opportunity!

Insurance for 2008-2009 for local PTAs – Please Read Carefully (Note 2009-10)
http://www.mdpta.org/bridge_insurance.html

As of the Maryland (MD) PTA fall convention in November 2007, all PTAs are required to have general liability, bonding, and directors and officers liability insurance as negotiated by MD PTA. Maryland PTA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:

All local PTAs shall have, at a minimum, bonding, liability, and directors and officers insurance through the Maryland PTA negotiated policy, a due date no later than October 1, 2008 as the date the state will cover existing local policies.

These provisions include the benefit of (1) consistency in that all PTAs are covered by the same policy with the same insurance company and (2) a group rate that reduces the cost to individual PTAs.

BB&T will once again be our insurance carrier for the 2009-2010 year. Invoices and statements will be mailed to the local units by May 30, 2009. Enrollment deadline is October 1, 2009. BB&T publishes an insurance summary and loss prevention guide. It refers to Red Light, Yellow Light and Green Light activities. Red Light activities are prohibited. Yellow Light refers to activities where certain conditions must be met and the local PTA must consult with the insurance broker in advance of engaging in any of those activities. Green Light activities are approved.

The BB&T annual premium is \$179 for each local PTA. Please include a late payment fee of \$25 if payment is made after October 10, 2009. So, EACH LOCAL PTA MUST PAY ITS INSURANCE PREMIUM TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Below is a link to the application to fill out and attach with payment to BB&T. An insurance summary and certificate of insurance will then be issued to each insured PTA.

Contact Teresa Willis, Office Administrator, at officeadministrator@mdpta.org or 410-760-6221 with questions regarding premium payments. BB&T can be reached directly through email at MDpta@BBandT.com.

URGENT: AFTER 6/1/09 THE OLD EMAIL ADDRESS WILL NOT WORK. PLEASE USE THE BB&T ADDRESS NOTED ABOVE.

[Enrollment Form and Loss Control Guide Book-2008 Maryland](http://www.mdpta.org/bridge_insurance.html)

http://www.mdpta.org/bridge_insurance.html

From Maryland PTA- The Official PTA Kit—Register for Yours!

The *PTA Back-to-School Kit* is now *The Official PTA Kit*—PTA's Big Box of Possibilities.

Along with the change in name, there is a change in the kit's delivery. This year, all local, council, district, and region PTAs must register to receive their kit. The registration form allows your incoming PTA president or other authorized leader to provide your unit's preferred shipping address and date.

This new process will help ensure that the kit gets into the right hands at the right time. And the kit is still free!

Look for a postcard and e-mail with your unit's registration link starting at the end of April. Kits will ship weekly June 19 through the end of October (kits shipped after October 1 will incur a handling cost).

For more details about the delivery and contents of *The Official PTA Kit*, go to National PTA's website, under Program Button, click on The Official PTA Kit.

The Official PTA Kit is available exclusively to PTAs in good standing.

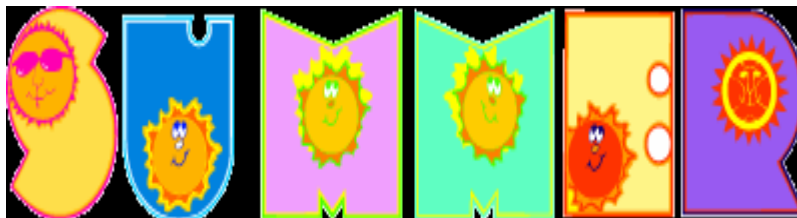
More From Maryland PTA- When sending your officer information to the state office, please be sure to send: name, full mailing address, phone, email address, and position. We must have all of this information before your president can be set up in the OMDR system. Email your information to office@mdpta.org or fax to 410-760-6344.

MCCPTA OFFICE NEWS - SUMMER HOURS FOR THE MCCPTA OFFICE

Summer hours begin the week of June 22. The hours will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am - 12 pm.

