

January 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

- **Joy2Learn** brings America's greatest artists into the classroom free of charge via the Internet. Visit www.Joy2Learn.org and click on e-Presentations to view artists as they demonstrate and explain their art. Learn about various art forms as you navigate through exciting videos and interactive multimedia elements including performances, history, artists' insights and quiz games.
- The New York State Education Department is seeking nominations for the **2010-2011 Helen Bach Moss Memorial Better Beginnings Award**. This award recognizes excellence in elementary education with a \$1,000 stipend. Additional information can be found at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/ted/BB>.
- The New York State Education Department is seeking nominations for the **2012 Teacher of the Year**. Please visit <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/ted/toty/> for additional information and nomination form.



Environment

- **Wrap-Up of Environmental Reforms in NYS for 2010:** NY Healthy Schools Network celebrated an important advocacy year and thanked Governor Paterson for signing into law several bills. Bill sponsors were thanked as follows: M/A Englebright and Senator Foley for the bill banning outdoor pesticides at schools; M/A Sweeney and Hayes and Senator Thompson for a bill reducing fees on hazardous waste disposals for schools; M/A Englebright and Senator Thompson and colleagues at Just Green Partnership for a bill banning bisphenol A (BPA) in child-care products. The Network also congratulated the New York State Education Department for requiring schools to use green cleaning products. For the wrap-up news, go to: http://www.healthyschools.org/HS_Newsletter2010.pdf
- **The Playgrounds and Toxic Threats Guide** offers tips for school leaders and parents, new resources and a tip sheet on how to organize for action on playground hazards. Visit www.HealthySchools.org or call 518-462-0062.
- **NYSERDA** (New York State Energy Resource and Development Authority) has a full offering of workshops for students and teachers. Visit <http://www.getenergysmart.org/EnergyEducation/Workshop.aspx> for more information.
- Getting a new **Smart Phone** in the new year? Here's some updated information on getting the best phone that emits the least amount of radiation: <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/greenhouse/post/2010/12/smart-phones-without-radiation/1>.
- **Where is PVC** hiding in your school? Check out <http://www.besafenet.com/pvc/thisvinylschool/> and see how your school is doing.

- **Yay Town of North Hempstead** for collecting plastic bottle caps at school and town locations! Diverting trash from landfills is always good! <http://www.citizenscampaign.org/alerts/alert-2010-12-a.htm>



Family Engagement

- **Projectappleseed.org:** Pledge your commitment to public schools. Pledge five hours of your time per semester to your child's public school and 15 minutes each night on homework or an enriching activity. Also pledge Public School Volunteer Week – 4/17/2011. Check out the parent involvement checklist which covers the six standards used by the National PTA including sample best practice ideas, challenges and results for each of the standards. <http://www.projectappleseed.org/chklst.html>
- **Encourage Local Businesses** to collaborate with public schools. Businesses can help in many ways: leadership, funding, expertise etc. Check out how your employer can get more involved: http://biztools4schools.org/how_to_use_this_toolkit.
- **Calculate the value of your time** donated to your school or other favorite cause: <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/tools/volunteercalculator>.



Health and Wellness

- **Abuse of medicines** and prescription drugs is an issue of increasing concern not only with adults but more importantly with our children. Available at the following Kids Health website is information for parents that will educate them in regards to medications: http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/drugs_alcohol/know_drugs.html.

At the **Kids Health** main website, you can find three separate health-related categories orientated for Kids, Parents and Teens. Each are loaded with information for all age groups and it is an excellent site to offer members. <http://kidshealth.org>.
- **Kick Butts Day.** Coming up March 23, 2011, the Campaign for Tobacco Free Children, which National PTA is a supporting member of, is reminding us of the upcoming Kick Butts Day. The website offers a guide, activities and materials for PTAs to use to promote the campaign. <http://www.kickbuttsday.org/>
- **Wellness wake up calls.** Check out these empowering messages for morning announcements. An easy way to fulfill Nutrition Education Goals as mandated by Local Wellness Policies, available in versions for K-5 and 6-12. <http://www.healthyschoolfood.org/wellnesswakeup.htm>



Special Education

- The New York State **Education Department has a large list of resources.** The topics include such subjects as testing accommodations, Section 504 as well as a link to the NYS PTA website. To check their resources visit: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/resources.htm>.
- The New York State Office of Mental Health has created a list of all of the **Mental Health Acronyms** from a variety of sources. Be sure to check out their publication section for additional information. This acronym information can be found at <http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/resources/acronyms.html>.
- Raising children can be the most rewarding yet challenging job we ever engage in. When the child has special needs, there are different situations to face. Sometimes it seems that everything becomes a battlefield. **For help with discipline issues** check out <http://specialchildren.about.com/od/behaviorissues/a/battles.htm>.

- The **National Center for Learning Disabilities** has an information document explaining specifics about “Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.” This information can be found at <http://www.ncld.org/images/stories/Publications/AdvocacyBriefs/UnderstandingADAAA-Section504/UnderstandingADAAA-Section504.pdf>.
- The **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** is an excellent resource for parents, teachers and anyone interested in special education. They have an excellent section which gives you a starting point to all of the research that is available. The article can be found at <http://www.nichcy.org/Research/Basics/Pages/Start.aspx>.