

**New York State**  
**PTA**<sup>®</sup>  
*everychild.onevoice.*<sup>®</sup>



# ANNUAL REPORT

November 2008

Maria L. DeWald, President



- ... Leadership
- ... Representation
- ... Support
- ... Communication
- ... Celebration
- ... Finance



Annual Report of the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT...

True to my theme of "Connecting the Dots", the NYS PTA has indeed been trying to connect as many as possible since our last Convention! Much new and strengthened collaboration have made PTA more visible and effective. A real partnership must be based on a common mission and each partner must enable the other to do something they could not do alone. For example, we co-sponsored a Parental Involvement Resource Center (PIRC)/PTA Summit in support of the Board of Regents Parent and Family Engagement Policy Implementation Plan. Our plan to gather 100 influential policy makers together to support systemic change in the field and ask them to work on a sub committee for a year was audacious but successful. We hope that at the end of this three year initiative, we will have realized significant gains through our sharing of resources and talent. Another example is the co-sponsoring of the Go Green Environmental Education Conference in Syracuse. Our ability to support this simple, effective school-based environmental education initiative, combined with our networking and advocacy abilities, has helped promote life long healthy habits for those involved.



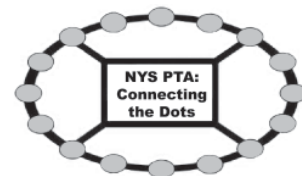
Working with our own team, comprised of Board members and enhanced by collaborating with region board representatives, has resulted in a brand new website which will be a wonderful resource for all our members. This year also saw the introduction of our first Minority Leaders and Parents As Reading Partners strands at our Summer Leadership Conference, our attempt to collaborate with our membership to build strong leadership for our PTAs and strong programs within them. Another collaboration in the works is the formation of statewide advocacy teams so that, regardless of what education, health and welfare issues we are talking about, the connection between PTA as an organization and each member will be enhanced. These collaborations will be what builds relevance and helps sustain the PTA of the future.

It has been my pleasure to visit all 16 regions over the course of my presidency which ends with this Convention. Meeting folks from across the State, all with a passion for PTA and children, has only strengthened my own belief that PTA is an organization that gets things done for parents, schools and children despite limited resources. That is because we have the best resource of all...you! So, as this Convention theme points out, your *continuing connection* to sharing our message and building stronger school and community relationships that can effect student achievement, can only happen with your *consistent commitment* to making every child's potential a reality. Thank you for that!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria L. DeWald".

Maria L. DeWald  
NYS PTA President



## Our Mission is:

*PTA is:*

- A powerful voice for all children,*
- A relevant resource for families and communities, and*
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.*

## Our Vision is:

*Making every child's potential a reality by establishing the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) as the premier organization for parent involvement and advocacy for all children.*

## Our Purposes are:

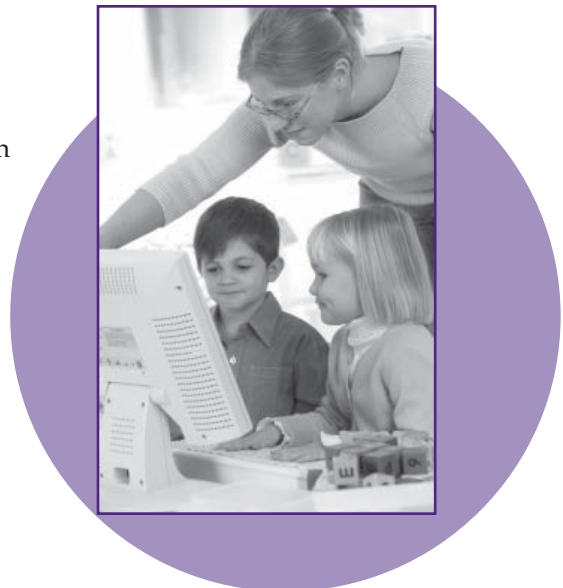
- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship*
- To raise the standards of home life*
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth*
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth*
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education*

# LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC PLANNING...

## Designing a path to the future

A year ago, we concluded the celebration of our 110th anniversary year with publications, celebrations and completion of a resolutions timeline that vividly demonstrated the real advocacy success of our organization. Now it's time to look to the future. Our future success will depend on a number of critical activities planned and supported by our Advocacy Team, and the Leadership Development, Budget and Finance and Strategic Planning Committees. The theme *"Every Child, One Voice"* captures the essence of where PTA must go. Whether the setting is a parent teacher conference, a school board budget hearing, a meeting with an influential legislator or Board of Regents member, or testimony to a legislative committee, improved quality of life for children is the goal. The work to make such efforts successful is time consuming, intellectually challenging and at times emotionally draining. In the past year alone, to name a few, NYS PTA committees have worked to:

- Clarify Mission, Vision and Purpose to more closely connect each with both individual unit members and national goals
- Enhance service to members and strengthen advocacy strategies through the formation of Strategic Planning sub committees to examine Organizational Effectiveness, Member Services and Advocacy
- Improve communication through a review of print materials and expansion of information available through the NYS PTA website
- Improve financial stability through the development of a five year plan to implement revised investment, sponsorship and advertising policies
- Build on the success of the Growth Through Leadership Award program which concludes this year by encouraging members to become more effective advocates, familiarizing them regarding the details of critical issues and recognizing their efforts through prestigious ACT and Advocates in Action awards.
- Welcome 22 new units from 9 regions. They are Cazenovia HS PTSA, GHR SEPTSA, Chester Academy PTSA, Monitcello SEPTSA, Tiny Scholars PTA, Shoreham-Wading River HS PTSA, Jackson Annex PTA, Manhasset SEPTA, St. Vincent Ferrer PTA, North Colonie SEPTA, School #2 PTA, Milton Terrace North Elem School PTA, Maine-Endwell HS PTA, John Jay HS PTSA, Nellie A Thornten HS PTSA, Valhalla Special Education PTSA, Mount Pleasant SEPTA, Cheektowaga Central MS PTA, Union East Elementary PTA, Anthony J. Schmidt Elementary PTA, Pine Hill Primary Center PTA, Lakeshore MS PTA. Each was given a voucher for a free-registration to our Convention so they could build leadership right from the beginning.
- Continue consistent field service provided by the Board of Managers in the form of schools of instruction, answers to many questions, leadership advice and state and region events and workshops.
- Influence adoption of law and regulation beginning with the research and development of potential resolutions. Once resolutions are adopted by membership, this research effort supports advocacy actions through committee work, testimony, advocacy letters and direct interaction with State and National policymakers.



# REPRESENTATION...

## Sharing our efforts with others

To communicate its message, NYS PTA representatives must be credible, persistent and above all, visible. Participation by PTA volunteers and staff on the Education Conference Board helps to shape the positions of teachers, boards of education, school administrators, and others to include and value a parent perspective. A “Virtual Lobby Day” effort, now entering its fourth year, is becoming part of the message legislators expect from PTA. Testimony before legislative committees, regular communication with our educational partners, ongoing input to legislators, members of the State Board of Regents and a continuing dialogue with legislative and SED staff keeps the NYS PTA agenda constantly in front of State policymakers clearly demonstrating the research and detail that goes into making the message credible. The names and faces of PTA representatives are familiar to the NYS Department of Education, members of the Board of Regents, legislators and the Governor because we participate and because our message is carefully prepared.

This year, our volunteers and staff have represented PTA at conferences of partner organizations such as the Middle Schools Summit; spoken at press conferences, testified before legislative committees in support of maintaining a State commitment to public school funding and before the NYS Commission on Property Tax Relief in opposition to caps on local property taxes. We joined with the Governor, our educational partner NYSHEPA, and others to promote healthy schools legislation that would create nutrition standards for school food service programs and assure attention to consistent levels of physical activity for students; PTA volunteers and staff participated in a December 2007 Educational Conference Board Policy Conference and contributed to the development of the issues document which accompanied that conference; We participated in the selection and recognition of the NYS Teacher of the Year; were represented at the Governor’s Summit on Dropout Prevention; and, presented thoughts on the testing models used to measure student growth. We have begun working on “whole child” initiatives to advocate against a “one-size fits all approach” to teaching, testing and learning in order to promote 21st Century Learning skills as crucial to career development.