The MCCPTA office will resume regular 10 am - 2 pm Monday through Friday hours the week of August 31st.

Kay Romero



Linkages to Learning Shoe Drive

Dear all,

We want to start a shoe drive for the upcoming school year but of course we need a lot of help. Below is a flyer that you can distribute via you newsletters or other ways.

Thanks!

Haifa Peter



Linkages to Learning Program

Dear Friend,

Would you help kids wear new shoes this summer and for the next school year?

Remember the joy you felt when you got a new pair of shoes?

We're seeking your support to purchase one pair of shoes for children in Montgomery County. These new shoes will go to children who are in kindergarten through 5th grade. The shoe sizes range from children size 10 to youth 7. Either gender is appreciated. These children live in difficult and stressful situations feeling the day to day effects of poverty.

Yes, there are 5,000 school age children with siblings living in poverty in Montgomery County, MD. They need your help.

Linkages to Learning, a collaborative initiative between the public and private sectors, provides much needed economic, social, and health services to school age children and their siblings in Montgomery County.

Throughout the year, Linkages responds to the urgent needs of children and their families with food, clothing, school supplies, as well as paying for medical, dental, electric and gas bills.

Our shoe drive will begin on(add date) and continue until (add date). Please place your new shoes at the entrance of the school. There will be a box at the entrance.

If you have any questions please contact, Haifa Peter at 240-777-1291.

Summer Food Service Program

Interested in receiving meals for your summer program?

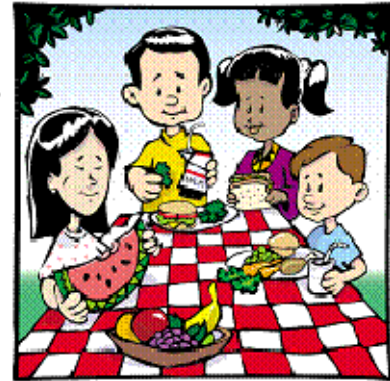
Facts:

The Summer Food Service Program provides nutritious meals to children when school closes and is designed to bridge the summer vacation “nutrition gap.” Approximately 27% of children in Montgomery County or 37, 640 students are eligible for free or reduced meals during the school year. The Summer Food Service Program feeds an average of 6,000 – 7,000 children each day at 105 sites throughout the county.

Increasing the number of sites providing the summer food program would help to reach more eligible children in Montgomery County!

Background:

The Summer Food Service Program was created in 1976 to ensure that children in lower income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during the summer months when school breakfast and lunches are not available. The program provides breakfast and lunch to eligible children and teenagers, 18 years and younger, at approved sites. Persons over 18 years of age who have been determined mentally or physically handicapped and who participate in a public or private non-profit school program for the handicapped during the school year are eligible to receive meal benefits.



Site Qualification:

To qualify for the program, sites must meet certain criteria and comply with specific conditions as follows:

- Meet requirements for meal service preparation, distribution and accountability
- Have proper capacity and logistics for those enrolled
- Offer educational, cultural and/or recreational activities
- Provide supervision, meal service monitoring and training to site staff
- Maintain proper health and sanitary conditions
- Keep daily records and issue periodic reports

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT:

