

March 2011 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Education, Environment, Family Engagement, Health and Wellness and Special Education Chairs to assist you in your advocacy efforts.



Education

- National PTA has released new parent guides related to the **Common Core State Standards**. Go to: <http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>.
- The State Education Department announced the release of **2009-10 School Report Cards** for all schools and districts throughout New York. In addition to school and district information, there is also a School Report Card for the entire state. The Report Cards are available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/reportcard/>.
- **The Nation's Report Card Release: 2009 Science Grades 4, 8 and 12 -** http://nationsreportcard.gov/science_2009/



Environment

- **Is your life too plastic?** Want to encourage others to give up the plastic bag habit? Bring a screening of the documentary *Bag It* to your community: <http://bagitmovie.com/screenings.html>.
- **Buffalo** becomes the first city in New York to **ban hydro-fracking**: <http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/17127/20110209/buffalo-becomes-first-city-in-new-york-to-ban-hydro-fracking>.
- Recent study finds **toxic chemicals in pregnant women's bodies**: http://www.usatoday.com/yourlife/parenting-family/pregnancy/2011-01-14-chemicals14_st_N.htm and EPA administrator Lisa Jackson responds with a request to update the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act: http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/letters/2011-01-31-letters31_ST1_N.htm.
- **How green is your town?** Westchester County knows. Do you? <http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/hgimindex.html>
- Plan Ahead: **2011 National Asthma Forum** to be held in Washington, DC in June. <http://www.epaasthmaforum.com/>
- There's still time to plan for **National Healthy Schools Day** on April 11, 2011. <http://www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org/>
- **Earth Day 2011** is in April, too. <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2011>



Family Engagement

- **Save the Dates!** For those who celebrate their volunteers and parents there are events coming up which you can plan for. **Project Appleseed** has inspired millions of parents to volunteer in thousands of schools nationwide. Parents are encouraged to engage with their public schools and raise valuable social capital for their school community. These resources are a great complement to Three for Me, a National PTA volunteering initiative.

Public School Volunteer Week, April 17 - 23, 2011

14th annual celebration, held during the third week in April

National Parental Involvement Day, November 17, 2011

17th annual celebration, held on the third Thursday in November

National Family Fitness Week, January 22 - 28, 2012

4th annual celebration, held during the fourth week in January

See how NBC has partnered with Project Appleseed on their website. There are many helpful ideas how other school districts are initiating parent involvement.

See a sample of Project Appleseed's parent involvement pledge:

<http://www.projectappleseed.org/pledgesample.pdf>.

Check out **Project Appleseed's** website at: <http://www.projectappleseed.org>.



Health and Wellness

- Approximately two out of three adults are willing to take civic action to support local street-scale urban design policy changes that **make walking and biking easier** in their neighborhoods, according to a new CDC study published in the January issue of the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*. The article, titled "Public Support for Street Scale Urban Design and Policies to Increase Physical Activity," is based on a data analysis of 4,682 adult participants in the 2006 Health Styles survey.

The authors note that street-scale design is important because it targets populations rather than individuals. Street-scale designs were recommended by the Task Force on Community and Preventive Services.

This study can be found at: <http://usdotblog.typepad.com/files/cdcsurvey.pdf>.

- For **parent tips** on how to determine if your child has the flu or a cold, safe sledding tips and how to keep your child's teeth healthy, visit: www.KidsHealth.org.

- **Product Recalls:**

AmerTac recalls night lights due to fire and burn hazard. An electrical short circuit in the night light can cause it to overheat and smolder or melt, which can burn consumers or result in fire. Three night light models are being recalled.

Escalade Sports Recalls Oasis Playsets due to fall hazard. The swing seats on the playsets can crack and break in half, causing the user to fall to the ground. This recall involves belt-style swing seats on four models of Oasis Playsets: PG01W, PG02W, PG03W and PG04W. Model numbers are located on a plate on the swing's horizontal beam.

For information on product recalls and safety information go to: www.clickcheckandprotect.org.



- **New Special Education Parent Center for Long Island:** The Office of Special Education of NYSED is seeking proposals to establish a Special Education Parent Center in the Long Island region of New York State. Submissions must be received at NYSED no later than March 23, 2011 at 3:00 PM. Information can be found at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/comcontracts/10-025/>.
- **Manifestation Determination:** Children with disabilities often experience behavioral difficulties in school which might result in the school wanting to suspend the student. In some cases when the suspension would be for more than 10 days, the school must conduct a manifestation determination. The purpose is to determine whether the behavior was caused by their disabilities. For information about the manifestation determination process visit: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/discipl.mdr.strategy.htm>.
- **Report from the National Council of Disability:** The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (Developmental Disabilities Act) established programs to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities, to protect their civil and human rights and to ensure their access to jobs, health care, housing and education. This report describes how well these programs are meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families and makes recommendations for changes. For more information visit: http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2010/rising_expectations_02-15-11.html.
- **Disability.gov** has an excellent parent resource section. Visit: http://www.disability.gov/education/parent_resources.
- On February 16, 2011, the **Office For People With Developmental Disabilities** changed their domain name to: <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov>.
- A memo from Melody Musgrove, Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, to clarify how a **Response to Intervention** cannot be used to delay an evaluation for eligibility under IDEA. The memo can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/osep11-07rtimemo.doc>.