Over the past three years, NYSPTA has participated with National PTA in an Emerging Minority Leadership Initiative with our goal being to replicate National’s efforts in New York State. This year, we have set up our own initiative, recognizing and involving minority leaders, in offering a community building strand at our Summer Leadership Conference. We also expanded on our partnership with EPIC one of two federally-funded PIRCs (Parental Information Resource Centers) in New York State and Co-sponsored, with EPIC, a highly successful parent engagement summit this past October.

Continuing efforts have also involved many PTA volunteers in efforts to build New York City interest in establishing PTAs after nearly 40 years of absence, to improve after school programs through partnership with NYSANS, support “Go Green” efforts through a co-sponsored SUMMIT in Syracuse, and recognize the achievements of special needs students with a meaningful high school diploma.

PTA representatives are regular participants in discussions to shape professional standards, recognize effective educators, establish meaningful standards for student testing and program evaluation, promote effective childhood vaccination programs, represent parents on many committees such as the Committee of Practitioners and the Homeless Advisory Committee, and many other ongoing initiatives, this year including input to the International Association on Brain Education at their United Nations conference in June. The collective impact is that of an organization whose influence belies its relatively modest resources.



# COMMUNICATION...

## Reaching a broader audience

Achieving the PTA Mission requires ongoing communication that must be timely and must reach as many of our more than 350,000 members as possible. We depend on three forms of communication to make this happen.

### **ELECTRONIC:**

This year, the New York State PTA took four significant steps forward to expand our use of electronic resources.

**Website:** On November 7, 2008, NYS PTA debuted its new website, [www.nyspta.org](http://www.nyspta.org) following an intensive two year process to assess our future needs, collect proposals from prospective vendors and then interview and award a website development contract from a select group of finalists. With a contract awarded to the Capital Region BOCES, the Technology Committee visited dozens of websites to guide BOCES website developers to a look and organization that would work best for NYS PTA. With basic design templates approved in August, Assignee April Holdren led a PTA website development team through the process of learning and applying the technology that would allow us to build content into the design prepared by the BOCES. The result is a new look, a more logical organization of content, an improved ability to edit and update content and beyond all else, an ability to grow and add new services. While the site is functional now, we will be adding a host of new services over the next year including a PTA Store, On-Line Event Registration, a variety of survey and feedback tools and will be exploring the potential use of on-line training opportunities.

**Cap Wiz:** Employment of an electronic tool to facilitate individual member communication with State and National policymakers had once been considered cost prohibitive. A new partnership with National PTA this year, however has brought the cost within reach and greatly enhanced the ability of individual members to communicate with their legislators. We also produce a monthly Advocacy e-newsletter.

**Just Between Friends:** A free set of software tools and benefits that will help you run your PTA more easily, attract new members, recruit and manage volunteers and communicate with parents in your schools.

**Internal Data Library (IDL):** Managing and communicating information based on a system of complex and ever changing files is an enormous challenge whether the system is supported by a paper or electronic system. NYS PTA has spent considerable time and incurred extensive mailing costs in its efforts to keep this wide range of files up to date. This year, a development team led by assignee Gene Kinney, introduced an electronic Internal Data Library or IDL which offers state and region PTA leaders a wide range of up to date documents, reports and data. With useful data stored and continuously updated on-line, the efforts of these leaders who rely on this information to provide quality support to individual units and their members becomes far less complicated. Likewise, staff time and cost required to prepare and distribute updates is dramatically reduced.

### **PRINT:**

At the core of NYS PTA's print efforts are the annual *Resource Guide* and position statements contained in *Where We Stand. Fast Facts*, a ten times per year publication, monthly *Legislative Briefs*, and the *New York Parent Teacher*, a four publication per year periodical and an annual report, round out the regular publications that are distributed to 2000 PTA leaders across the state. In the next year, an extensive review of the *New York Parent Teacher* publication is planned to assess how that publication may be modified to better respond to member needs and interests. There are also new projects being developed at any given time. Topic related brochures and related publications are developed by PTA volunteers, often in cooperation with "partner" organizations, based on need, e.g. a new AIS booklet in partnership with NYSUT.