Division of Food & Nutrition Services
301-840-8170

E-mail:
SummerFoodProgram@mcpsmd.org

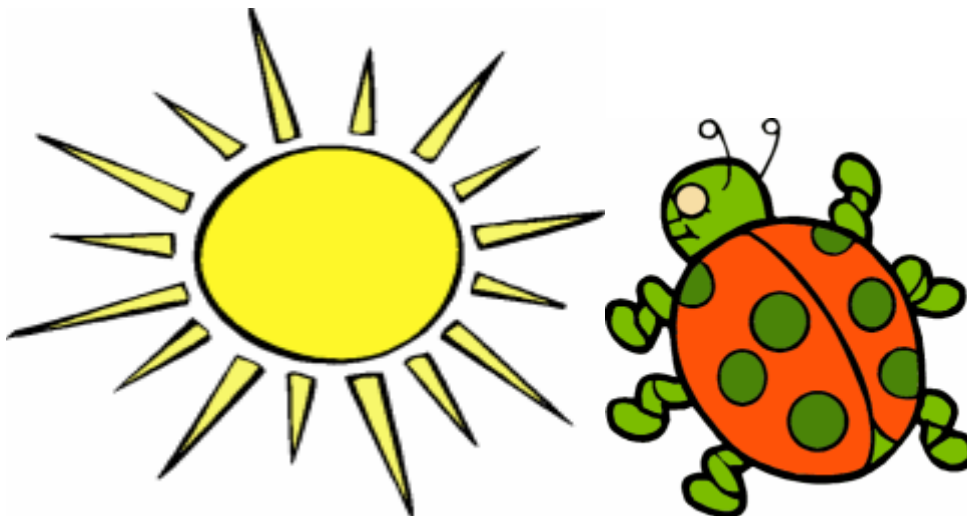
Once these conditions are satisfied, eligibility to participate in the Summer Food Service Program is determined by geographic or enrollment data. At least 50% of the children who live in the area from which the site draws its attendance must be eligible for free or reduced price meals in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, or at least 50% of the enrolled children at the site must have the same eligibility. Geographic eligibility is documented by using school or census tract data. Once a site is qualified to participate in the Summer Food Service Program, all children at the site are eligible to receive meals at no cost!

Participation Data:

During the summer of 2008, 105 sites provided the summer meals program. In addition to Montgomery County Public School summer school sites, there were many community based sites including the City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Housing, daycare and church based locations.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Operating Days	54	51	50	50
Sites	80	80	79	105
Breakfasts	80,043	91,027	103,367	122,522
Lunches	127,297	128,121	134,856	166,389
Total Meals	207,340	219,148	238,223	288,911

For more information, contact the Division of Food and Nutrition Services 301-840-8170.



Maryland PTA Training Offerings

July 18, 2009
"Navigating the Sea of Leadership"
[2009 Summer Leadership Conference](#)
Conference Center at the Maritime Institute
Linthicum, Maryland

"The Winds of Change"
94th Annual Fall Convention
November 13-14, 2009
Frederick, Maryland

Maryland PTA offers training in many forms to our officers, councils and local units. This is accomplished thru Summer Leadership Conference, Regional Trainings, Maryland PTA Convention, Local Unit training, Council Officer training, National PTA events, BSP Training and more.

If you are interested in any of our training programs, please contact the state office at office@mdpta.org or call 410-760-6221.

2009 Regional Trainings

May 30	<u>Worcester County</u>	8-3pm
June 13	<u>Queen Anne's County</u>	9-3pm
August 22	<u>Maryland PTA Office</u>	9-3pm
Sept 26	<u>Wicomico County</u>	9-3pm

2009 Financial Workshops

August 15	<u>All Day Financial Workshop</u>	Maryland PTA Office	9-3p
October 17	<u>All Day Financial Workshop</u>	Maryland PTA Office	9-3p

REGIONAL TRAINING INFORMATION

Training is free to all PTA members. Breakfast and Lunch are provided. If you register and do not show, you will be charged \$15.00 to cover the cost of meals ordered for you. You MUST preregister. Send an email to office@mdpta.org or fax to 410-760-6344 with your name, address, phone and choice of workshop(s). All workshops are full day events.

Who Should Attend? PTA Officers, Chairman, Treasurers, Up and Coming Leaders from All Counties

Workshops Include: Treasurer; Basic duties of Officers: President/Vice-President, Secretary, Committee Chairs; Board responsibilities and Bylaws.

What will we learn? You will gain in-depth training for all especially for treasurers and officers. There will be work sessions and networking to raise the level of performance in each local.

