

fast **FACTS**

New York State PTA

August 2009

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REMINDER:

Unit presidents must complete the Annual Officer's Contact Information Update (Form A) to receive mailings and the *Resource Guide* from NYS PTA. This can be completed online at www.nyspta.org

Statewide Turnoff Week

The NYS Department of Health Obesity Prevention Program and the Center for Screen-Time Awareness (CSTA), announce the third annual **Statewide Turnoff Week, September 20-26, 2009**. We are excited to participate in the upcoming September event. This partnership is guided by strategies outlined in the NYS Strategic Plan for Overweight and Obesity Prevention, http://www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/obesity/strategic_plan/strategic_plan_index.htm. A main goal of the plan addresses the reduction in TV viewing and other recreational screen time among children.

A limited quantity of event Organizer's Kits (CD) and posters are available at no cost. The kits provide guidance and resources for schools for planning events and establishing "Universal Screen-Time Reduction" strategies. Please use the enclosed order form to fax or email your order. One kit and three posters have been allocated per order. If requesting materials for more than one location, please return a separate order form with a contact name and email for each location. The CSTA is also providing a 20% discount to NY residents interested in purchasing additional items from their website, <http://www.screentime.org/>.

United We Serve

PTA is proud and ready to support President Obama's new volunteer initiative called "**United We Serve**" that will mobilize millions of Americans to give back to their communities from June 22nd-September 11th. The President is encouraging every American to serve to develop a lifelong commitment to service and civic engagement through this initiative. PTA has a strong legacy of service throughout its history -- this initiative takes it one step further! National PTA is joining efforts with the White House and is asking all PTA members to participate. PTA members are encouraged to focus on projects that address education, health and serving military families. Getting involved can be as easy as helping families sign up to receive library cards, reading to students, or organizing a community health fair. Check out PTA's **Call to Service Toolkit** (available at www.pta.org/calltoservice). The Toolkit has helpful resources, project ideas, and tips to help you plan an effective service project. It also includes information regarding how to volunteer with an existing project in your community.

7 Super Things Parents and Caregivers Can Do

1. Talk often with your child from the day they are born.
2. Hug them, hold them, and respond to their needs and interests.
3. Listen carefully as your child communicates with you.
4. Read aloud to your children every day, even when they are babies. Play and sing with them often.



5. Say “yes” and “I love you” as much as you say “no” and “don’t”
6. Ensure a safe, orderly, and predictable environment, wherever they are.
7. Set limits on their behavior and discipline them calmly, not harshly.

(Information from US Department of Education and Health & Human Services)

A publication of the
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Susan Lipman, President

Find out wwwwhat's happening at www.nyspta.org

Watch the Home Page - News Headlines for:

- ▲ 2009 NYS PTA Convention information
- ▲ Official PTA Kit Sign-up Information

Quick Links:

- ▲ Annual (Form A) Unit/Council Updates for 2009-2010
- ▲ Just Between Friends Sign-up
- ▲ Frequently Asked Questions
- ▲ Virtual Exhibit Hall - launched in May 2009!
- ▲ Take Action - Electronic Advocacy through CapWiz
- ▲ Let's Fight Flu Together!
- ▲ GoodSearch

Under Publications:

- ▲ *Advocacy Newsletter* - current and past issues
- ▲ Fast Facts - current and past issues
- ▲ *Legislative Briefs...* - current and past issues
- ▲ Insurance and Loss Prevention Summary

The website is updated almost daily, so keep your eyes open and check it on a regular basis to find new and up-to-date information.

Helping Your Child to Be a Friend and Be Responsible

If your child is at a party and there is drinking, peer pressure makes it hard to be responsible and leave. Many teenagers have died or have irreversible brain damage from alcohol poisoning. Here are some tips of advice that you can give your child in not taking any chances with their own, or a friend's life.

Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning:

- Can't Stand up, staggering, slurred speech
- Non responsive to pinching or punching
- Difficult to wake up
- Skin is cold, clammy, pale or bluish in color
- Breathing is slow or irregular
- Vomiting, especially when sleeping



Your Responsibilities:

Never leave a friend who has been drinking alone. If you see a person who has been drinking having difficulty breathing, roll them onto their side. Monitor their breathing
Do not let them take anything by mouth, no liquids or solids. Do not leave a friend alone to sleep it off. Call 911, get HELP!

(Information from Rensselaer County Stop DWI)

Skip the Typing; Reduce the Errors

Traditionally, it has been a time-consuming process for PTAs to get up-to-date, accurate information about their members. This year, it becomes easier with Just Between Friends, a web-based service that helps you reduce both time and errors as you collate your membership roster, build your communications lists (including emails, phones, and addresses), and create directories. And it's provided to you at no charge by NYS PTA in conjunction with National PTA. With Just Between Friends, instead of you putting all the information into your system, you simply give a codeword, called a token, to the parents in your community – both members and non-members – and ask them to enter it at www.JustBetweenFriends.com. This token automatically links the parents to your PTA and prompts them to update information, including contact info, and grades of their children. Within 5 minutes, they have entered all the information you need to run your PTA. It's faster, easier, and more secure than other methods. Your data is also more accurate because you don't need to interpret the parents' handwriting. Once the information is in the system, you can use it for member recruitment and management, increasing volunteer participation, communications, fundraising and more.