### **PEOPLE:**

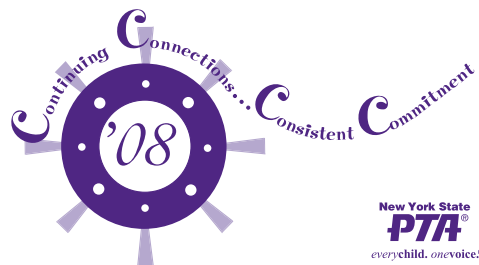
From its beginnings 111 years ago, NYS PTA has depended on person to person contact to spread its message. No matter how sophisticated our efforts at communicating electronically or in print, the heart of PTA continues to be in person to person and face to face contact. Leaders within 16 regions, supported by topic related committee chairs, combine as a Board of Managers to represent PTA positions to local, state and national policy makers. The structure works but undergoes continuous review and renewal to assure that we find more effective and less costly ways to provide maximum person to person contact within the limits of budget and volunteer time.

# CELEBRATION...

## We celebrate the present as we build to the future.

Essential to the success of any organization is a determination to honor the past while we celebrate present accomplishments and look to the future. This year we celebrated the contributions of the Dickinson Avenue School PTA in Suffolk Region, winner of this year's PARP award for their program titled "Reading Roundup". We recognized National Reflections Winners Isabella Saccente of Holbrook, NY, and Jessica Calzi of Williamsville, NY, Award of Excellence winners for Dance, Grace Rosner of Upper Nyack, NY, Award of Excellence winner for Film/ Video and Matthew Goodman of New Hartford, NY, Award of Merit winner for Visual Arts. In addition, this year we received 453 entries for the annual Theme Search contest! We celebrated the achievement of students planning to enter the teaching profession by awarding nine \$3,000 Jenkins Scholarships for Teacher Education. In addition, we support teachers working to improve their craft by awarding seven \$1,000 Teacher Fellowships in Memory of Richard Gazzolla. We celebrated Katherine Maher of the Central Hudson Region as this year's winner of the Youth Humanitarian Award in Honor of Stanley Marcus as well as the many students who build community through their humanitarian efforts. We celebrated 2007-08 repeat Newsletter Award winner J. Irving Baylis PTA's efforts in publishing the Baylis Bugle. Finally, many volunteers from all parts of the state were nominated to receive the Leadership Award in honor of Jane Skrzypek. We celebrated Southwestern Region's Julie Rodriguez as our 2008 state winner, as well as many region winners.

Hundreds of other individuals and collaborative teams are also honored each year as units and councils across the state acknowledge outstanding service with Lifetime Memberships, Distinguished Service, Golden Oak and Diamond Awards and Membership Growth Awards. Many also are recognized at the National level with *Schools of Excellence* designations and, for example, *Healthy Lifestyles* and *Take Your Family To School Awards*. Thousands more quietly pursue their advocacy roles with no more recognition than the inner satisfaction that comes from making the lives of our children just a little bit better. Whoever we are and whatever recognition we receive, we can all celebrate in the realization that our individual and collective efforts are important and valued by those we serve.



# STAFFING...

## Building on a model for more effective support

While NYS PTA prides itself in being a volunteer operated organization, the size, complexity and scope of the operation make it impossible to pursue our mission without effective staff support. A new staffing model, implemented this year, created four specialist positions, one each to support events, communications, membership dues and insurance activities and general office support. The model has worked well but experience has led us to further refine the office support role.

These changes have been achieved at minimal change in overall salary and benefit costs. We have hired two new staff since mid August. Clare Hart has been appointed to the Events Coordinator position and Holly Miller has just accepted employment in the Office support role which has been re-titled Administrative Assistant. Rick Longhurst, Noreen Iacobucci, Pam Chrysler and Eileen O'Connor continue in their current roles as Assistant to the President, Membership Specialist, Communications Specialist and Office Assistant. The staff is committed to the evolving model, the PTA mission and to their individual roles.