Registration is FREE but a must. Contact the state office to register at 410-760-6221 or office@mdpta.org.

If you would like to host a regional training or have any suggestions for needed regional training topics, please contact the state office at office@mdpta.org

RESOURCE TRAINING LIBRARY
(members only)

Want to learn more?

At a time when PTA budgets are tight and schedules are even tighter, e-learning is a solution for members looking to expand their skills cost-effectively and without the need to travel. This e-learning initiative is a step toward achieving PTA's goal of making all members informed advocates by 2020.

Choose from the following courses, and look for new courses to be added throughout the year. Each course takes 30 minutes to an hour to complete and can be revisited repeatedly for more practice.

- PTA Basics
- Grant Writing
- Conflict Management
- Planning Your New PTA Year
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Running a Successful PTA Program
- Effective Advocacy for Your Child
- Writing and Proposing PTA Resolutions

Log onto www.pta.org/e-learning. You will need the user name and password on the back of your membership card.

Cultural Awareness

For a Stronger PTA, Put Diversity in the Details

(Pulled from National PTA website)

By Caryl M. Stern

At the school my children attend, there are 410 students representing more than 40 countries. It is not unusual to hear a variety of languages being spoken as the children enter school each day. In fact, the school officially recognizes four languages—Chinese, Spanish, Korean, and, of course, English. The morning drop-off period looks like a meeting of the United Nations as parents proudly display their cultural attire. There is also a multitude of religions represented in the student body, and numerous family constructs—from single-parent families to same-sex-parent families to extended families living together in one home to multigenerational families. There are families in which both parents work outside the home, families with stay-at-home moms, families with stay-at-home dads, families with live-in child-care providers who play significant roles in the school community....I could go on and on.

As president of the parent group at my children's elementary school—and as someone who has dedicated the majority of her career to teaching people to value diversity—I know that making this widely diverse group of families cohere into a single school family presents numerous unique challenges, not the least of which is ensuring diverse representation and involvement in the school's parent group. That challenge—attracting and engaging parents of all backgrounds—is one that PTAs across the country are facing.

While people often are attracted to an organization because of its mission, volunteers tend to remain active because there are other people like themselves in the group. When people find themselves “the only one” of their kind at the first meeting they attend, they're much less likely to stay involved. Here are some suggestions for creating an inclusive school and PTA where people feel welcome and want to stay involved.

Offer a welcoming environment

Examine your overall school environment, and note whether it tells a parent whose background, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, etc., is not that of the majority at the school that he or she is welcome, valued, and a significant part of the school community. Is information about the school disseminated in multiple languages? Are interpreters (professional interpreters or parent volunteers) available for those whose first language is a language other than English? Do specific events require specific relationships that may not be present in every student's home, or does the school take account of the various family arrangements when planning events? Are the all-school cultural events reflective of only the culture of the majority, or are there opportunities to explore and place value on various cultures? Is there a mechanism for knowing how the school environment is perceived within various segments of the school

community? Few people want to volunteer their time to something they feel does not value them.

Ask yourself what opportunities are provided to ensure that parents get to know one another and learn more about the various things that are important to each of them. If your PTA wants to diversify membership, it must offer opportunities for parents to expand their circles of acquaintances.

In my work, I often receive calls from people who say, for example, “I have just hired several people from another country. Can you tell me where I can go to learn how to provide them with a comfortable work environment?” I tell the callers they need not go anywhere other than to the people they just hired. Those people are their cultural experts. What the employer—and PTA leader—does need to do, however, is learn to ask questions in a way that makes the experts feel comfortable answering. To that end, here are a few suggestions:

- Avoid questions that begin with the words “How do people from your country feel about...” Questions like this are offensive; they imply that all members of a particular group feel one way, which we know is not true.
- Check out a question by first asking it of yourself. Think about the question and determine whether you would answer it if it were asked of you. Would you answer the question regardless of who asked it, or would the person asking it have to know you first? What tone, body language, etc., would make you feel comfortable?
- Conduct an anti-bias or diversity training program for your PTA and, keeping the previous tips in mind, practice asking questions about people’s cultures and beliefs.