If you have not yet signed up your unit, go to www.JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAQuickStart, armed with your National PTA unit number (which you can get from your NYS PTA Region Director). Then, send your token to the parents in your school community, and tell them to enter it at www.JustBetweenFriends.com. (Your token is your National PTA Local Unit ID followed by "tok". So if your unit number at National is 12345, your token would be 12345tok.) As you know, parents don't always act immediately when you ask them to act. So it might take several repetitions to get everybody in the system. But it will be less time-consuming for you; and it will put you in a position to increase your membership within the school and get greater participation throughout the year.



Official PTA Kit

Have you ordered your unit's free *Official PTA Kit*? Use your unit's PURL (sent via e-mail to the PTA president in June) to register for the 2009–2010 kit today. To learn more about how to order (and for the few exceptions to the rule), go to PTA.org/OfficialKit.



Let's Fight Flu Together

National PTA, Novartis Vaccines, and Flu Busters have joined together to fight the spread of influenza through a program designed to educate, motivate, and vaccinate children, families, school staff, and other members of the community—*Let's Fight Flu Together!* Please take time to view the new National PTA web site on this issue. There are many new resources available for local units and an updated Frequently Asked Questions. The FAQ piece is helpful to address the changes in the program from last year. Promotional materials are available through the National website www.pta.org

Membership Cards to Mail Mid-August

The membership packets (containing the membership cards) will be mailed mid-August. If you have not filed your Annual Officers' Contact Information Update (Form A), had less than 25 members in 2008-2009, or did not pay your insurance for 2009-2010 then you will not receive a membership packet. If your unit does not receive your packet by the end of August, contact your Region Director for guidance.

Convention 2009

Registration for the 2009 NYS PTA Annual Convention is being sent to all unit and council presidents in this mailing. It can be accessed on our website, www.nyspta.org and you can register for the Convention online! Attend this exciting event which is being held in Saratoga, NY, November 13-15, 2009.

Hope to see you there!

Walk to School Day on October 7, 2009

PTAs and communities can choose to celebrate for the day, once a week or the entire month as part of International Walk to School Month; choose what is right for your interest and resources. By participating in this event you help to promote health, safety and the environment. If your school is too far to walk to, make it a community effort and create a more walk-able and bike-able community, making your community more inviting. Visit the website for ideas, resources and what other states and countries are planning. Start planning now and register your event online and let the world know that your community is walking. Registered users have access to a variety of downloadable materials, including templates for printing stickers, certificates, a frequent walker punch card and new puzzles. Registrants also receive a weekly e-newsletter for six weeks in September and October with tips and resources on holding a Walk to School event.

www.walktoschool.org. Walk To School Day also helps further key PTA priorities: environmental health, child safety and health and wellness. Consider kicking off a campaign encouraging your PTA and school to establish Safe Routes to School programs. [Federal funds](#) are now available to each state department of transportation to establish [Safe Routes to School](#) programs. www.saferoutestoschools.org

Region Growth Incentive Award

Congratulations to the following regions for winning the Region Growth Incentive Award:

- 1st Place - North Country
- 2nd Place - South Central
- 3rd Place - Genesee Valley

An outstanding job done by those regions!

PTA Healthy Lifestyles Award

Physical activity and good nutrition help equip children for a day of learning and a lifetime of health. This November plan an event that promotes healthy habits among students and families and your PTA could receive support for those plans. Now you can help families develop and enhance those healthy habits with support from the PTA national organization. Plan an event to promote health and wellness for PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month this November and apply for a monetary award of up to \$1,000 to support those plans. Applications for the PTA Healthy Lifestyles Awards must be received at the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy by 5:00 p.m. EDT, Friday, September 11, 2009. For the award application, event ideas, and planning tips, refer to the Healthy Lifestyles leader's guide mailed to all units in May, or visit

www.PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles. As you plan your PTA Healthy Lifestyles events, also consider how they can support your PTA's other work: Think strategically about what long-term effect your events might have on the school community. For example, a family 5K walk might get your community interested in creating a walking club; the winning recipes from a healthy recipe contest could be compiled into a cookbook sold to raise money for future wellness programs. Use Healthy Lifestyles to increase membership. Community events are a great way to illustrate the value of becoming a PTA member. Set up a membership table at your event, and make sure community members and extended family members know that they don't have to have a child attending your school to support your PTA with their membership. www.pta.org/healthy_lifestyles.asp is a link to: *PTA Healthy Lifestyles: A Parent's Guide* (in both English and Spanish), the newest Healthy Lifestyles resource, a poster that you can download in four different versions based on the age group. One copy of The Parent's Guide will be included in each of the "Official PTA Kits" that has been mailed to units. Anyone who would like copies of the Parent's Guide can just send an email to wmeagher@pta.org (Whitney Meagher / Program Coordinator-Health and Welfare), with the number needed and their mailing address.

New York State

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