



Skip the Typing; Reduce the Errors

Every year, almost every PTA is faced with the task of getting the most up-to-date, accurate information about their members, other parents in the school, and sometimes even students. Traditionally, it has been a time-consuming process, requiring you to collect the information, transcribe it to some common format, and praying that you haven't mis-read the handwriting on the paper.

This year, it becomes easier with Just Between Friends. Just Between Friends is 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. This suite of services is 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, and all you need to do is approve what they entered, which could take you a few more minutes. You've eliminated hours of work for you; and gave yourself a better list which is more functional and more secure than paper-based lists, email distribution lists or spreadsheets. (If you already have your data on spreadsheets, you can even import the spreadsheet.)

Your data is also more accurate because you don't need to interpret the parents' handwriting. In addition, all email addresses are verified; so if an address doesn't allow delivery, you'll know quickly.

Once the information is in the system, you can use it for member recruitment and management, increasing volunteer participation, communications, fundraising and more.

What's the next step?

First, get your token. Just Between Friends automatically creates one for you as soon as you start-up your unit in Just Between Friends. It's your National PTA Local Unit ID (not your NYS PTA ID) followed by "tok". So if your unit number at National is 12345, your token would be 12345tok. If you don't know your National PTA number, ask your NYS PTA Region Director.

Once you know your token, get it into the hands of the parents in your school community, and tell them to enter it at www.JustBetweenFriends.com. Then every couple days, look in your own Just Between Friends PTA leader account so you can approve parents who have entered their info.

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. We'll explain more in future articles.



IMPORTANT: If your unit has not yet gone through the PTA QuickStart listed below, please do that before sending your token to the members of your community.

If you have not yet signed up your unit, go to www.JustBetweenFriends.com/2008QuickStart, armed with the start-up code that we gave you at the New York State PTA Convention or sent you via United States Mail. If you don't have that code handy, please contact your region director.