Communicate the PTA’s goals

If parents are to get involved, they not only need to feel welcome in the school and PTA, but also need to feel that the work of PTA is worthwhile. Reflect on how the goals of your PTA are articulated. For those of us who have been educated in U.S. public schools, the purpose of PTA is clear; we do not need it defined. In many countries around the world, however, parents are not part of their children’s school communities. Parents from these countries do not understand the influence and benefits of PTA. For parents from some countries, an organization like PTA represents an unnecessary or inappropriate challenge to authority. It is important to spell out why PTA exists; what PTA has achieved; what PTA expects of members; and how parents’ membership in PTA benefits themselves, their children, and the school community.

Create operational rules that encourage diversity

It is also important to look at the operational rules of your PTA. As a working mom, I could not be involved in (much less serve as president of) the parent group at my children’s school if meetings were held during the workday. When does your PTA meet? Examine not only times but also dates and places of meetings and events. When a meeting is held on a religious holiday, a clear message is sent about the unimportance of

having members of the group observing that holiday participate in the meeting. When the room selected for a meeting is inaccessible to parents with disabilities, a clear message is sent. When food is served at a meeting and nothing is done to make it possible for a parent who observes religious food restrictions to partake with other members, a clear message is sent.

But operational rules go further than time, date, place, and food. How are decisions made? Is the process clear to all members? What is done to orient new members so they feel comfortable enough to participate? How are unwritten rules shared? For example, you may not have a written rule against bringing children to PTA meetings, but it is customary that people do not. How is this information passed on?

There are many schools and PTAs that operate with only limited diversity. While these organizations may meet many of their objectives, they also miss out on many good experiences. A piece of music may be played beautifully by a single instrument, but it is the richness of a whole orchestra playing that brings the beauty of the song to its fullest potential. It is the same with PTA. If we are to truly prepare our children to live and succeed in this country, we must capitalize on our nation's greatest strength—its diversity.

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.[®]

Strategies for Increasing Diversity in Your PTA

by Caryl M. Stern

Here are some additional strategies for creating an inclusive environment. Use these strategies to recruit and retain a diverse group of parents.

- Identify programs, services, and events that create an inclusive environment. At my school, these include anti-bias workshops for teachers, anti-bullying workshops for students, and a schoolwide international night that invites families to dress in native clothes, prepare native foods, share cultural performances, and celebrate the school's diversity.
- Consider diversity when selecting decorations, assembly programs, movies for movie night, songs for school concerts, books for school book clubs, etc.
- Thank teachers with a parent-sponsored, parent-prepared luncheon for which parents are encouraged to prepare foods that reflect their cultures. Call upon parents and other relatives to present information about their heritages in the classroom, as part of the curriculum.
- Draft and disseminate materials that articulate the purpose of your PTA, a brief history of your PTA, and the benefits of PTA membership.
- Establish a formal translator program for parent-teacher conferences and other school functions; establish an informal network of parent and/or student translators who are willing to assist at school and after school.
- Write and send a personal invitation (translated into the appropriate language) to each parent; the invitation should ask for the parent's involvement and identify why and/or how the parent's involvement would be valued.
- Assign a mentor to all new members to help ease their transition into the group and to articulate unwritten rules.
- Reach out to individuals who may serve as intermediaries with specific groups in the community. These individuals may include religious leaders and leaders of local ethnic organizations.
- Create a feedback system that allows anyone who perceives or experiences exclusion to make it known to the PTA; make sure the PTA responds to all such feedback.
- Ask volunteers to be involved in the creating and planning of programs and events. People support better that which they help build.
- Take time to learn how people are comfortable being recognized for their involvement, and then make sure they are recognized.