# FINANCE...

## Making wise use of limited resources

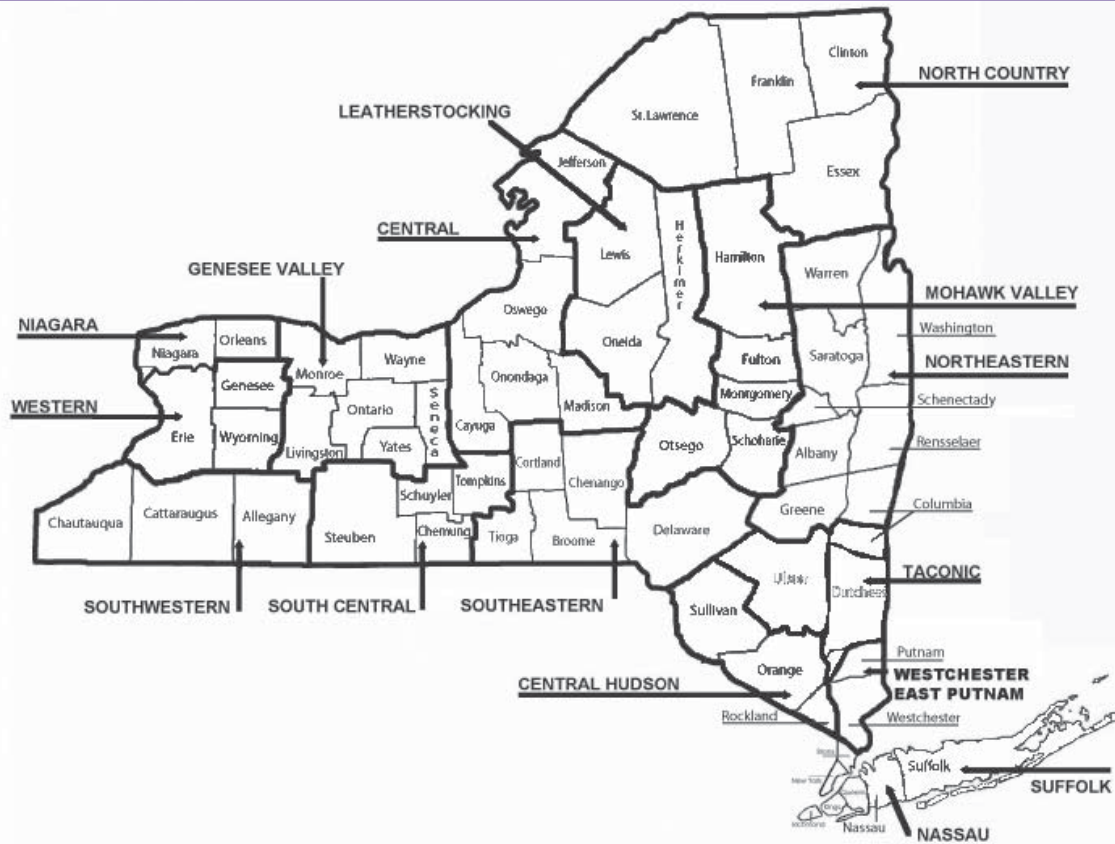
The past year has presented us all with challenges we could never have anticipated, even several months ago. Keeping our hard earned reserves safe, our investments diversified and our hands continually on the pulse of our financial activities has become a critical priority. Responding to a changing world economy while we continue to address declining membership and limited resources requires creativity and persistence. While these efforts alone may not be sufficient to respond to everything that the future brings us, we have been successful in managing current budgets, reducing mailing costs, building successful sponsorship programs, reducing the need for extensive travel and lodging costs through the use of conference calls, working diligently to contain the cost of insurance premiums and creating an investment program that maximizes revenue from invested reserves while offering maximum protection for those reserves. We have also worked closely with the Bonadio Group, our new independent auditors, in the past year to help us assure that our future will be both secure and well managed. A summary of recent financial activity includes:

### New York State PTA Revenue and Expenditure Activity

	Actual 2006 - 2007	Actual 2007 - 2008	Budget 2008 - 2009
<b>Revenues: General Operating Fund</b>			
Membership	\$630,918	\$622,089	\$625,200
Convention	\$93,772	\$113,901	\$92,500
Summer Experience	\$45,742	\$44,843	\$42,500
Leg/Ed Conference	\$19,919	\$17,496	\$18,500
Subscription/Publications	\$5,443	\$3,425	\$3,400
Gifts/Grants/Sponsorship	\$3,396	\$14,477	\$7,800
Distinguished Service Awards	\$5,510	\$3,710	\$5,000
Investment Interest	\$47,905	\$52,224	\$32,000
PTA Store (Net)	\$(10,417)	\$18,235	\$2,500
Miscellaneous/Interfund Transfer	\$784	\$3,651	\$1,300
<b>Total Revenue General Operating Fund</b>	<b>\$842,972</b>	<b>\$894,051</b>	<b>\$830,700</b>
<b>Expenditures: General Operating Fund</b>			
Advocacy	\$28,181	\$24,140	\$32,300
Field Support	\$78,873	\$73,440	\$79,838
Communications	\$32,764	\$32,634	\$50,800
Leadership	\$140,657	\$141,466	\$153,650
Structure	\$110,076	\$84,243	\$118,000
PTA Office	\$388,680	\$377,704	\$396,112
<b>Total Expenditures General Operating Fund</b>	<b>\$779,231</b>	<b>\$733,627</b>	<b>\$830,700</b>
Total Revenue PARP	\$17,776	\$18,331	\$12,750
Total Expense PARP	\$18,399	\$14,147	\$12,750
Total Revenue Twin Projects	\$53,171	\$72,382	\$48,600
Total Expense Twin Projects	\$40,231	\$36,368	\$44,400
Total Revenue Insurance	\$394,659	\$393,600	
Total Expense Insurance	\$317,845	\$292,638	

- Excess premiums are placed in an Insurance Reserve to protect against unanticipated insurance losses or premium increases.
- An Annual audit, conducted by the Bonadio Group (formerly the DR Group,) CPAs rates NYS PTAs financial reports as "unqualified", the best opinion an audit firm can provide.

## OUR REGIONS



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## NEW YORK STATE PTA BOARD OF MANAGERS

### Executive Committee:

President- Maria L. DeWald; First Vice President- Mary Ann De Costanzo; Educator Vice President- Dr. Steve Black; Vice President- Stephanie Fehr; Vice President- Susan Lipman; Vice President- Susan Berkow; Vice President- Michele Conklin; Vice President- Kathy Dowling; Vice President- Dr. Maria Fletcher; Vice President- Sue Rau; Secretary- Patricia Hysert; Treasurer- Janet Meyerson

### Region Directors:

Central- Kammy Popiwczak; Central Hudson- Cheryl Lee S. Freedman; Suffolk- Doris Fischer; Leatherstocking- Donna Imobersteg; Genesee Valley- Sue Russotti; Mohawk Valley- Marge Ugalde; Nassau- Gracemarie Rozea; Niagara- Diane Campbell; Northeastern- Penny Hollister; South Central- Area Consultant- Sue Rau; Southeastern- Wendy DelSanto; Southwestern- Linda King; Taconic- Alvin Benson; Westchester East-Putnam- Jane Harsha; Western- Maria Eagen; North Country- Carla J. Ingram

### State Chairmen:

Arts in Education- Merle L. Payne; Bylaws- Nancy L. Cummings; Education- Tamalin Martin; Environment- Sally Giuffrida; Health and Wellness- Mary Ward; Legislation- Lana Ajemian; Membership- Kelly Stephenson; *New York Parent Teacher* Editor- Bonnie Russell; Outreach- left vacant for future planning; Parent Involvement- Bonnie Russell; Parenting & Family Life- Bev Cottrell; Parents As Reading Partners (PARP)- Debbie Grayer; Public Relations- Lauri Dahlin; Publications- Pam Schmitt; Resolutions- Lana Ajemian; Special Education- Tamalin Martin; Twin Projects- Julie Griffith

### Additional Board Members:

Youth Members- Kimberly Griffith and Angela Johanning; Immediate Past President- Penny Leask; Presidential Assignees- April Jean Holdren, JoAnn Incalcaterra, Mike Meehan, and Catherine Romano; Consultants- Janet Ahola, Richard Ahola, Jane M. Bernhard, Gene Kinney, Rhea Vogel, Penny Whiting

### State Office Staff:

Assistant to the President- Rick Longhurst; Administrative Assistant- Holly Miller; Communications Specialist- Pamela Chrysler; Event Coordinator- Clare Hart; Membership and Insurance Specialist- Noreen Iacobucci; Office Assistant- Eileen O'Connor

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