The PTA National Magazine, Our Children, is mailed to all local PTA Presidents and is also available online.

www.pta.org

Parents Can Help Make Schools Safer

by: Joselle Shea

(Online edition of Our Children, the PTA national magazine)

Each weekday, you make sure that your children get to school on time and do their homework. You talk with teachers about your children's academic achievements and how they get along with other students. But have you ever tried to get involved with, school safety? If children worry about their safety at school, they may have trouble concentrating on their work or building good relationships. Based on the results of a July 2008 survey of 1,400 parents with children in grades K–8, the National Crime Prevention Council created the following recommendations on school safety for parents:

Discuss safety efforts with school administrators.

Two-thirds of parents have never talked to their children's teachers about safety issues, and fewer than one-quarter of parents say that their children's school frequently communicates with them about school safety measures, disciplinary policies, and safety education. Don't wait until a tragedy occurs to talk about school safety. Instead, talk to your school officials about programs and activities to prevent violence. Parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, and PTA meetings provide opportunities to discuss school safety.

Ask about bullying prevention and conflict-resolution efforts.

Bullying and fighting are among parents' top school safety concerns. Thirty percent of parents of middle-school students are extremely or very worried that their child will be bullied, and more than 25 percent of black and Hispanic parents worry that their child will be a victim of a hate crime at school. Many parents—14 percent overall and 22 percent in urban areas—also are extremely or very worried that their child will be involved in fights with other students. Ask school administrators how the school teaches children about conflict resolution and bullying prevention. Inquire about training staff receive related to these issues, resources available to students (such as guidance counselors or peer mediation programs), and awareness-raising efforts to prevent bullying and fighting.

Identify skills and interests you have that could benefit the school.

Unfortunately, about a third of parents say they aren't more involved in school activities, including safety initiatives, because they don't believe they have much to offer, the school is not interested in what they could contribute, or other parents are already doing enough. Remember that any involvement improves the school. Think about skills you have or things that you like to do. Could you prepare a mailing, do an Internet search, or serve as a lunchroom or playground monitor? Becoming involved in the school will reinforce the importance of school to your child and help you and your child connect to the school.

Volunteer to get involved in school safety efforts.

Speak to the school principal about opportunities to involve parents in school safety efforts. Parents could join school administrators on a safety walk-through or serve on a school safety committee. Consider speaking to the principal about starting a Be Safe and Sound in School program (<http://www.ncpc.org/programs/be-safe-and-sound-campaign/about>).

Joselle Shea is director, Children and Youth Initiatives, National Crime Prevention Council, Arlington, Virginia.



Upcoming MCCPTA Summer Area Meetings

Clarksburg/Damascus/Gaithersburg/
Magruder/Watkins Mill

Date: June 8
Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Clarksburg Elementary School

Bethesda Chevy Chase/Walter
Johnson/Wheaton/Whitman

Date: June 15
Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Walter Johnson High School

Northwest/Poolesville/Quince Orchard/Seneca Valley

Date: June 10
Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Sally K. Ride Elementary

Northeast Consortium (Blake/Paint
Branch/Springbrook) & Sherwood

Date: June 17
Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Paint Branch High School

Down County Consortium
(Blair/Einstein/Kennedy/Northwood)

Date: June 11
Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Einstein High School Media Center

MCCPTA Calendar 2008-2009

Unless otherwise specified all meetings take place at the
Carver Educational Services Center (850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD)

August

- 6 6:30 pm MCCPTA Committee Chair Orientation--Auditorium
- 6 7:30 pm MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting-Auditorium
- 31 Montgomery County Public Schools Open

September

- 3 7:30 pm MCCPTA Board of Directors Meeting – Auditorium
- 22 7:30 pm MCCPTA Delegate Assembly/Committee Fair – Auditorium

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

MCCPTA
2096 Gaither Road
Suite 204
Rockville, MD 20850

PONY MAIL to PTA
Presidents to be shared
with School PTA Delegates
and PTA members

May/June 2009